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## Two Years of Modi's Government Rajindar Sachar

Two years ago when Modi swept the Parliamentary Elections, the Corporate Sector, especially big ones went agog - their enthusiasm and hopes were unbounded. They went on to imagine a free rein to expand in the way it likes.

The young generation went dancing on the streets and dreamt of immediate boom and the expansion of economy.

The minorities legitimately were in panic considering the anti minority role of Modi starting from 2002 Gujarat killings and the continuance of anti Minority expression and the policies carried out as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Any Prime Minister with Modi's background should have started his term by assuring the Minorities that there will be no discrimination against them and he accepts that all people of whatever religion enjoy the same rights and will be treated equally. Apart from being practical wisdom of a politician, this assurance was necessary in the context of preamble of our Constitution that we have resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist and Secular ..... Republic.....also it is accepted wisdom, "that in any country the faith and the confidence of the minorities in the impartial and even functioning of the State is the acid test of being a civilized State".

But ironically now even corporate sector is openly saying that policies of growth are mere chimera. That is why it is pressing for a free hand and asking for further dilution of workers rights. But for obvious reasons there are limits to which even Modi can ignore workers rights and dilution of them will lead straightaway to a collision course.

There is unexplained silence in explaining 5 Lakh Crores bad loans (of course inherited partly from U.P.A. government). Deliberate propaganda is being done that disclosing the names of the defaulters will harm economy. How deceitful – rather disclosure may prevent innocent public from being cheated by those very Corporates and also expose the political parties which may have benefited in the matter of donations made to them for elections.

I do not mind confessing that I feel disappointed with the organized Labour which is not taking an aggressive stand against these anti Working Class Policies. I have not seen any strong stand taken by Railway Unions against Bullet Train madness. Nor is there any plan to stop industrial corridors of Delhi – Bombay, Amritsar – Calcutta to be built on Railway land which requires diversion of the railway line resulting in crores worth of wasteful expense and ruination of farmers. Of course it was approved by U.P.A. Government – is Modi comfortable to be in the same muddy swamp as the congress. The choice is his.

I am however, seriously concerned that in two years the confidence of

minority in even handed treatment by the state is diminishing, if not almost vanished.

Secularism mandates giving equal dignity and respect to all religions - thus inclusive development in India and for that matter in any country alone is the path to prosperity. ***It is an undeniable truth and needs to be irrevocably accepted by all in India, namely that minorities, Muslims and Christians are not outsiders. They are an integral part of India.*** Swami Vivekanand in fact profusely praised Islam and in a letter to his friend Mohammed Sarfraz Hussain (10<sup>th</sup> June 1898) without any hesitation wrote "therefore I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems Hinduism and Islam – Vedanta brain and Islam body - is the only hope..... the future perfect India." There thus can be no real progress in India which does not include minorities, Muslims, Christians as equal stakeholders. Also in the Report of U.N. Human Right Council Forum for minorities has mandated thus; "Consequently, the right of minorities to participate effectively in economic life must be fully taken into account by governments seeking to promote equality at

every level. From implementing non - discrimination in employment Governments can consider both targeted and inclusive approaches to addressing the economic and social exclusion of minorities."

It was encouraging to read the speech made by Modi on September 15, 2015 while speaking at the Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, the PM said, "The confluence of Indian and Islamic civilisation took place in Central Asia. We enriched each other in spiritual thought, but also in medicine, science, mathematics and astronomy."

"The Islamic heritage of both India and Central Asia is defined by the highest ideals of Islam - knowledge, piety, compassion and welfare. This is a heritage founded on the principle of love and devotion. And, it has always rejected the forces of extremism," he added. [*Emphasis added.*]

But no effective steps have been taken by Modi to assure the Minority by concrete acts, in the spirit of speech above. Dr. Lohia the great Socialist Party leader always condemned this dishonest separation of speech from deeds. He always maintained that honest politics mandates that there should be equivalence of words and deeds in politics – would Modi follow Dr. Lohia's advice.

The recent elections to various State Assemblies no doubt have

dealt a possibly irrevocable blow to Congress. But to interpret this as a victory for B.J.P. (excepting in Assam) would be totally misreading the political situation I am worried that B.J.P. is going to increase communal pressure in the garb of illegal Immigrants in Assam. This danger must receive immediate attention of all Human Right Organizations. Modi, if he wishes to quicken the development in the country cannot do so without utilising the natural resources of Assam.

The danger to development plan by Modi is the strong lobby of RSS with its congenital antipathy to the Minorities especially Muslims. U.P. Governor recently criticized the State Government which banned and arrested a group of V.H.P. who were, making preparation to play a mischief by maliciously provoking Muslims on the building of Ram Temple issue (to me the question of building Ram Temple at Babri Masjid can never arise as it is an act of treason to even think of it). But the Governor of the State Mr. Naik has again embarrassed Modi publicly by saying that this group was only learning self defence – should a Governor criticize publicly the State Government on an action totally within the jurisdiction of State Government. The least that Modi can do is to transfer Naik to some other State.

Dated: 28/05/2016 □

**Press Statement:** 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2016

*PUCL Statement Condemning Witch Hunt launched against Lawyers Collective and Indira Jaising & Anand Grover:*

## **Stop Persecuting Lawyers Collective!**

PUCL strongly condemns the continued persecution of Senior Advocates Indira Jaising and Anand Grover and the 'Lawyers Collective' organisation run by them, by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) using the coercive provisions of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 in an arbitrary, biased and politically motivated manner.

The vindictiveness is evident from the fact that the Order dated

31.5.2016 of the Central Government suspending the FCRA registration of Lawyers Collective for 6 months was leaked to the Press even before it was formally communicated to them. Even earlier in November, 2015 media articles reported that Show Cause notices were issued to the Lawyers Collective for violation of FCRA even though no such Notice was received by the Lawyers Collective. Thus there is a pattern to the

actions of the MHA by first launching a smear campaign tarnishing the image of Lawyers Collective even before an enquiry. A plain reading of the alleged violations of FCRA by the Lawyers Collective do not reveal any evidence of financial fraud or defalcation having occurred. All the queries raised by the MHA appear to be technical in nature. It's very clear that the MHA has launched a witch hunt against yet another NGO

which has been consistently taking up in principled manner issues of human rights violations in the State of Gujarat and accountability of the political leaders to excesses committed under their watch.

It is also pertinent to point out that Indira Jaisingh and Anand Grover have defended the cases of Priya Pillai of Greenpeace, Teesta Setalvad, Yakub Menon and Sanjiv Bhat, the former IPS officer from Gujarat. Anand Grover has also appeared in the case protesting the discharge of BJP National President Amit Shah in the Sohrabuddin encounter case. The present action against the Lawyers Collective is calculated to create a climate of fear and intimidation in an attempt to silence anyone from challenging the present BJP Government.

Indira Jaising, Anand Grover and the Lawyers Collective team have for the last 4 decades stood for the rights of the most marginalised sections of society – from tribals to

urban poor to rights of unorganised sector workers; from women to sexual minorities; from victims of communal violence to issues of HIV patients – they have been in the forefront of all major struggles to secure justice. Their contribution to the development of law and jurisprudence is unparalleled. Noteworthy is the role played by Indira Jaising and Lawyers Collective in the framing and implementation of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment Acts. They have always enjoyed the fairest of reputations for their ethical and principled conduct inside and outside courts.

It is ironical that while there is a relentless plundering of national and natural resources by the corporates and unearthing of a regular stream of corporate scams exposing massive financial fraud and diversion of money to foreign lands, little or no action is being taken by the Central Government in this regard. In stark contrast,

activists and NGOs fighting against the plundering and looting of national wealth and natural resources, environmental degradation and violation of rights of people are being targeted over frivolous charges. Lawyers Collective, Indira Jaisingh and Anand Grover are the latest victims to join the long list of people being targeted by the Central Government.

PUCL demands that the central government immediately drop the witch hunt against Indira Jaisingh, Anand Grover and the Lawyers Collective under the FCRA. We would like to remind the Central Government that such repressive actions meant to silence groups and suppress dissent not only destroys the democratic fabric of our society but also eventually damages the standing of India as a democratic country in the comity of nations of the world.

**Prof. Prabhakar Sinha**, National President, PUCL; **Dr. V. Suresh**, National General Secretary, PUCL □

Karnataka PUCL: Press Release: 19 June 2016

## Police to Probe "Credentials" of 14 NGOs

It is most astonishing that the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission has asked the police force to investigate the credentials of 14 human rights NGOs operating in the state.

The People's Union for Civil Liberties-Karnataka holds that: (a) India's constitution has every provision for human rights organisations to operate; (b) It is for the public at large to gauge the credibility of such NGOs. It is absurd for the KSHRC to deploy the police to perform this task; (c) As it is, the KSHRC lacks a full-time chairperson, the function being performed by an IAS officer. It is highly unfortunate that rather than correcting this sorry state of affairs, the KSHRC is training its guns on human rights NGOs using the police force; (d) It is imperative that the state government intervene immediately and put an end to this unwarranted judgemental move.

**Dr V. Lakshminarayana**, President, PUCL Karnataka, Mysore □

Preliminary Report of Fact Finding Team of PUCL – Karnataka, WSS:

## Police Violence during Bangalore Garment Workers' Protest Needs to be Investigated

On 18 and 19 April 2016, garment workers in Bangalore, predominantly women, took to the streets in an unplanned demonstration to protest an ordinance on the Employment Provident Fund by the Central Government. The demonstration was a landmark event, as the Central Government withdrew the ordinance that would have hurt

lakhs of salaried workers across the country.

