editor's letter

Right: Nathalie Rykiel of the French luxury brand Sonia Rykiel. Below: Editors and publishers of *Marie Claire* across the world

What can the media do in any case? she said on the phone, sobbing about the 11/7 Mumbai blasts. I didn't even know who she was. She had a name and some disturbing questions. They cut through the air like a sharp knife. What can we do? Where does the buck stop? As bystanders of a gory spectacle that silenced some lives and created deafening screams in others', millions feel helpless when terrorism bloodies our paths. Then, a kind of least resistance creeps up – like a quick defence mechanism. A free association with anger, shock, sadness, anxiety... Then? Nothing. The routine numbness returns and life goes on. I started objecting (to nobody in particular) about a minister saying on TV, "The punishment will be harsh for those who kill innocent women and children." Why, aren't the men who were killed equally innocent? In fact, most of the people killed in the blasts were men. Does anyone think about people with special needs? Read our 'first person' story... an account of a sightless survivor.

Exploring the vicissitudes of survival has been a *Marie Claire* staple across the world. I now know why. At the Ninth International *Marie Claire* Editors' Conference held in Paris last month, I could 'feel' the formidable arsenal of ideas that the 26 other editors pack into their approach. Don't ask me who wore what, because that would be simple. I would say – some white, but mostly black. Gorgeous black, glamorous black, sensuous black... But ask me who said what and I would sift through a torrent of cross-cultural insight, empathy and energetic tides of radical, reader-centric journalism. Wow.

But reserve one wow for the colour black too. Not my colour really. Why does it dominate the fashion world with such unchallenged autocracy, I asked the stunning, dressed-in-black Nathalie Rykiel. "Black is absence of colour; as well as presence of all colours," said the daughter of Sonia Rykiel, who founded the French luxury label by the same name. "When you wear black, you only see the woman. When you wear colour, it is the colour that is seen."

Between black and colour lies a lifetime. In fashion and beyond. Think about it.

Shefalee

Shefalee Vasudev,
Editor