



BANK EMPLOYEES FEDERATION OF INDIA

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To All Units/CC/GC Members

Dear Comrades,

CONDOLENCE

At the outset we mourn the Pulwama martyrs who sacrificed their lives to protect us and our nation. We also condemn the terrorists for their inhuman, shameful and brutal activities. We also demand that exemplary punishment must be given to those terrorists and ensure to build up harmonious relation amongst the local people, local administration and Indian army deployed at Kashmir to avoid recurrence of such brutal incidents and isolate the terrorists. We hope that the Govt. of India will take serious initiative to solve the Kashmir issues politically.

International Women's Day 8th March, 2019

We greet you all with renewed fighting spirit on this historic occasion of International Women's Day 2019, for advancement of the movement of the Women as well as the Working class as a whole and to fight for establishing equal rights in the banking industry as also in the society. Looking back at the origin of women's day, we may recall that on 28th February, 1909, the women socialists of U.S.A. organized huge demonstrations and meetings all over the country demanding political rights for working women. In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Working Women, **Clara Zetkin** brought forward the issue of organizing an International Working Women's Day. The International Women's Day 2019 campaign - theme of **Balance for Better** is a Call-to-action for driving gender balance across the world.

Our country is going to the election for 17th Lok Sabha within a short period from now. The manifesto of the major constituent of the present Govt. in the last election had a section pompously titled "Women - The Nation Builder" where commitments were for women's empowerment, for improvement in women's health, education etc. It was also assured that 33% reservation in all legislative forums for women would be made a reality but this bill did not see the light of the day.

We should look back to the last five years since the election. Employment is one of the core issues when it comes to women empowerment. According to the 5th Employment-Unemployment Survey done by Labour Bureau, share of working women came down drastically. Joblessness among women increased substantially. Ours is one of the lowest women's work participation in the world. Women's health and nutritional condition is another area on which the present Govt.'s contribution has been minimal. The Govt. refused to address this widespread problem and even cut funds for schemes meant to provide nutrition for women. There had been increase in crimes

against women during this regime. Shockingly, there has been a decline in conviction rates in these years showing that the administrative push to punish the guilty has been lacking. It is shameful for us that from the top of line India ranks number 10 among the countries in the world in the matter of violence on women, behind Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia.

In our country, gender biasness is so great that our male: female sex ration is dwindling and this figure is around 1000:850 on an average or even less in some areas. This is due to rampant killing of female child while in the womb. The growing incidents of atrocities highlight all-round failure to provide a safe and secure environment for women. Sometimes judiciary has to take a pivotal role to force administration for proper action. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, after prolonged hearing, issued verdict to remove the so-called customs of tin-talaq (immediate divorce) to Muslim Women. On the other hand, despite verdict of Supreme Court to allow entry of women of all ages at Sabarimala Temple (removal of so-called custom) in Kerala, central ruling party is declining to honour the Judgment. Rather they are indulging through their political outfits to create tension in Kerala. We appreciate the role of Kerala Govt. to honour the verdict of Supreme Court.

The attitude of the ruling party towards the condition of women in the country is not at all surprising if one traces their ideological roots. Their ideology doesn't allow women to have equal rights or even for every human being irrespective of caste, creed and religion. They do not want women to have equal rights or even an independent identity rather the women are needed only to fulfil their duties set by patriarchy. This is the root cause of complete disregard towards women's burning problems including employment, security, health and political representation. As the election is nearing we should not be surprised if the Govt. brings back the old promises from the basement and offer the people packed in new wrappers. We have to play a proactive role for a change of the present regime at the centre.

Comrades, while we are committed to set free the society from the evils, we should continue our fight against neo-liberal economy uninterruptedly. And to achieve our goal, we must be class conscious otherwise our struggle to fight against injustice on women can never be successful. Emancipation of women is also to be seen from that angle.

In this backdrop, need for observance of the Day has assumed added importance. We call upon all our State level and Bank-wise Women's Committees to observe the International Day in a befitting manner during this month.

With warm greetings,

Yours comradely,



Nupur Ray
Convener
Women Sub-Committee