On 1 May 2016, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah congratulated the garment workers for creating "a successful workers' movement", which was "historic" and caused the Centre to roll back the "ill-conceived amendments to the EPF Scheme".

While the protest was lauded

across the country as a victory for workers' rights, specifically for the role women played, the response of the state law enforcement machinery has been of utmost repression and violence. It sought to systematically create an atmosphere of abject fear. The Karnataka Government and its machinery needs to recognize that the garment workers protested as

the Central Government's move to restrict access to their EPF funds was the last straw on their already burdened backs.

This preliminary report about the April 2016 events and the police brutality has been prepared in order for the SHRC, Karnataka Government and the Police Complaint Authority to take cognizance of and initiate action against serious violations of human rights that took place and still continue. (Interviewed workers' names are not mentioned in the report as they fear reprisals.)

The fact-finding team was made up of the People's Union of Civil Liberties - Karnataka (PUCL-K), Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression-Karnataka (WSS), and independent researchers.

### **The Spark: Changes in EPF Withdrawal Procedure**

An announcement to change the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) withdrawal procedure was made on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Many workers feared they would not be able to withdraw the total amount of the EPF until the retirement age of 58 years. Resentment built up as the workers depend on EPF withdrawals for emergencies and other instances when they suddenly or urgently need funds. The ordinance, along with oppressive working conditions in their factories, led to the mass walk-out from factories.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April, demonstrations began at Maddur, spreading to Hosur Road and Mysore Road, areas with large numbers of garment factories. At least 50,000 workers – some estimates are of 100,000 – demonstrated. In response, the Labour Ministry announced a three-month delay in implementing EPF changes. On April 19, demonstrations continued in areas around Hosur Road and also Peenya and Mysore Road. At least 50,000 people took part, with other estimates saying a lakh. On both days, in Hosur Road and Peenya, the police responded with disproportionate and gratuitous violence and repression.

The level of violence perpetrated by

the police throughout the protest as well as in the following weeks was most likely a calculated effort to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among workers. This action flouts the protocol as per the Karnataka Police Manual, such as giving prior warnings.

All workers maintain that when the demonstrations began in Bommanahalli on 18<sup>th</sup> April, it was entirely peaceful in nature. Just a small number of policemen were present initially.

Around 1.30 PM, hordes of policemen armed with batons and tear gas, descended on the workers, raining blows on women workers. No female police officers were present even though 90% of those protesting were women. The workers said seeing their female colleagues being violently beaten up by male policemen without justification, was a turning point.

On the second day, the police arrived in greater numbers and violence against the demonstrators escalated. Even though the police could see the protest was primarily by women workers, most police officers present were male. The police indulged in arbitrary, violent lathi-charge. Some of those interviewed said they were mere bystanders, at the wrong place at the wrong time, subject to severe police violence. Some were questioned under the guise of identification and verification, and then arrested. One worker Saidas gave a media interview about police violence; in response, he was beaten excessively as punishment.

### **Random Arrests from Residences: Spreading Terror**

In the following days, many workers were arrested from their homes and factories, based on an alleged video footage recorded by the police during the protests. However, these allegations of video footage are riddled with inconsistencies. Some workers said they were at work at the time the police alleged to have shot their footage and that they could produce their computerized in- and out-timings from the factory to back

their claim.

One interviewee said a police vehicle spent an entire day patrolling her neighbourhood. Finally, they came to her home and asked to speak to her son, a college student, who told them he was out of station throughout the protests. They then decided to arrest the mother. These police patrols seem to have terrorized workers' neighbourhoods.

All workers spoke of physical and psychological torture upon arrest. They were stripped to their underwear and beaten. Physical abuse included being repeatedly beaten on their hands, legs and back, their fingers pulled backwards, etc. One interviewee said he witnessed a worker being hung upside down and beaten. The violence took place throughout the night. A common anecdote among those interviewed was that every time a new officer came on duty, he would ask if the workers had "eaten". When they said no, they were beaten. Having eaten a meal seems to have been a euphemism for police torture!

Some of the injuries were still visible when the fact-finding team met the workers, almost four weeks after the arrests. Many had not resumed work as they were still in pain. One worker complained of severe joint pain which incapacitated him from operating machines. None of the workers had received any medical care.

Verbal abuse ranged from insults mocking the workers to insults directed at female members of their families. Female workers were subject to sexual slurs and beaten by male officers with their bare hands.

Workers were shown videos recorded by the police at the site of demonstration and told to name others from their factories. When they could not or would not do so, they were further beaten up. This lawless and highly condemnable tactic has further created a palpable aura of fear among the workers, being a brazen attempt to crush their unity by forcing them to turn on each other.

Female workers interviewed said that upon arrest, they were not detained in a police lock up but taken to *Paraspara*, a private NGO and left there the whole night, under the supervision of its staff. This is a clear violation of the provisions of the Cr. PC that governs such detentions.

After hours of violent beatings, arrested workers were taken for a medical examination meant to patch them up before producing them before a magistrate. No injuries were mentioned in the medical reports.

#### **Post Arrest Trauma**

Many workers said they were produced before the Magistrate more than 24 hours after being picked up. They were threatened by the officers that if they dared to talk to the Magistrate about police abuse, they would be beaten up again and that the officers would ensure they would not get bail and would rot in jail for years on end.

A few interviewees said the date of arrest mentioned in the FIRs was entirely wrong. FIRs were registered naming multiple individuals. Workers let out on bail were even rearrested on the basis of the farcical FIRs. Workers were charged with grave offenses including Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code, i.e. attempt to murder. This seems to have been done to avoid quick granting of bail and as a means to intimidate workers.

Workers said they faced enormous difficulty in obtaining bail. The surety has been set at as high Rs. 5,000, which is difficult for workers' families to raise. This has caused great hardship to bystanders such as students, who were arrested arbitrarily and later denied bail, forcing them to miss their exams and thus lose an entire academic year. The toll on the families of the workers has also been extreme. This fact-finding team was told that one man had committed suicide for fear of being arrested.

The fact-finding team spoke to a police officer who was on duty in Peenya who said people were arrested as they were blocking National Highway-4, without

permission from any authority and that there were other locations identified by the government to conduct protests, which the workers could have used. The police claimed they were not the first to use force but that the workers were the ones who turned violent by pelting stones, beating police officers, burning government property (including three KSRTC buses and a police jeep). One Inspector of Peenya Police Station said he had suffered injuries on the head and face. Violence was used only after this and 91 people arrested based on CCTV footage and videos captured on mobile phones of the passengers of the KSRTC buses and passersby. Of the 91 arrested, three were women and seven were bystanders.

#### **Summary of Findings**

After interviewing the workers, the police and the representatives of the Garment and Textile Workers' Union, Garment Labour Union and Karnataka Garment Workers Union, concluded that:

- Not all those arrested were workers. Bystanders such as students were arrested. These indiscriminate arrests are condemnable.
- The violence suffered by protesters, mostly women, was at the hands of a predominantly male police force.
- Continuous re-arrests of those bailed out created an environment of fear.
- All those targeted were from working-class families unable to bear the exorbitant litigation costs.
- The garment industry employs a huge number of migrant workers who have been completely isolated and marginalized after the protests. Hostels provided to women workers were kept locked throughout the protests so that they could not join the demonstrations. Those who managed to do so were asked to leave the city immediately.
- The fact-finding team has not come across reports of police

violence on the Mysore Road stretch, as the police there reportedly took extra care to avoid provoking workers.

- The use of *Paraspara*, a private NGO, to detain workers is illegal and in violation of procedures to safeguard the rights of arrested female workers.
- It was seen that the criminal justice system was used as a method of oppression to quell the protest
- A palpable aura of fear still persists among workers.

#### **PUCL-K and WWS demand that The State Government**

(a) Follow-up on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's promises in relation to the garment workers' demonstration; (b) Ensure no new arrests are made; (c) All cases against those arrested must be withdrawn; (d) Comprehensive investigation into police brutality must be ordered; (e) All police officers who flouted procedures of arrest, used criminal violence and intimidation must be suspended

#### **Karnataka State Human Rights Commission**

(a) Obtain and provide information of all FIRs filed; (b) Conduct an investigation into police use of institutions outside official correctional facilities; (c) Obtain clear information about the activities of *Paraspara* in order to prevent illegal detentions

#### **Police Complaints Authority**

(a) Ensure speedy end to police intimidation; (b) Take necessary steps to end the climate of fear generated by sending circulars to all factory managements stating they will not arrest, pursue further cases, or harass people in factories or homes; (c) Pay compensation to all abused parties for physical injury, psychological trauma, missed days at work and false cases; (d) Circle Inspectors of respective police stations must ensure that possessions taken from those arrested are returned in proper condition, including compensation for any damage to or loss of property □

## Burning of Dalit Houses at Kamagarh and Deliberate Inaction by the Government Machinery

The PUCL is deeply concerned at the growing caste atrocities on dalits by the upper caste communities in the state, particularly in the rural areas. Of more concern is the deliberate inaction by the government machinery in providing protection to the dalit communities and making a mockery of the Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989). The recent incident in Kamagarh is an example of this.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016, eleven dalit houses were burnt down allegedly by the upper caste (*Sabarna*) of the village Kamagarh of the eponymous Panchayat in the Aska Block of Ganjam District. Upon the request of local social activists, the PUCL team in association with Shri Shankar Pani, Advocate, visited Kamagarh on 18<sup>th</sup> June. The team met victim families, the incumbent Sarpanch, the IIC of Aska police station, local reporters of Aska and political and social activists of Ganjam.

