



AIDMAM & NDMJ CONDEMNS RISING ATROCITIES AGAINST DALIT WOMEN AND MINOR GIRLS IN THE STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH

Joint Press Statement

On 29th September 2020 India has once again failed Dalit Women and Girls in upholding their rights and safety; we have lost another young life to the savage brutal gangrape and murder. This brutal incident occurred on 14th September in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh and once again exposes the harsh realities of caste based sexual assault faced by Dalit women and girls in this country. Victim was dragged with the dupatta around her neck into the field where she was gang raped; suffered severe spinal cord injury, severely beaten up and also got deep cut in her tongue as she fought back the rapist. She was not in a situation to give her statement till 23rd September 2020 due to the severe injuries that paralyzed her condition.

The level of brutality and inhumanity continues even after the demise of the victim, as the UP police forcibly cremated the body in the early morning around 3 AM on 30th September. Victim's body was burnt by the police against the will of the family members and not letting them take her home one final time. Beside this, the police locked family members and locals inside the house as per the statement of family members of the deceased.

Rising Atrocities:-

Such ghastly incidents of violence are perpetrated everyday against women and minors and especially during the Pandemic and the Lockdown. The state of Uttar Pradesh has witnessed several cases of atrocities against Dalit women; with Lakhimpur Kheri leading in the graph of violence. In the past 60 days more than six atrocities were reported in the district against Dalit women and minor girls. Similarly in Saharanpur district, six cases of abduction and rape have been reported where NDMJ has intervened. These gruesome incidents of sexual violence reflect the real picture of Indian society constructed on violent casteist patriarchal structure.

It should be noted that the crime rate against Dalits in Uttar Pradesh has been rising exponentially in the last few years. As per the NCRB report of 2018, Uttar Pradesh tops the list of number of crimes committed against Dalits including Dalit women in 2018. Also, Uttar Pradesh has recorded the maximum number of cases of rape (526), attempt to rape (48), incidences of kidnap and abduction of Dalit women (381) and incidences of assault (711) in the year of 2018 under the SC/ST (PoA) Act. As per the compiled data of the NCRB reports of 2014-18, Uttar Pradesh has witnessed the maximum number of atrocities against Dalit women in India and an increase of 15% in the number or rape cases against Dalit women from 2015-18. 7,920 number of atrocities against Dalit women have been registered under the SC/ST (PoA) Amendment Act in Uttar Pradesh from 2014-18. A big majority of this figure has been for the cases of assault (3,421) and rape (2,410) of Dalit women. Attempt to rape (219) and kidnap and abduction (1,870) also form a major form of violence committed against Dalit women in Uttar Pradesh from 2014-18.

Hathras Incident: – On 14th September 2020, Dalit girl had gone to the fields to collect fodder for cows with her mother. Her mother was working around 100 meters away from the girl when four accused namely Sandeep alias Chandu s/o Narendra; Lavkush s/o Ramesh Singh, Ravi s/o Attar Singh and Ram Kumar alias Ramu s/o Rakesh Singh all resident of village Bugadhi under PS Chandpa District Hathras Uttar Pradesh from the dominant caste attacked the girl and gang raped her before strangling her. The victim, once she recovered a little, gave her statement to the police mentioning the names of three accused and explaining the whole incident. The girl was admitted to the District Hospital, Hathras with grave injuries on her spine, abdomen, and mouth on 14th September and was transferred to Aligarh's Jawaharlal Nehru Medical hospital following that. The doctors of Aligarh Medical Hospital have stated that she was brought in with severe trauma and a paralysed condition of the lower body because of the spinal cord injury. She was brought in to Safdarjung Hospital on 28th September 2020 and breathed her last on the morning of 29th September 2020.





Police Apathy and State Response:- We hold the Police and the State responsible for their inaction to register complaints and not arresting the accused in time. They have further inflicted mental as well as physical torture upon the survivors and the families. Every case reveals the state machinery has turned a blind eye toward the cases through its apathetic response, violated rights of victims to access justice and have nullified the Human dignity. In the Hathras case, the victim's brother mentioned that no arrest was made by the police even after 10 days of the incident being reported. The fourth accused was arrested and sent in judicial custody only on 26/9/2020. There was no effort made by the police to provide the safety and protection to the family of the deceased. This became the root cause of threatening and criminal intimidation mounted upon the survivor family by the accused and their community.

Key Demands :-

1. AIDMAM & NDMJ *calls upon the State* to uphold the rights of Dalit Women and Minors;
2. Strict implementation of the Rule of Law in the State of Uttar Pradesh and throughout the Indian State;
3. Calls for strict implementation of the SCs and STs POA Act, POCSO Act and Rules in cases of violence and discrimination against SC and ST communities especially Minors;
4. Fast track all cases of sexual assault on Dalit women and girls under the POA and POCSO Acts in conjunction with IPC Sections;
5. The non-bailable offense clause under the POCSO and POA Act should be followed in letter and spirit;
6. Provide relief and rehabilitation to survivors of caste and gender based violence as per the POA Act.
7. In the Lakhimpur cases FIR should include the names of all the accused as identified by the survivors and all accused should be arrested;
8. Police officials in Lakhimpur cases as well as in Hathras case should be booked under section 4 of the SCs and STs POA act for negligence in duty;
9. In Lakhimpur and Hathras cases of atrocities compensation, relief and rehabilitation should be provided to the family as per the SCs and STs POA Act.
10. Strict follow-up of the State and district vigilance and monitoring committees should be carried out in Uttar Pradesh as well as the entire Indian State.

With Warm Regards,

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All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch - National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (AIDMAM-NCDHR), New Delhi, India; has been working with Dalit women in 7 states, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Haryana, Bihar, Maharashtra and Delhi in order to raise and address the issues of caste discrimination and violence against Dalit women on national as well as international platforms. Also, AIDMAM is doing advocacy with police and administration of these states for effective implementation of Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 and 2016.

National Dalit Movement for Justice - National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NDMJ- NCDHR); focusing on *Access to Justice* by the Dalit communities from systemic discrimination, exclusion and violence based on caste and gender, promoting Dalit leadership specifically of Dalit women, and has been engaging with the Judiciary for justice, state machinery for effective implementation of Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 and 2016, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, 2018 and other significant legislations, there is regular advocacy with the State for policy changes impacting dalit and other marginalized communities. NDMJ also engages at the international forums on issues impacting Dalit communities.

