



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
New Delhi



INFINITE  
OPPORTUNITIES | GERMANY+INDIA

Prof. Dr. Annette Beck-Sickinger  
Institute of Biochemistry  
Brüderstraße 34  
04103 Leipzig

**Michael Steiner**

The Ambassador

New Delhi, 9th March 2015

*Dear Prof. Beck-Sickinger,*

it has been brought to my attention that you denied an internship to a male Indian student, giving “the rape problem in India” as a reason. Let me make it clear at the outset that I strongly object to this.

The 2012 Nirbhaya rape case has refocused attention on the issue of violence against women. Rape is indeed a serious issue in India as in most countries, including Germany. In India, the Nirbhaya case has triggered a lively, honest, sustained and very healthy public debate – a public debate of a quality that wouldn’t be possible in many other countries. The Indian Government and Indian civil society organisations are very committed to tackling the issue.

Yesterday, we celebrated International Women’s Day at the German Embassy here in Delhi with many local activists including many men. Your oversimplifying and discriminating generalization is an offense to these women and men ardently committed to furthering women empowerment in India; and it is an offense to millions of law-abiding, tolerant, open-minded and hard-working Indians. Let’s be clear: India is not a country of rapists.

I would encourage you to learn more about the diverse, dynamic and fascinating country and the many welcoming and open-minded people of India so that you could correct a simplistic image, which – in my opinion - is particularly unsuitable for a professor and teacher.

*Sincerely yours,*

*Michael Steiner*