There are 19 families belonging to *Hadi* caste (one of the Scheduled Castes located at the bottom of the caste hierarchy) living in the periphery of the village for the last three generations. All of them are landless. Only five families have managed to have homestead land on which they had constructed pucca houses under Indira Awas Yojna. Other families have been living on a small patch of unused land by building small thatched houses. Wage labour is their main source of livelihood. Women make brooms out of date fronds and chip stones to supplement the family income.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016, a cultural troupe was performing *Duari Nata* (a traditional folk art form) in the village. *Hadi* and *Hadiani* characters are a permanent feature of this performance. While playing these characters, the artists took

individual names of the people belonging to *Hadi* community of the village and made obscene, ugly and humiliating remarks having double meanings. One of the youths of Hadi community objected to this, and asked the troupe manager to desist from making such remarks. But some of the upper caste youths, mostly emigrants to Surat, who had come back to the village on vacation, tried to shout them down and threatened to beat them up. Out of fear, they left the place. Since this incident, tension between the upper castes and the dalit community was simmering. The upper caste men kept on abusing and threatening the dalit community. Even a 'compromise' was reached between both the parties in the Aska police station. A written statement was signed by both the parties to the effect that they would maintain peace.

But, on 7<sup>th</sup> April, another *Duari Nata* was performed in the village, and the same obscene, casteist remarks were made while playing the role of Hadi and Hadiani in violation of the compromise that was reached in presence of the police. This was followed by more threats and social boycott of the dalit community. They were denied access to village shops and pond. Chemicals were thrown into the well to make its water non-potable, and a lump of human excreta was fixed on the community hand pump-set. Fearing physical attacks, most of the men went to hiding. However, not being satisfied with this, the upper caste people held a meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, and decided to attack the Hadi hamlet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June with the goal of destroying the entire hamlet. It was even decided in this meeting that each family of the village will provide one member for the attacking team failing which a fine

of Rs.1051 would be levied on the household for non-participation.

Apprehending the looming danger, male members of the victim families, who had already left the village, knocked on every door available for their safety. They, including women, went to meet the M.L.A of their constituency. They also met the Collector and the SP to apprise them of the situation of the village and sought protection of life and property. On 31<sup>st</sup> May, they sent messages by Fax to the Collector, SP, and the Chief Minister.

Around nine O'clock in the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, nearly 2000 people including 30-40 women (standing in for absent male members) came in a group with lathis, crowbars, axes and *gainti* in hand shouting "*mara, hana*" (beat and slay) and attacked the dalit houses. Out of fear, people fled to a nearby hillock, with a few women offering feeble protest. But they were dragged by their hair and were thrown around, and had to watch their houses being burnt and decimated. The male members, who were staying outside the village, contacted the IIC and the Fire Brigade. The first group of fire fighters was not allowed to enter the village by the attackers. The second group came around 11 O'clock and managed to douse the fire. By then 11 houses had burnt to ashes.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, the victims lodged complaints against 19 miscreants. An FIR has been registered under various sections of the IPC and the PoA Act of 1989. However, no action has been taken against any one of accused till date. The joint investigation to be undertaken by the police (not below the rank of DSP) and Tahsildar is yet to be initiated. People have been living under open sky with black polythene sheets provided by the administration – the only barrier

between them and the impending monsoon rains. No steps have been undertaken by the district administration for the rehabilitation of these people except providing cooked meals for two and a half days.

#### **Key findings**

It is a clear case of the failure of the police and the administration to respond to a situation where a vulnerable community, under threat from dominant upper caste people, was seeking help from the state for protection of its life and property. Even after the incident, the police are yet to take action against the accused. This clearly shows an utter disregard for the concerned law but also an indifference to the

sufferings of the people.

Victims are perpetually living in fear and in apprehension that rest of the dalit houses would be destroyed by the upper caste people.

Caste prejudice against the dalit community, including untouchability, is a serious issue in the area. However, neither the district administration nor the local political leadership has shown any concern to address it.

#### **Demands**

PUCL demands that both the police and the district administration immediately take measures to provide security to the victims' families in the village so that they can live without fear and with dignity. The police need to act upon

the FIR immediately. An RDC level inquiry into the failure of the local police and the role of other concerned officials in responding to the situation would help in restoring the confidence of victims in the police and district administration.

In addition to immediate relief of providing food and shelter to the victims' families the administration must take steps for their long term economic rehabilitation.

The District administration must keep a close watch in the entire Kamagarh Gram Panchayat to monitor the caste tension and prevent escalation of further violence.

**Pramodini Pradhan**, Convenor, PUCL Odisha □

**Note: PUCL Rajasthan has for many years been running a very sought after internship programme for students from many faculties including law, engineering, arts and sciences and other disciplines. In fact scores of youngsters vie to be selected to the internship programme which exposes young people to both the reality of human rights across diverse sectors from custodial violence to prison offences to a range of socio-economic and cultural issues including food security issues covering drought, starvation, failure of social welfare and PDS system and other pressing systemic problems confronting the poor. The National Executive meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 coincided with a 3 day workshop for the student interns. We asked some of the students to write their experiences and plan to carry some of the reports.**

## **Human Rights Training by PUCL in association with Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur**

*Date: 11th May - 13th May, 2016*

*by Rooppreet Dhamija, Government Law College, Mumbai*

There comes a time in everyone's life when one after the other you encounter EUREKA MOMENTS and the three day Human Rights Training organized by People's Union of civil liberties in association with Institute of Development Studies had brought such prolific moments into the lives of all those who attended the same. Covering a wide range of topics under Human Rights, the training stretched over three days. These three days brought into the ambit of our knowledge, different aspects of human life and the diversity of problems that people in this country are forced to face. The development strategies of our country are unable to take under the umbrella, the marginalized sections of the society. These three days made us aware about the problems of people relating to equity, equality, justice,

employment, democratic rights, religion, caste and what not. The sessions also included the discussion over major social issues of child labor, child marriage, poverty, malnutrition, women empowerment.

Mr. V Suresh, National General Secretary PUCL, started the training by telling us, how this training is going to add on to our lives a life time experience if we indulge into it with our heads and hearts. The *level of interaction that took place during the entire training session was commendable*. There were moments of realization and discoveries. I would like to mention the major changes that I encountered in myself during the training itself.

**The first day and the first exercise!**

**Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress and**

**working together is a success! And we started with success!**

When all of us were asked to make groups according to our seating arrangement, there flew a vibe of dissatisfaction, Why not making groups with friends? Then came to my mind the very first thought that "all of us need to realize the existence of mankind as a whole but not into bits and pieces." This was too deep a thought to realize but mindset was working accordingly. All the groups then were asked to put forth two confusions related to Human Rights. This was when the entire group of people indulged into the discussion, digging deep into the confusions they had related to human rights. The variety of questions that came forth was huge. This was one moment that made us realize that our lives don't exist just around our loved ones but

beyond! This is where the chain of thoughts started building.

The major confusions that were addressed by Sir Suresh and Prof. Prabhakar Sinha, National president PUCL, opened the floor for a wide ranging discussion of three days.

#### **Encountering Novel ideas!**

#### **The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones!**

All of us were aware about basics of human rights, and please note, basics include just the definition! Through this training we came to know about the wide range that Human Rights cover. We came across the basic principles of Human Rights, as to how they have to be inclusive, participatory, equitable, sustainable, a part of democratic republic. Also, how Human Rights are responsible in providing to people the basic amenities of life i.e. clean environment to live in, safe drinking water, employment protection, a land to live in and two square meals a day. When resource persons from different villages and unions came and shared their problems with us, that was the moment we realized that how dire the need is to bring our helping words into actions! Mr. Jay ram came and spoke about how people in his village and the entire Neem ka Thana area are suffering from mining activities and how he along with his team had protested against it and are successful in bringing up a change. Then Mr. Kailash came and spoke about the problems of water and other resources are faced by the people of his village and how he has surpassed the struggle for the protection of human rights in that area. Last but not the least came two young workers of Honda, Mr. Dilip and Mr. Shiv who explained us about how the trade unions are suppressed by the higher class people and how our system and judiciary is unable to provide justice to them. They spoke about how it is mandatory for all of us to fight against the basic human rights and not give up to the devils who

overpower the human race.

#### **The moments of discoveries were no less!**

#### **All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.**

There came moments during the training when we not only came across new things but also discovered the facts of the same. For example we came across terms like fracking which we had never heard about. The very basic idea of politics and political parties was made clear. Sir Suresh told us that how we merge both the concepts. This was when I realized that politics is no harm but the parties are.

Then came into the discussion, the role of media in protecting Human Rights. Mr. Girish who is a senior journalist explained us how "He who pays the piper calls the tune." We came across certain facts which were so disturbing that one cannot come out of them for a long while. We came to know that how the debates that are telecasted over news channels have paid speakers. We also came to know about the concept of an Underdog, which means that in situation of crises it is the foremost duty of the media to support and promote the interest of the weaker sections of the society. Corporatization, monopolization, economization of media was other issues that made us ponder about the bodies that will now become the *Voice of the people*. Mr. Neelabh who continued after Mr. Girish added on to our knowledge by talking about the concepts of Nation state, biasness by media, TRP, Vanity assets, corruption in media, money laundering, and so on.

