The last time you saw a report of sexual assault in the newspaper, what did you see? Did you see the figure of a sad woman hiding her face or a woman crying out for help? Or did you question the circumstances in which the “victim” faced assault? My name is Tarishi Verma. I’m a doctoral candidate in the school of Media and Communication at BGSU and I’m going to talk to you about my research on reporting sexual assault on social media and its impact on shame. Visual feminist activism has been prominent since the two thousands. It gained a new life after the #MeToo movement that gained global traction. However, #MeToo has been limited to those two words. Survivors have gone beyond the hashtag and reported harassment detailing exactly what they went through. So what happens when a survivor reports their sexual assault on social media rather than to a legal institution? Shame is a prominent emotion associated with sexual assault that finds its space within the larger narrative of silencing women. Survivors often do not report assault for fear of being shamed and asked questions like why were you out at night or what were you wearing? In news media, the shame is reinforced by way of stock images that show a women hiding her face or crying for help that accompany stories of sexual assault. The name of the survivor is legally bound to be kept hidden. Shame could force survivors to keep the trauma to themselves for years resulting in psychological issues. Social media intervenes in this. I tracked three cases in India between 2017 and 2019 where survivors used social media to speak up about how they had been sexually harassed or assaulted. They went beyond using the hashtag MeToo and reported exactly what happened to them. My data comprised posts authored by the survivors that name the harasser, talk about the incident, and once posted find traction with other survivors of the same harasser. I found that as opposed to portraying survivors in a pitiful light as a helpless victim, social media give the agency to the survivor to decide how they want to be seen. They were able to bypass the personality of news media and first information reports. They do not hide their names or identities in these posts and they go beyond a performative expression of #MeToo. The results show survivors are to a certain extent able to side step the shame associated with sexual assault when they report their trauma on social media. The perceived shamefulness of sexual assault is circumvented when the survivor takes control of the narrative. This does not necessarily affect the consequences of the accuser to face but focuses on the survivors needs. The results of this research suggest pushing the legitimization of reporting of sexual assault on social media. Survivors are not obligated to perform their trauma over the hashtag but social media provides them with the opportunity to be heard on their own terms. Yes, these platforms also invite trolls and negative actors who lash onto these posts but they are unable to change the effect of the narrative. Thus, social media gives autonomy, agency, and power to survivors of sexual assault. Thank you.