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## In Delhi, actress Ashley Judd opens up about being a victim of sexual assault

At the World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls, American actor and activist Ashley Judd spoke about gender discrimination and her personal experiences.



Ilma Hasan

New Delhi, January 31, 2017 | UPDATED 11:19 IST

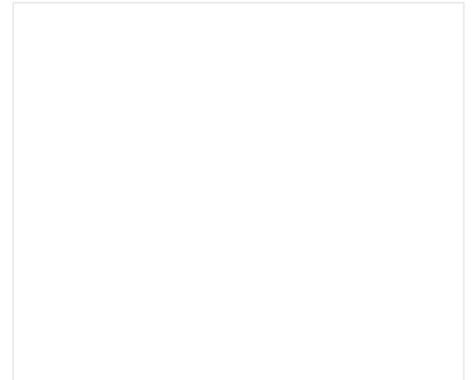
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Two hundred and fifty key voices in the global movement to abolish prostitution systems gathered for a World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls in the National Capital on Monday, January 30.

American actor and activist Ashley Judd, survivor and author Rachel Moran, and Political leader from Chhattisgarh Soni Sori were present at the event, among others.

Actor and activist Ashley Judd spoke against gender discrimination and her own experiences of dealing with sexual assault at the event. The actor, who is India for the next few days, opened up about being a victim of assault as a child.



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Ashley Judd posted this picture of herself on Instagram with the caption, Honored to be at the #LastGirlFirst conference in Delhi with my friends from @apneaap (sic).

Judd's visit comes just days after her recital of Nasty Woman at the Women's March held across the United States on Donald Trump's first day of presidency made headlines.

sing the media and delegates of the Congress, the actor said the US has a long way or gender equality and even opened up about her personal experience.

. . . molested when I was seven years old. I was raped at 14, and then I was raped in 1998. It's a miracle that I wasn't trafficked," she said.

Judd added that there are severe flaws in law on violence against women across the world, and the move for the abolition of trafficking would end harassment. "If us as survivors can come together, we can create change. The onus of the crime should only go to the perpetrator. And laws should give women and girls exit strategies to get out of trafficking," she said.

At the end of her five-minute speech, she spoke in Hindi and urged everyone to rise against sexual exploitation, and decriminalising of prostituted women and girls. "*Ab samjhauta nahi*," said Judd.

Ashley Judd (centre) at the event in New Delhi on Monday.

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... what she should have earned, had there been pay equality in the industry.

The Congress was organised by Apne Aap Women Worldwide and CAP International, and had representatives from over 30 countries. "We want to fight the injustices that the last girl is subjected to. The last girl who gets into prostitution because of poverty, her gender or her caste. African Americans in the US, Indigenous in Australia and Canada, a refugee in Africa and Europe, all those who are preyed upon by traffickers," said Ruchir Gupta, founder, Apne Aap.

The Congress was held at a time when a new Trafficking Bill is going to be introduced in the parliament. The group is demanding provisions for prevention of trafficking through budget allocations for investment in housing, food and education for girls at risk.

...s groups in India, however, have objected to the event. An open letter to the ... es signed by SANGRAM—a culmination of nine groups—have slammed the event in a ... he letter points out: "Organisations like the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution International (CAP Int'l) persist in erroneously viewing all women in sex work as victims of trafficking and violence denying them the very right to call themselves workers."

Judd later took to social media to share her experience of being in India. She posted a picture of herself wearing a garland with Javed Akhtar, even though she erroneously spelt his name as 'Jared' Akhtar.

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A photo posted by Ashley Judd (@ashley\_judd) on Jan 26, 2017 at 7:04pm PST

After the event, Judd and other attendees indulged in a round of *bhangra* over some authentic *dhol* beats:

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Enjoyed my time at the #LastGirlFirst conference.

A video posted by Ashley Judd (@ashley\_judd) on Jan 30, 2017 at 4:24am PST

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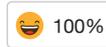
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