The last session of the Human Rights Training was a discussion over death penalty/capital punishment. The panelists for the session were Mr. Neelabh, Mr. Radhakant, Mr. V. Suresh and Prof. Prabhakar. Each of them shared their experiences bringing under the umbrella of discussion section 161 and section 163 of the Indian Constitution. A case study

conducted by Mr. Ajeet was also discussed and discussion also involved the 4 criteria that have to be considered before granting capital punishment.

These were entirely new concepts for the most of us and were really enlightening.

#### **Need of the hour!**

#### **The purpose if human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others. Also, if we cannot end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.**

During the training we were shown a movie "Jai Bheem Comrade." The entire movie revolved around the sufferings of the downtrodden. They have been looked down upon since time immemorial, the only reason being they were born dalits. The very idea of reservation that previously didn't fit into my mind is now in my good books. The country has to realize the concept of reservation as the supporting system for all those who genuinely suffer economical and social backwardness. The efforts of Dr. Ambedkar are now taken for granted but they should serve the marginalized section of the society. The entire training made me realize as to how the young generation can play a vital role in changing the scenario of Human Rights in the country. It is high time that now we realize the need of the hour to work on national interest as a whole and working towards the development by taking the people along.

I can't thank enough, Miss Kavita Srivastava, Secretary PUCL Rajasthan, for organizing this brilliant three days' session and contributing her bit to the lives of everybody who attended the training.

#### **Internship experience by Rooppreet Dhamija, Government Law College, Mumbai**

*Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 to 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2016*

The entire month of my internship was filled with amazing thrilling experiences. People's Union for Civil Liberties is one such organization that can add a lot to

your life. I can definitely say that my tenure in PUCL has made me a better hum being altogether.

### **Punctuality**

First and the foremost thing that I learned during my internship is to be punctual, come what may! There is strictness when it comes to being on time. You get late and you are asked to leave the internship! This fear of termination of internship keeps you punctual and it also has many other positive effects which you'll get to read further in my report.

### **Discipline**

This is one aspect that you cannot fault at. Kavita ma'am is very particular when it comes to the conduct of the interns. It is mandatory for all the interns to send their daily feedback mentioning their experience for the day. Also she personally keeps the record of all the interns working under her which is absolutely commendable as she is at the same time loaded with lots and lots of work. She makes sure that each intern works properly.

### **Independency**

You learn how to work independently. Whatever the work is, you are supposed to complete it within a given deadline by hook or by crook. Given the duty of a coordinator, my skills of coordination have undoubtedly improved. The trust and confidence that ma'am has on her interns is what keeps the interns working endlessly. PUCL grooms you to the best.

### **Team work**

Every time you are given a team task, you'll be in a new team. Teams are never made according to the interns but always according to ma'am. And believe me you get the best out of each team. This is how PUCL contributes greatly to your friend circle! I worked with 45 co-interns and I can say this with no doubt that all of them are now my good friends.

### **Work environment**

Everyone here is so passionate about all the things they do. You

cannot realize how your day passes. When you go back home after a long working day, there is no regret regarding the work you did the entire day. Each work allotted to you adds on to your knowledge. PUCL is probably the best place for First and second year students to intern at. Being an abecedarian at law, one can best learn the basics in depth when working with PUCL. The knowledge will definitely surpass the basics.

### **My one month**

My internship started with a three day Human Rights training. This included wide range of topics under human rights. Also I came across the role of Media as the protector of human rights. All my confusions related to human rights were addressed by the resource persons. After this all the interns were sent for a PDS and Pension Survey in teams. My team and I went to the village Moriya Kuna, Udaipur District. I feel privileged that my efforts have added on to the data. I also attended sessions on Decline in Child Sex Ratio by Dr. Meeta Singh, a discussion on Right to Justice, a discussion on coming in of smart cities and also on dignity of women. My internship also included visit to the Family court, District and Session court, Rajasthan High Court and Mahila Police Thana. Our visits to the courts were regularly discussed with Senior Advocate Prem Krishan Sharma.

Interaction with eminent speakers like Dr. V. Suresh, Prof. Prabhakar Sinha, Mr. Radhakant Saxena on topics such as Juvenile Justice Act, Capital Punishment, really adds on to the chain of thoughts. We were also sent for a safety audit in *kacchi bastis* of Jaipur. Not only this but also I came to know about the protest and struggle that had taken place to bring in RTI. Cherry on the cake is my bit of contribution to the 22 days' protest for Accountability act which was organized on Shahid Smarak, MI Road, Jaipur. This protest focused on different problems that are faced by the poor

people in the Indian society i.e. problems related to ration, pension, NREGA, drought. It talked about implementation of a law and a constitutional right each day. It also talked about the problems of the vulnerable communities, Forest Right Act and PESA (1995). It was my last day when Right to choice was discussed at the protest. It also gave me an opportunity to interact with and listen to political personalities such as Mr. Sachin Pilot and Mr. Yogendra Yadav.

### **Changes encountered**

Right from the first day to the last, all the changes that I have seen in myself are positive. First and foremost is the change in thoughts that I have felt. Seeing through the problems that people in this society face, have made me a much more sensitive human being. There are large sections of people who are unable to get two square meals a day, safe drinking water, secured employment and a land to live in. And when you yourself encounter all of these, you realize how difficult life is. By doing safety audit in the slums and kachi bastis of Jaipur I have realized that women are not safe even in their own homes! The fear of getting teased revolves around in every woman's mind! And we as young citizens can bring a change to the situation. My visits to the courts, encountered me with the sluggishness of the Indian Judicial System. Attending the protest for 10 days made me aware of the problems faced by the people and also developed a great bond which will help me to help them in future.

This entire month has made me more efficient, strong, practical, independent, workaholic, knowledgeable, confident, and professional and a highly social being. Much of the credit goes to my mentor Ms. Kavita Srivastava, who believed in my capabilities and gave me responsibilities and guided me through out. I am sure of the fact that my relationship with PUCL, Jaipur is everlasting. □

## Two Years of Modi Sarkar- Broken Promises: Sectarian Agenda

Ram Puniyani

The performance of the Modi Government during last two years has to be seen in the light of the promises made in the electoral campaign and on the barometer of values of Indian Constitution of pluralism and diversity. Acche dinhad become a buzzword, black money being retrieved and being deposited in everybody's bank account was looked forward to and anticipation of creation of jobs got registered in people's mind. None of this came through. Prices of essential commodities started shooting the sky, of all the things evendal(pulses) started becoming a luxury item. Fifteen lakhs is nowhere in the account and job creation is stagnant. As such the much flouted foreign policy remained on the confused platter with nothing to show except the Prime Minister's much hyped global rendezvous on regular basis. With Pakistan the policy of blow hot blow cold is in operation and the friendliest neighbor Nepal is drifting away from the earlier status of a close ally.

The much touted Maximum Governance-Minimal Government has been reduced to all powers being centralized in the hands of a single person and authoritarian streaks are visible as the cabinet system, where PM is first among equals, is being overturned towards a PM controlling everything. The major damage is in the arena of the communal amity, autonomy of academic institutions and communal harmony.

This is the first time that BJP has got a simple majority in the Lok Sabha and with this the Hindutva agenda is being unfolded in a drastic way. Right from the word go; the affiliates of Hindutva politics became active and Mohsin Shiekh, a techie from Pune was killed by the activists of Hindu Rashtra Sena. The cabal of this politics stepped up spreading hate against those not agreeing with the agenda of ruling

dispensation. Even before coming to power the current minister in the centre, Giriraj Singh had stated that those not voting for Modi should go to Pakistan. Another worthy in the ministry; Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti uttered the word Harmjade (illegitimate) for those not voting for her party. All and sundry from this dispensation reached the limits of spreading hate against religious minorities; all this when the all powerful PM kept overseeing the march of 'Hate other' politics. It was said that as a Prime Minister how can he comment on every incident? It seems his silence was a deliberate one and part of the 'division of labor' assigned by their parent organization, the RSS. Those making these hateful statements were not fringe elements as called by some; they are part of core agenda.

Hindutva politics thrives on identity issues. This time around the Holy Cow-beef eating took the center stage and the hysteria created around this issue led to the murder of Mohhammad Akhlaq in Dadri and many other acts of violence including murders. This came in the back drop of the murders of Dabholkar, Pansare and Kalburgi. This Dadri incident became a sort of barometer of growing intolerance in the country, prompting many eminent writers, scientists and film makers to return their well earned honors. Rather than taking note of the growing intolerance in the society they were criticized heavily as being motivated politically or doing so for money.

The attempt of this Government to intrude in to the educational institutions became apparent soon enough. It was visible with appointments of those who are ideologically aligned with ruling organization irrespective of their competence. Gajendra Chauhan was appointed as the Chairman of FTII. The student's protests against this decision were ignored. In

Hyderabad Central University, Ambedkar Students Association was targeted. The local BJP MP, Bandaru Dattatreya complained to MHRD minister that anti-National and casteist activities are going on in HCU. MHRD Ministry pressurized University and Rohith Vemula and his friends were expelled from the hostel and their scholarship was stopped. This is what led to the suicide of Rohith Vemula.

There was a nationwide outrage against policies of Government towards the academic institutions. Meanwhile JNU was targeted and Kanhiya Kumar and his friends who had not shouted anti-India slogans were charged under sedition. Those who shouted slogans were not arrested. This also ignored the fact that mere shouting of slogans is not a crime. The doctored CD was used to implicate the JNU scholars. They were charged under sedition act. This triggered the debate on nationalism leading to prominent scholars participating in 'teach-ins' on nationalism in JNU.

