

ALL INDIA DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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2nd June 2014

Report of AIDWA visit to Badaun

A delegation of the All India Democratic Women's Associations (AIDWA) comprising of Jagmati Sangwan (General Secretary) and Sehba Farooqui (Secretary) and accompanied by Rajeev Shant and Banne Ali of the UP All India Agricultural Workers Union, visited Saadatganj village in Badaun District of UP where the horrible incident of gang-rape and murder of two minor OBC girls belonging to very poor Maurya families occurred. Their bodies were subsequently hanged on a mango tree near the village.

The delegation met the parents of both victims (the girls were cousins), many villagers, media persons and some police personnel. The region is dominated by the Yadav community and many members are known for their bullying and aggressive tactics. These have become more pronounced under the present SP regime. Many police officers and personnel posted in the area also belong to the same community. Generally poor people in the area are completely intimidated by them and this was something that was expressed to members of the delegation by many people that they met. The accused all belong to the Yadav community and are recent migrants to the area. The families of the victims are extremely poor agricultural labourers. They live in mud huts without any electricity or toilets.

In the night of 27th May, the two girls had gone to the nearby fields in answer to Nature's call. A relative who went to the fields a little later heard them screaming and tried to look for them but could not see them. He returned to the village and told others what he had heard. The parents of the 2 girls became very agitated since they were missing and the fathers went to the police chowki in the village itself. The policemen on duty pretended to be sleeping. When they were woken up they pretended to be very angry and started shouting at the poor fathers. Finally, they said that they knew where the girls were and that they would be 'returned' after 2 hours. The poor, desperate men felt that they had no other choice but to go home and wait for their daughters to be 'returned'. It seems that little has changed in rural India in the last thousand years. When the girls did not return, their family members hired a jeep and left for the district headquarters at 4.00 a.m. They were chased by a policeman on a bike who told them to look for their daughters in the mango orchard. When they reached there, they saw the horrible sight of their daughters hanging dead from the tree. The families of the girls are convinced that the policemen were also part of the gang that raped and killed their daughters.

The UP Govt. has announced payment of compensation to the families but nothing has been received by them. They cannot survive without help is what they said.

Generally also the delegation was of the opinion that the UP Government should take urgent steps to stop the criminalization of society and the breakdown of law and order which is having grave consequences for women

in UP. Apart from Badaun, there have been horrific rapes in Azamgarh, Etawah, Lakhimpur Khiri and Greater Noida as well within a week time. The culprits in all the cases must be identified and punished whoever they may be and the investigation should take place in a time bound manner. It may be recalled in this context that AIDWA had warned and condemned Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Samajvadi Supremo in April (11th April 2014) against his trivializing statement on rape and gang rape in a public meeting at Moradabad during his election campaign, where he openly asked for condoning such heinous acts as momentary lapses. Here again we want to reiterate in this context that rape can hardly be called a “mistake” as Mr. Yadav thinks it is, more than often it is a premeditated act and an expression of power over women. It can in no way be condoned by using the old patriarchal argument that “Boys will be Boys” such irresponsible statements must also have played their role to embolden the criminals in the state.

The AIDWA delegation demands:

1. In the FIR lodged by the police, the culprit policemen have been charged with abettment (120B) whereas they should be named as **the accused and** (Sec. 166A) also should be invoked in the case. This is in keeping with the Justice Verma Commission recommendations.
2. Proper financial aid should be given to the families immediately and the UP Govt. must announce a policy of compensation and rehabilitation of ALL rape victims instead of continuing with its current policy of 'pick and choose'.
3. Fast track courts for all cases of rape in the State should be established.
4. Toilets must be provided for all in rural areas. This is necessary for the health and security of women and girls.
5. Proper security must be provided to the families of the victims since the accused are themselves policemen.

**Malini Bhattacharya
(President)**

**Sudha Sundararaman
(Vice President)**

**Jagmati Sangwan
(General Secretary)**