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To

All the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units

Dear Comrades,

NIRBHAYA DAY – 16TH DECEMBER

The 7th Anniversary of the ghastly gang rape and murder of Nirbhaya falls on 16th December. A mere two weeks before this 7th anniversary, a young veterinary doctor from Hyderabad - Dr. Priyanka Reddy's case shook the nation. It was followed by the death of Unnao rape victim who was set ablaze while she was on her way to a court hearing. The Nirbhaya tragedy shook the moral conscience of the nation and the country erupted into massive protests demanding justice for her. This resulted in Parliament making amendments to the criminal law and speedy trial of such cases on the recommendation of Justice J.S. Verma Committee. A new legislation was enacted doubling prison terms for rapists to 20 years and also provided for the death penalty in cases that cause death of the victim or leaves her in a vegetative state. But this has not stemmed the tide of new cases of rapes being reported, almost daily. We wanted Nirbhaya case to be the catalyst that brought an end to such rape incidents. But even after 7 years, the nation has miserably failed in this with the surfacing of Unnao, Kathua, Ranchi rape incidents and all the others that we probably don't even know about.

There is a growing horror and anguish over the assaults on the daughters of India. According to statistics, a rape occurs every 20 minutes in India. According to the NCRB report, in 2017, there were as many as 1.17 lakh cases of rape pending trial. In that year, there were an additional 28,750 cases sent for trial. But at the end of the year, there were only 5,822 convictions, just around 4 per cent of all cases on trial. In so many other cases, as in the Unnao case, the rape-accused are out on bail. The system with its long delays acts as a protector to rape-accused. The judicial system is tarnished for its delays and huge backlogs in cases of crimes against women. This dismal picture fuels the public demands for instant justice. This public anger, created by a rotten system, is manipulated by guilty governments and the police to conceal their own failure to prevent the crime in the first place and ensure speedy justice. And the encounter killing in Telengana is a classic case in this regard.

The responsibility and accountability of governments in ensuring social and physical infrastructures to prevent crimes against women should not be lost in the outrage to hang the accused. The NDA Government at the Centre and the various State Governments should strictly implement the comprehensive measures as suggested by the Verma Committee 6 years ago. It is a matter of concern that the Nirbhaya Fund for women's safety is not being used fully. Even Delhi, where the infamous Nirbhaya incident took place spent an abysmal 5% of its allocation. If Central Government really wants to implement its flagship programme "Beti Bachao", they should ensure proper and full utilisation of funds allocated.

Another worrying key factor is that when the victim belongs to a poor family and to an oppressed caste while the perpetrators of the violence belong to a powerful political background/upper caste with all the right connections among the police and administration, they are let scot free. Therefore, we need to join our hands with the women's movement and democratic forces that launch protests and struggles against sexual violence.

Therefore, on the eve of 7th Anniversary of Nirbhaya incident, **on 16-12-2019 (Monday) demonstrations and gate meetings should be organised in front of all Divisional/Regional Offices of LIC/Public Sector General Insurance companies** urging the Central and State Governments to ensure the safety of women and girl children of the country. While the governments should show seriousness through its actions, the society must also understand that as pointed out by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres **"Sexual violence against women and girls is rooted in centuries of male domination. Let us not forget that gender inequalities that fuel rape culture are essentially a question of power imbalances."** Therefore the Indian society must prioritise to work to remove these power imbalances.

With greetings,

Comradely yours,



GENERAL SECRETARY.