RSS patriarch Mohan Bhagawat raked up another emotive issue by saying that youth must be told to say 'Bharat Mata ki jai'. In response to that; Asaduddin Owaisi of MIM said he will not say so even if a knife is put on his throat. In further building up the issue and RSS fellow traveler Baba Ramdev stated that had Constitution not be there, by now lakhs would have been beheaded. The ground level message of this is fraught with dangers.

All in all, two years down the line Modi, the RSS pracharak, is on the job of pushing the country towards Hindu nation and undermining Indian nationalism. Indian nationalism has liberal space and place for diversity built into it. As such communal politics resorts to emotive issues and that's visible in propping issues like beef,

nationalism and Bharat Mata ki jai. While three more years are to go for this government the divisive

agenda and policies which are detrimental to the welfare of average people is on the display.

India needs to march on the path of inclusive growth and amity among the people that seems to be missing at the moment. □

## Muslim Men Support Demand for Abolition of Triple *Talaq* and *Nikaah-Halala*

We, the undersigned, believe that gender equality and justice are human rights issues which must be as much a matter of concern for men as for women. If anything, it is more so men's obligation to cry a halt to patriarchy, particularly when it is sought to be perpetuated in the name of God.

We therefore fully support the campaign launched by the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) for the abolition, and declaration as illegal, of the current practices of triple *talaq* (instant divorce) and *nikaah-halala* in India. We salute BMMA for its initiative in collecting 50,000 signatures from across the country in support of their demand.

While the triple *talaq* method of instant divorce is today banned in more than 21 Muslim majority countries, including Pakistan, it continues to be justified by the *ulema* in India as legally valid, even though theologically repugnant.

We categorically reject the false claim of the *ulema* that what goes in the name of Muslim Personal Law in India is a "God-given" law. As BMMA has rightly pointed out, there is no mention of the inhuman, unjust and anti-women instant *talaq* practice in the Quran. In fact, the

Quran clearly stipulates an obligatory three-month period during which attempts must be made at reconciliation and mediation before severing of the marital bond.

Equally, triple *talaq* violates the Constitutional principles of gender parity and non-discrimination. Thus this obnoxious practice is both un-Quranic and un-Constitutional.

The *ulema* who proudly proclaim that Islam is the first religion to have given rights to women are duty bound to ensure justice to women. We bemoan the fact that instead of doing so they continue to justify the Muslim male's privilege of unilateral and instant divorce, often on a mere whim or fit of anger.

As for *nikaah-halala*, it is a shameful practice which is extremely degrading for women. Even if a husband utters the dread words '*talaq, talaq, talaq*' in a fit of anger but regrets the same immediately thereafter, according to the *ulema* there is only one way for the couple to resume their relationship. Another man must marry the divorced woman, consummate the marriage and then divorce her so that she may remarry her former husband. BMMA has even documented

some cases where *qazis* not only justify and legitimise *nikaah-halala*, but even offer their own "services" as temporary husbands. What could be more disgraceful than this?

The least we expect from the *ulema* who have proved themselves unwilling and incapable of ending the shameful, anti-women practices of instant divorce and *nikaah-halala* is to stop perpetuating patriarchy in the name of religion.

The word *ulema* is supposed to mean a body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology. We demand that the *ulema* in India to live up to that definition. They must stop making a mockery of their honorific, stop demonising Islam in the process.

Signatories in alphabetical order:

**Anjum Rajabali** (Screen Writer); **Anwar Hussain**, Corporate Executive; **Aamir**, Communication designer; **Feroze Khan**, Theatre director; **Feroze Mithiborwala**, Activist.; **Hasan Kamaal**, Senior Journalist, Poet, Lyricist; **Irfan Engineer**, Activist.; **Javed Anand**, Activist, journalist; **Javed Siddiqi**, Screen/dialogue writer, playwright; **Kader Qazi**, Creative director; **Saeed Mirza**, Film-maker; Rahman Abbas, Fiction Writer □

## Unity of Islamists and Practitioners of Hindutva on Wife Beating

Shamsul Islam\*

Every theocratic state needs religious boosters to survive as a totalitarian state. It can be seen regularly happening in Pakistan. It came into being on August 14, 1947 as an Islamic State but the first formal dictator General Ayub Khan (1958-69) realized that Pakistan needed a booster dose of Islamism so many of democratic rights of women and minorities, both

religious and linguistic, were curtailed. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, the worst dictator (1978-88) declared that Pakistan, already an Islamic state, would be governed under 'Nizam-e-Mustafa' (Rule of the Prophet). Though fond of 'nautch' he introduced high octane Islamic laws making Pakistan a hell for women and traditional minorities like Christians, Hindus,

Shias and Ahmедыas. Interestingly, the dreaded Blasphemy Laws followed by Zia were introduced by a so called democratically elected ruler, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77). Bhutto introduced Hudood Laws turning women and minorities as sub-human beings. Democratically elected ruler Benazir Bhutto (1988-90 and 1993-96) also adhered to Islamism and continued

giving booster doses of Islam. In a framework of an Islamic theocratic state they all played their pre-destined role.

This process is still on as a natural corollary of a theocratic state of Pakistan. The latest booster dose of Islamism has been demanded by an official religious agency that Muslim males should be allowed to thrash their wives. Shockingly, this demand has appeared in a document titled as 'Women Protection Bill'. According to a press report, "The *Council of Islamic Ideology* (CII) has proposed its own Women Protection Bill, recommending 'a light beating' for the wife if she defies her husband. The council has proposed that a husband should be allowed to 'lightly' beat his wife if she defies his commands and refuses to dress up as per his desires, turns down the demand of intercourse without any religious excuse or does not take bath after intercourse or menstrual periods. It further suggests that beating is also permissible if a woman does not observe Hijab, interacts with strangers, speaks loud enough that she can easily be heard by strangers and provides monetary support to the people without taking consent of her spouse". (1)

You are grossly mistaken if you believe that it is happening in Pakistan, a theocratic state. The Hindutva organizations working over-time to convert India into a Hindu theocratic state have been supporting bashing of Hindu

women in a more organized manner. The largest organization in the world to circulate literature on Hindi way of life has a popular title both in English and Hindi namely 'How to lead a Household Life' and 'Grahsth Mein Kaise Rahen' by Swami Ramsukhdas. This book is in question-answer format and is a kind of help book for imbibing Hindu way of life.

A question is posed: "What should the wife do if her husband beats her and troubles her?" (2) Swami Ramsukhdas offers the following sagely advice to the battered wife and her parents: "The wife should think that she is paying her debt of her previous life and thus her sins are being destroyed and she is becoming pure. When her parents come to know this, they can take her to their own house because they have not given their daughter to face this sort of bad behaviour." (3)

And if her parents do not take her to their house, learned Swamiji's pious advice is: "Under such circumstances...she should reap the fruit of her past actions. She should patiently bear the beatings of her husband with patience. By bearing them she will be free from her sins and it is possible that her husband may start loving her." (4)

This book came out in 1990 and so far has had 50 editions both in Hindi and English with 1.2 million copies circulated. Interestingly, it is the most popular title with NRIs. This book with other more than 10 titles on women are sold from hundreds

of outlets including 110 railway stations where Geeta Press has been provided stalls free of charge by the central government. The allotments were allowed by Kamalapati Tripathi in 1970s when he was railway minister for many years in Indira Gandhi cabinet. Such books are also available at RSS run book stalls.

The Hindutva fraternity in largest democracy on this earth, thus, is far ahead in propagating wife beating in comparison to Islamists in Pakistan. Islamists and practitioners of Hindutva may seem to be indulging all kinds of rhetoric against each other but fact is that they together remain committed to similar ideology so far their own women are concerned. Both seem to have studied the same anti-woman syllabi. But the most deplorable aspect is that India still committed to an egalitarian polity allows such demeaning ideology against women a free run.

#### Notes:

1. <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/light-beating-for-wives-defying-husbands-cii-2819728/>
2. This 'women Protection Bill' also contains many other brazenly sadist demands against women.
3. Ramsukhdass, Swami, *How to Lead a Household Life*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 2001, p. 43.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

*Courtesy: Counter currents, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016*

*\*Shamsul Islam is a retired Professor of University of Delhi. □*

**Press Note of Khedut Samaj – Gujarat protesting plans of Surat Urban Development Authority (SUDA), to expand area under Surat Corporation:**

## **Cancel the Development Plan - 2035, Announced by SUDA**

*'We are not anti-development; development is anti-us': Khedut Samaj, Gujarat'*

By a notification dated 09/12/2015, 104 villages of Olpad, Choryasi, Kamrej, Palsana, Mangrol talukas of Surat district were declared as having been inducted into Surat Urban Development Authority (SUDA). In a press conference held on 07/05/2016, the Development

Plan-2035 of SUDA was announced and on 10/05/2016 a notification was issued to this effect. There are large-scale changes effected even to the 95 villages taken into SUDA in 1983. Thus, farmers of the 199 villages spread over 1024 kms.<sup>2</sup> (102400

ha.) know how devastating the effects of 'development' can be. When the extremely fertile area of 1024 kms.<sup>2</sup> (102400 ha.) of 199 villages (95 earlier and present 104) on the left and right banks of the Ukai and Kakrapar irrigation schemes, reaping rich yields of

sugarcane, bananas, cotton, papaya and vegetables, is about to become victim of the government's 'development' policy, the Khedut Samaj-Gujarat (KS-G) condemns it in the strongest terms and demands the immediate cancellation of the entire development plan.

