



**COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Congress**  
**Samar Mukherjee Nagar**  
**Visakhapatnam, April 14-19, 2015**

*Resolution*

On Crimes against Women

The 21<sup>st</sup> Party Congress expresses its deep concern at the continued increase in crimes against women. The number of registered criminal cases crossed 300,000 in 2013. The number of rapes of women was more than 33,000 in a single year, or one rape every 16 minutes. Shockingly, there was a 44 per cent increase over one year in the number of rapes of minors; such rapes constitute more than one third of all registered cases of rape. More than 8000 women are burnt to death for dowry in a year, yet the conviction rate with respect to this crime is dismal. Of the number of people accused of violent crimes against women, 75 per cent walk free.

The brutality of the crimes against women and children, including disabled women, reflects a deeply disturbing misogynistic trend. Neo-liberal policies promote cultures that commodify women. There has been a violent backlash against the assertions by women of the right to equality in all spheres, including the domestic sphere. This backlash is reflected in cases in which rapists have filmed their crimes and proudly flaunted the recordings on the Internet.

Young women are increasingly questioning and defying conservative notions of women as secondary citizens, and thereby becoming targets of attack. The Nirbhaya case in Delhi symbolised all these issues.

Poor women, particularly Dalit women, continue to be most vulnerable to class- and caste-based sexual crimes. In spite of the law against sexual harassment at the workplace being enacted, its implementation is most unsatisfactory. Gender specific violence is a characteristic feature of communal violence.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CPI(M) condemns the utter failure of Governments and law enforcement agencies to fully implement the recommendations of the Verma Commission. On the contrary, objectionable moves are on to dilute existing laws such as Section 498A.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CPI(M) also expresses its strong protest against the proliferation of rape cultures that justify rape and blame women for the violence against them. It is shameful and utterly unacceptable that some leaders of political parties, Ministers in Government, and many elected members of Parliament and Assemblies also make sexist statements, using language demeaning to women with impunity, and that they are protected by their parties. It is shameful that an elected member from the Trinamul Congress, Tapas Pal, was protected and defended by the Chief Minister of West Bengal after he had threatened rape against women who were his political opponents.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Party Congress of the CPI(M) also expresses concern at the increasing criminalisation of politics and the criminal behaviour of some elected members towards women. According to a recent estimate, 369 MPs and MLAs in the country face charges of crimes against women,

including crimes of rape and molestation. The Kerala Legislative Assembly recently witnessed the most shameful display of sexist behaviour by ruling UDF MLAs against women members of the LDF. Earlier, in the West Bengal Assembly, women members of the Left Front were targeted and badly beaten up when they were protesting against increasing crime in West Bengal.

Instead of taking action against criminals, Governments have often protected those responsible, or, as in the case of the present Modi Government, maintained a deafening silence when their own Ministers and MPs make statements against women.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CPI(M) reiterates the commitment of the Party to uphold and work for the equal rights of women and to promote and work for democratic cultures and environments in which women have safe, secure, and equal access to all public spaces, and enjoy freedom from fear of violence.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CPI(M) demands that the Government

- implement, in a timebound way, the Verma Committee recommendations in full for the prevention and punishment of crimes against women;
- act against personnel subverting the laws to prevent and curb crimes against women; and
- set up a mechanism in Parliament and State Assemblies to make elected members and leaders accountable and punishable for any sexist or demeaning statements they make against women.

\*\*\*