KS-G further gives its **reasons for opposing the merger of 199 villages into SUDA:**

1. The Indian Parliament has added sections 243ZD and 243ZE to the Constitution through constitutional amendment. As per these amendments, the development plan of the area is to be developed by a development authority comprising the Chairpersons of the village panchayats, elected members of the taluka and district panchayats (Mayor, if it is a Municipality or Corporation).
- The role of the officers / bureaucrats is to offer technical assistance only; the **development plans have to be sanctioned by the development authority**. The state government cannot impose its vision/version of development from above. Exactly the opposite is happening here and hence the development plan must be cancelled forthwith.
2. The above amendment has not been implemented till date by the Government of Gujarat. KS-G and other organisations have petitioned the Hon'ble High Court of Gujarat in this regard (petition no. 1480/2016 and 1480/2016) to direct the Government of Gujarat to implement this amendment. The GoG has sought time from the HC in order to implement the amendment. When the matter is yet sub-judice and the government is yet to act on its undertaking, such a unilateral announcement is tantamount to contempt of the Constitution, the Court and indeed of the people.
3. The entire process – from the notification to the present announcement of the plans – is totally non-inclusive and non-participatory. The elected members and heads of the

panchayats (village, taluka and district) have not been consulted **ever**. The government has made unilateral decisions and announcements and the administration is doing the bidding of the government. KS-G condemns this undemocratic dispensation of the government in the strongest terms.

4. The present notification has been issued under the provisions of the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976. As per the provisions of this Act, 20% of the land of the farmers is to be deducted. However, we have learnt that around 35% of the land is to be deducted in this development plan. Why should the farmers part with their priceless assets for development plans which are useless for them?
5. The final plots, when allotted, are situated far from the original plots. The agricultural assets on the original plots – canal, wells, farm ponds, \_\_, cannot be shifted to the new plots and getting them anew is financially not possible. This inevitably pushes farmers out of agriculture. Such development only adds to the numbers of jobless and unemployed. **That is why we say: We are not anti-development; development is anti-us.**
6. By virtue of being included in SUDA we will be unable to access credit, subsidies and other motivational grants while the increased burden of property taxes, electricity bills etc. will increase which is unacceptable to us.
7. The villages of this area fall in the area of Sumul Dairy. The people of the villages supply thousands of litres of milk daily to the Sumul and Choryasi dairies. The proposed development plan will destroy the cattle-rearing industry of the area and the supplementary income from dairying will cease, which is unacceptable to us.
8. The people of the area and the cooperative sector are intimately

connected. Available data indicates that this region yields a combined production worth **Rs. 1741,50,28,228/-** (approximately One thousand seven hundred forty one crores) – Rs. 1227,78,56,000 sugar, Rs. 252,91,00,210 milk, Rs. 171,05,72,009 paddy, and Rs. 89,75,00,000 vegetables. The proposed development thus endangers the very existence of the cooperative sector of the region which is completely unacceptable to us and as such we demand the immediate cancellation of the entire development plan. Besides, the sugar factories of Kamrej, Sayan, Chalthan, Maroli, Pandvai, Vataria, Kotha and Bardoli which get the raw material from this area also face grim prospects for their survival if the development plan is allowed to materialise. Hence the KS-G opposes this development plan.

The KS-G demands that the above-mentioned reasons be carefully thought over and that the Development Plan 2035 be cancelled in its entirety. Besides, it is not as if plans once announced cannot be rethought or changed. Section 66(J) of the GTPUDA, 1976 gives the Government of Gujarat the authority to do so. Being opposed to the entire development plan proposed by the GoG, we demand that the notification for the 104 villages to be merged into SUDA be immediately cancelled.

The leaders of KS-G further state that the Gujarat Drainage and Irrigation Act 2013, SIR Act 2009, 7.5% automatic increase in irrigation is not helping farmers affected by natural phenomena like droughts or floods, pending electricity connections to farmers, decommissioning of Narmada command area and diversion of Narmada water, as also water from other irrigation schemes, from irrigation to industry and GIDC, not giving remunerative prices to farmers for their produce, and, ensuring that farmers do not receive seeds, fertilizers,

pesticides in time – all reflect a systematic onslaught on farmers and agriculture in order to take away their lands on one pretext or another. Where that is not possible

it is being done via urban planning and urban development. We also oppose this anti-village and anti-farmer mindset of the government. **The KS-G demands that the**

**entire proposal of SUDA 2035 be cancelled within the next 15 days.**

Khedut Samaj – Gujarat. □

## Trupti Shah, Human Rights Activist Is No More

**Trupti Shah**, feminist, environmentalist, human rights activist is no more with us. She left us at 9.15 p.m. May 26, 2016. Trupti was a valiant fighter till her end, fighting not just cancer but to make our society a more just, fair, equitable, safe, sustainable and humane society. We have lost a comrade, a fellow traveller, a unique person whose opposition to injustice, discrimination and exploitation was so ingrained that till she had even the minutes energy, she refused to stop work.

Our solidarity with you and son Rohit, in this hour of physical parting from Trupti. Let us make her spirit live by ensuring that we continue the fight to make our society a better place.

Please share our condolences with your and her family and all the comrades who were part of your organisation and union, from the entire PUCL family.

On behalf of all the Office Bearers of the National PUCL and the State units, also,

**Dr. V. Suresh**, General Secretary, PUCL National □

PUCL Press Statement: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016

## PUCL Condemns Action on Academicians in Chhattisgarh

The People's Union for Civil Liberties strongly condemns the shocking action of the Chhattisgarh state police and district administration threatening criminal prosecution against a team of academics and members of the CPI and CPI(M) parties who had visited Kanker, Bastar, Dantewada and Sukma districts of Southern Chhattisgarh between 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 to enquire into the conditions of life of ordinary adivasis caught in the conflict between the State and the Maoists. This is apart from the vicious witch hunt launched by the district police against all local tribals who accompanied and assisted the team during the Fact Finding visit.

The fact finding team consisted of Prof Nandini Sundar of Delhi University, Prof Archana Prasad of Jawaharlal Nehru University and Shri Vineet Tiwari of Joshi-Adhikari Institute. Shri Sanjay Parate, State Secretary, CPI(M) also accompanied the team. The team visited many villages between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and released to the press its preliminary findings of the very serious humanitarian crisis prevailing in this area. The team pointed out the human rights

violations suffered by the ordinary adivasis at the hands of **both parties** to the conflict – fake encounters and fake surrenders and arrests by the State as well as arbitrary beatings and killings by the Maoists. The FFT also pointed out the extreme distress experienced by villagers caught in the cross fire in a situation reminiscent of the “Salwa Judum” which had caused widespread displacement, divisions in the Adivasi society and destruction of their lives and livelihoods. The Fact Finding Team has appealed to all political parties, the Central and State Governments, as well as to the Maoists to urgently address this situation.

What is shocking and deplorable is that the State police, instead of providing their response to the findings of the FFT, has chosen to sponsor a ridiculous and politically motivated allegation against the team that “**they are JNU professors who threatened the villagers to side with Maoists**”. In an unprecedented move the District Collector, Mr. Amit Kataria, has irresponsibly propagated the allegations by posting in his Facebook page, a so called

complaint in the name of local villagers demanding a FIR against the FFT. This has been done even before any investigation has even started.

This raises the crucial issue of the ethical and legal propriety of the District Collector posting in a public fora like social media, such a complaint even before it is verified. It is unfortunate that the high office of the District Collector, who is expected to behave in a restrained, independent and balanced manner, has degenerated to indulging in political propaganda to whip up hate campaign filled with hostility, hysteria and hype against anyone exposing the role of the police and state administration in creating the war like situation that has enveloped the life of adivasis in the Bastar area.

Even a cursory reading of the so called complaint of the villagers does not inspire confidence about its authenticity and indicates that it is a fabricated complaint. In a move symptomatic of the antagonistic manner in which the state government, district police and administration responds to any critical assessment of its role in creating a situation surcharged with

fear, intimidation and terror for ordinary villagers, the Home Minister and Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh have supported these baseless allegations and said that they would be “thoroughly investigated”.

Our greatest concern is that local residents of Bastar who helped the team are already facing intimidation. Ms Manju Kawasi, a member of the CPI women's wing who accompanied the team got a midnight visit from the Sukma police, who told her that she would have to go to Jagdalpur for questioning; she was also threatened that an FIR would be registered against her. A villager from village Nama – Shri Mangla, a carpenter by profession, who had accompanied the team has also been repeatedly called to the police station for questioning.

The PUCL notes that Professor Nandini Sundar, who is a petitioner in the case before the Supreme Court challenging the government-sponsored Salwa Judum, has been continuously facing harassment by the Chhattisgarh police - being stopped, detained and followed;

facing malicious propaganda and tapping of her phones. Such a hostile response was in fact commented upon by the Hon'ble Apex Court but evidently with no effect on the Chhattisgarh government.

It is evident that the Chhattisgarh government does not want human rights organisations, Citizen's fact findings teams, or social activists to make any independent enquiry into the news of dozens of encounters, hundreds of surrenders and arrests and of the counter insurgency operations being carried out in the Bastar region. It should be pointed out that such allegations of widespread involvement of state authorities in creating a humanitarian crisis are not baseless. In fact the record of allegations are so well documented that Constitutional bodies including the National SC & ST Commission, the National Commission of Women and the National Human Rights Commission have sent official teams to investigate the allegation. Their reports highlight cases of sexual violence, fake encounters and other human rights

violations.

Over the past few months the Chhattisgarh government has been continuously hounding journalists, lawyers and social activists who are raising serious issues of human rights violations and has been criticised for wanting “a war without witnesses”. Such motivated and hostile actions of the State Government are clearly abuse of the process of law, illegal, unconstitutional and undemocratic. PUCL reiterates its firm conviction that a free press, an independent judiciary and fair criminal justice system, and an engagement with voices of dissent are essential to a democracy, even more so when a highly militarized counter insurgency operation is being carried out which is having sweeping consequences for lakhs of adivasi people. PUCL calls upon the Government of Chhattisgarh to give up its hostility to human rights groups, rights defenders and other democratic forces.

**Prof. Prabhakar Sinha**, President, PUCL; **Dr. V. Suresh**, General Secretary, PUCL □

**Press Statement:** 02<sup>nd</sup> June 2016

**Justice Rajindar Sachar**, former President of *People Union for Civil Liberties* (PUCL) has issued the following statement::

On the eve of Prime Minister Visit to U.S.A he has to deal with an embarrassing human right situation at Home. Vadodara Municipal Corporation under its demolition drive had promised Muslims living in area of Suleiman Chawl to shift them over to next locality to a Kapurai locality – the scheme is under the Slums free Vadodara drive. But now owing to the resistance of some Hindus, the shifting of displaced Muslim families has been stopped. The shocking reason is given that Hindu chauvinists of Kapurai say that the relocation of Muslims will disturb the peace. I strongly condemn this dastardly communal approach.

I am of the firm opinion that under no circumstances, the relocation of displaced Muslims be delayed. Such action will be discriminatory and an open criminal action. This act on the state to which Prime Minister Modi belongs will permanently damage the prestige of the country.

Even as a short time measure it should be noted that already, an embarrassing situation has been created when P. M. arrives an U.S.A on Wednesday. The congressional Human Rights Commission announced that it would hold a hearing on the “advancement of Human Rights in India,” on June 7, the day Modi arrives in Washington. Modi addresses the congress on June 8, 2016.

I feel that immediate step should be taken to stop this communal action of Vadodara authorities and to relocate the Muslims immediately. Should not Prime Minister Modi immediately order the State Government to implement the scheme and relocate the Muslims to Kapurai, the place already selected to avoid an ugly situation which will not only spoil his position but damage his proposed visit to U.S.A.

To enhance to the discomfort of Prime Minister, verdict by Gujarat High Court in holding 24 accused of murder in Jafri case is a grave stain difficult for Modi to wash it away, considering that he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at that time. This is going to be highlighted when he visits U.S.A.. Should he not wash Vadodara stain of discrimination against Muslims before he leaves for U.S.A. □

## Muslims and RSS cannot afford to go on hating

Today the BJP has become the central force in Indian politics.  
Can it afford the luxury of hating such a large population?

J.S. Bandukwala\*

The rise of the BJP in the Northeast, the shrinking of the Congress and the emergence of powerful satraps in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, are vital features of this election. Strangely, print and electronic media have ignored its crucial impact on the 180 million Indian Muslims, and therefore on secularism in India. This may be the decisive feature of the 2016 assembly polls.

Muslims across India view Narendra Modi through the lens of the 2002 tragedy in Gujarat. This image has been magnified by the unfortunate role of Hindutva fanatics in the last two years. *Ghar wapsi*, love jihad, Go to Pakistan, beef eating, Bharat Mata ki Jai, and now the likely release of the Malegaon suspects, have left most Muslims in a state of panic. Note that barely 25 percent of Muslims belong to the upper and middle classes. The remaining, about 135 million, belong to the Dalit and backward classes. Even in the language of eminent Muslims like Ashraf Ali Thanwi, they were described as Arzal (Dalits or most backward castes).

In this description, the other two classes were Ashraf (noble/upper castes) and Ajlaf (contemptible/backward castes). The classification itself speaks volumes on the inability of Islam to break the caste rigidity of Muslim converts. It is these poor and illiterate Muslims who fear the rise of the BJP. For they have nowhere to go. This is more so in Assam, where Hindutva vigilantes will spread havoc in the name of deporting Muslims, accusing them of being Bangladeshi. Can the new BJP government stop this witch-hunting?

The BJP has evolved from the thoughts of its leading lights, K.B. Hedgewar, M.S. Golwalkar and V.D. Savarkar. Deeply influenced

by Mussolini and later Hitler, events of the pre-Partition period had a profound impact on them. They found sustenance in the hatred of Muslims. Today the BJP has become the central force in Indian politics. Can it afford the luxury of hating such a large population?

Many Muslims have joined the BJP in the last two years. The community has resented that shift. Yet there is a ray of hope: That their presence may dilute the hatred towards the community as a whole. But that requires that BJP Muslims must be encouraged to identify with the community. They must be the bridge that is badly needed today. Excessive identification with "Bharat Mata ki Jai" or "gau raksha" may be counterproductive.

Finally, Muslims must learn to stand on their own feet. In a highly competitive environment, no one is going to give them much leeway. Muslim focus must move towards quality education, business and honouring the rights of women as pronounced in the Quran. Zakat and lillah must be used wisely to lift poor Muslims from their current pitiable state. Muslims must refrain from going frequently for Haj and Umrah. The amount so saved can be used to educate bright boys and girls from poor families. By my estimate, every Umrah trip, if avoided, can educate at least one medical or five engineering students. Allah would be more pleased with such a shift.

The plight of the Indian Muslim must be viewed in a global context. With the exception of Indonesia and Malaysia, almost the entire Muslim world is in severe turmoil. Pakistan is close to a state of collapse; Bangladesh and Afghanistan are no better off. The Arab world, though blessed with huge natural resources, has spent them all on a murderous Shia-Sunni conflict that has seen the

entire region destabilised. African Muslim countries are equally dangerous: So many young girls kidnapped by Islamist militants are held as sex slaves violating every canon of Muslim law. The authorities have no idea where they are held. Egypt, which could have guided the Muslim world, is itself a nervous wreck.

In this darkness, Indian Muslims are a source of hope and solace. Their links with Islam go back to the Prophet himself, due to trading between the Gulf and the western coast. Some of the greatest Islamic saints had Indian links, such as Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and Nizamuddin Auliya. In music, poetry, spirituality and architecture, the flowering has been the best in the world. Muslim rulers like Akbar rank with Ashoka and Julius Caesar among the greatest rulers of all time. In short, Indian Muslims have the culture, the religion and the history to guide the Islamic world out of its free fall. It needs just one thing. The Sangh Parivar must move away from Muslim hate. Then and then alone, the Indian renaissance would save the Islamic world. The credit would go to all Indians, including the RSS.

Indian civilisation is a rainbow of languages, castes, creeds and living standards that range from the ultra rich to the very poor, but there is something mystical that holds the 1.3 billion people together. Ashoka and Akbar, Nanak and Kabir, down to Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru tapped this emotional bond for the larger good. Sadly, Muhammad Ali Jinnah failed on this count, leading to a frightening vivisection of the country and a failed Pakistan. Today our Kashmiri brothers and sisters are emotionally alienated from the country, tens of thousands have perished in the hatred in Kashmir. An equal number have become refugees in their own land.

Every Kashmiri, whether Muslim or Hindu, suffering seven decades after freedom, is a blot on all of us. The only way out is to refresh the mystical links that bind. It is not an impossible task. But it requires that both Muslims and the RSS move away from any negative feelings for the other. As a Gujarati Muslim who paid a heavy price in 2002, I forgive

those who caused so much harm to me and my community. My only daughter was married to a Gujarati Hindu, with my consent, in the immediate aftermath of 2002. By God's grace, they are very happy. Today it is impossible for me to hate a Gujarati Hindu. Can the RSS do the same? It would change the face of our beloved India.

(This article first appeared in the print edition under the headline 'I forgive, I hope')

*\*Prof. J.S. Bandukwala is the former President, Gujarat PUCL. The writer is a former Physics professor and a human rights activist based in Vadodara.*

*Courtesy: The Indian Express, May 27, 2016* □

## What India can learn from Australia on Domestic Violence?

Pushkar Raj

One social parallel that can be drawn between two dissimilar countries like India and Australia is rampant family violence in both the countries. As Australia is fighting the menace vigorously, India can learn a few lessons from it, giving some relief to its about 500 million strong female population, majority of which go through the humiliation of domestic violence, sometime or the other, in their life.

An analysis by Australia's National Research for Women's Safety in 2012 revealed that one in five Australian women, aged over 15, experienced sexual violence and one in three experienced physical violence from an intimate partner. Every year 80 to 100 women are killed in the country by their former or current partners. 81 in 2014(ABC News, 4 May 2015).

The situation is worse in India as the scope of violence against women here is vast-from pre-birth to death. A United Nations in India Report (2013), Masculinity, Son Preference and Intimate Partner Violence, stated that 34 percent women (aged 18-39) experienced physical, emotional and sexual violence in their family in previous one year. India's National Family Health Survey-III, carried out in all states (2005-06), found that nationwide 37.2 percent women experienced violence after marriage. 63 per cent of urban women suffered abuse indicating urbanization means more domestic violence for women. Delhi government's women helpline

receives about 13,600 calls in a month, nearly 90 percent of which are reportedly of domestic violence - women who are unsafe in their own homes (Hindustan Times, 14 September 2012).

In Australia, however, the debate and action on the issue of domestic violence has intensified recently after an incident in February 2012.

Luke Batty, an 11 year old Melbourne boy was killed at a cricket ground by his father who was separated from his former partner- Luke's mother Rossie Batty. The tragedy underlined a pervasive social problem in the country with which a large number of women identified, pouring support for Rossie Batty's public campaign against domestic violence. The government also set up a Royal Commission on Domestic Violence in Victoria that made 217 recommendations (April 2016) including an awareness programme targeting children and including it in school curriculum. The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull called family violence a national problem committing \$100 million to fight it, while premier of Victoria committed \$ 500 million in the current state budget to fund preventive and protective measures to combat domestic violence in the state (ABC News, 13 April 2016).

In India, however, no such government seriousness and financial support is seen despite passing of prevention of domestic violence legislation in 2005. After

six years, in 2012-13 budget, the government allocated Rs. 20 crores for its implementation but the money remained unspent because there was no programme of action. Since then there has been a silence in government circles on the issue. In the 2015-16 budgets also, there are no financial provisions for preventing domestic violence. On the contrary, the ministry of women and child development, a nodal agency for women centric programmes, received 17,408 crores in the current budget over 17,352 crore last year - an increase of 0.32 per cent ( Government of India budget, 2012 and 2016), while Indian economy grew by about 7 per cent during this period!

Apart from raising serious questions about women's share in economic prosperity of the country, it also signifies government's indifference to women protection and welfare in the country. Irrespective of political party in power, the governments have been reluctant to increase spending on women empowerment programmes contrary to loud claims in international forums such as Commission on the Status of Women in United Nations (Maneka Gandhi, Minister for women and child development, Hindu, 16 March 2016).

It is a serious policy lapse as the protection of women at home has an enormous economic implications for the society.

A report of Copenhagen consensus

on conflict and violent assessment (2014) estimated that the domestic violence costs the world \$8 trillion annually. Given India's about 3 per cent contribution in the world economy it translates into whopping \$240 billion per annum. Even a little reduction in domestic violence in the country therefore, has a rich economic dividend and an adequate investment in this area makes a sound economic sense.

Socially, domestic violence is a 'stand alone' problem which, Rossie Batty, the Australian of the year (2015), called 'terrorism in family'. It requires to be confronted

and prevented in real time to break a cycle. It is shown that the children who witness domestic violence are more likely to perpetrate or accept family violence when they are adults (UN Report on Gender 2012), thus perpetuating control, patriarchy and disrespect for women in a family. To break this chain there is a need of creating awareness programmers and institutional structure for which a liberal funding is urgently required. Australia, as an economically developed country has recognized that material prosperity is no guarantee to a civilized and happy

life if socially the family remains a violent and barbaric unit. It has realized that the domestic violence is a deep social problem that requires to be fought legally and socially matching words with financial commitments. India also should follow its example by heavily investing in women protection and development measures. Sooner it does, earlier it will reap the fruits of modernity that it aspires.

*The writer is a Melbourne based human rights researcher & writer. Formerly he taught political science in Delhi University and was the National General Secretary of PUCL* □

## **The Judiciary, too, is Responsible... Rajindar Sachar**

*There is a shortfall of 458 High Court Judges. In a similar situation in the executive, the legal fraternity would have shouted about the lack of sensitivity. The judiciary must work out a quick solution to avoid disappointing litigants by delays*

After it was decided that judges will appoint judges, the collegiums for the purpose should have started filling the vacancies, but still further to show that it is open to suggestions from the Bar and public as to the methodology of not only selecting judges but also the process of making the process more transparent. It was expected that after further court hearings, it will come out with a Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for selection.

Surprisingly after weeks of court hearing, it decided to avoid its responsibility and asked the government to frame the Memorandum of Procedure. I have still not understood the logic of this decision which was bound to be self defeating. It naturally gave an opening which had been closed permanently by the Bench holding earlier that the last word in the selection of judges is that of the collegiums.

So the government having got this golden opportunity, unabashedly prepared a MoP (including the objectionable and illegal suggestion considered in the light of the decision of the Constitution Bench) that if the name of the Judge is not approved by the

Executive he will not be appointed.

Another obnoxious suggestion by the Government Memo is that the Attorney General and Advocate Generals should along with the judiciary be on the selection of judges. This suggestion is so horrendous and openly objectionable that it has not found place even in the Judges Act which was passed by the legislature and has been held to be unconstitutional. Are we then in a dark alley with no opening? No doubt this situation is greatly worrisome, but a quick solution has to be worked out.

I am, in this context suggesting that it is the duty of the former Chief Justices and even the judges of the Supreme Court to involve themselves in this deadlock by openly coming out with their views. It is not a strange suggestion. When a five-judge Bench invited suggestions from the public about the Memorandum of Procedure, some of the retired Supreme Court Judges and retired Chief Justices of High Courts sent a memo openly during the hearing giving their views on the matter. They had no embarrassment at sending suggestions which may have been

rejected by the Bench, considering that some of the present judges may, at some point in the past, might have been their juniors. At time like these, notions of undue delicacy and aloofness should be given up because at stake is the independence of the Judiciary – one of the sheet anchors of our Constitution. The old lot needs to jump in the fight, not as partisans but as a sobering effect on the stubborn stand being taken by the Executive which is openly saying that it will not relent on its stand of not appointing a judge whom the Executive disapproves – outrageously unconstitutional, but there it is.

Long ago Montesquieu, saw this predicament and opined “that there can be no liberty if the power of judging be not separate from the legislative and executive powers”.

This conflict between Executive and Judiciary has not been settled and will always remain a matter of debate. But it is well to remind the Executive of certain postulates which are unalterable.

Thus even 400 years after the Magna Carta was signed, King James I of England felt unhappy when prerogative courts set up by

him came in conflict with old courts applying the common law. King James I summoned the Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke to stop interfering with the prerogative courts. The king's will, James asserted, 'was supreme'. Sir Edward Coke the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, responded that the judges must follow the common law, to which King answered wrathfully, "then I am to be under the law – which it is treason to affirm." Coke replied by quoting Brocton, a medieval scholar monk, Rex non debete sse

sub homine sed sub deo et lege." – "The King ought not to be under any man, but under God and the law." The story of this exchange has echoed down through the centuries. In India similarly we have had the established principle that King, though an absolute sovereign must yet function within Dharma – which is another way of proclaiming the principle of the supremacy of law. Wherever there is a written Constitution, the supreme law is the law of the Constitution. Parliament should accept that limiting of its

powers by the written Constitution does not in any manner derogate from its sovereignty. It should accept that its sovereignty like the sovereignty of the executive and the judiciary is limited by the written Constitution.

Can one hope the Executive to act with grace and accept that it is not the modern Henry VIII of England fame, because of settled principle that the sovereignty vests in the people as expressed in our Constitution?

*Published in The Tribune  
June 08, 2016* □

## PEOPLE'S UNION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES MEMBERSHIP FORM

The General Secretary,  
People's Union for Civil Liberties

**Dear friend,**

I subscribe to the aims and objects of the People's Union for Civil Liberties and agree to abide by its Constitution. Please enroll me as a member.

I remit herewith Rs 50/- (yearly)/ 1000/- (Life)/ 2000/- (Patron) membership fee. [See Clause 3(c) and (d) of the Constitution].

I also remit herewith Rs.100/- at concessional rate as the subscription of the PUCL BULLETIN (optional).

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*NB: Please send money in the name of the 'People's Union for Civil Liberties', preferably by DD/MO. In case of outstation cheques, please add Rs. 70/-. Please do not send Postal Order. Always send the Membership Form to the State/local branch.*

**National Office:** PUCL, 270-A, Patpar Ganj, Opposite Anand Lok Apartments (Gate-2), Mayur Vihar-I, Delhi-110091 (Phone: 011-2275 0014)

## Invitation of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha to attend Shahid Diwas Celebrations on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2016 at Bhilai

Dear Comrades,

This year again we shall gather again,

To recall the dreams of the worker martyrs of 1<sup>st</sup> July.

To gather courage for the tough challenges ahead,

To gain strength from our small victories,

To reflect on the situation of the working class

In Chhattisgarh, in our country and

All over the world.

The task of uniting workers in the cement sector is before us,

Of organizing the contract workers in the steel plant,

Of dealing with the destructive "smart city" projects,

Of fighting patriarchy

And Manuvaad (Casteism) among the working class,

Of evolving a new "education" for the children of the working class,

Of showing solidarity with the peasants,

Of fighting the burning problem of displacement,

Of supporting adivasi sister Soni Sori in her struggles,

Of washing out the poison of religious bigotry,

Of building a new Chhattisgarh.

This year, many of you

Helped us a lot in our struggles –

Ideologically, politically, materially.

We got so much help in the ACC struggle from Com

Ashim Roy of the NTUI, from Mathias of IndustriALL

and Yvonne of Solifonds;

People from all over the country helped contribute to the rebuilding of Shaheed School;

Friends from Bhopal to Odisha supported our cultural endeavours;

Students, workers and intellectuals from Delhi and

Mumbai helped us in countless ways.

We urge all of you to join us.

Your solidarity is our most precious asset.

*Bansi, Lakhan, Kaladas, Ramakant, Saraswati, Rajkumar, Neera,*

*Rinchin, Kaushal, Mahesh, Kalyan Patel, Shreya, Sudha, Chhattisgarh*

Mukti Morcha (Mazdoor Karyakarta Committee) □

## Announcement of Next National Council Meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in Delhi

**Attention** - All National/State Office Bearers and National Council Members,

The next PUCL National Council Meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 at Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi. Members are requested to make advance travel arrangements to attend the meeting.

**V. Suresh**, General Secretary, PUCL □

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