



National Federation of Indian Women_Delhi @NationalFedera4

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Press Release

The National Federation of Indian women (NFIW) unequivocally condemns the exclusion of young Muslim girls from universities and schools in Karnataka, on the flimsy grounds that their attire is not appropriate.

The administration caved in to the demand by a group of saffron scarved boys to ban women wearing hijab from entering the premises of educational institutions.

College after college is shutting its gates to unconstitutionally and criminally deny these women their fundamental right to freedom of expression and the right to education, available equally to every citizen of this country.

What is being witnessed in Karnataka must be identified as the standard operating procedure of rabid communal fundamentalist groups who proclaim their allegiance to the RSS and the Sangh Parivar.

Preventing students of the minority community from entering the educational institutes, vandalising the institutions, burning down text books and other study materials and instruments, and just before the examinations, are established methods employed to

further the divisive agenda. Such a method was observed in Kandhamal, Orissa and many other places against the minority communities.

At a time when women's education is suffering due to various material dispossession and structural violence, the fundamentalist forces are further aggravating the situation to dis-empower women, even more.

It is contradictory and appalling that, the Modi government speaks about all-round empowerment of women, while the Karnatak State BJP government is hell bent on excluding Muslim girls from education.

We would like to point out that the equation between the hijab and a religious symbol (a saffron scarf), is illogical and has been deliberately created for the purpose of raking up communal hatred. It is malicious and an attempt to terrorize the minorities.

The complicity of the government officials to unconstitutional demands of the Hindu extremists, make them party to violating constitutional rights.

It is shameful & unacceptable that authorities who manage the educational institutions display such communal & misogynist behaviour.

Ostensibly, the strictures on the girls are a direct outcome of the threats issued by the saffron brigade. It is deplorable that instead of upholding the constitutional values and fundamental rights,

the administration of these institutions have become willing participants in an agenda set by Brahmanical forces.

It is distressing that as women are beginning to assert their right to freedom to choose apparel of their choice, Muslim women are being blackmailed with denial of education and forced to change their choice of clothing.

This is a form of cultural diktat of imposing the majoritarian aesthetic. Every citizen has the right to practice and profess their religion of choice without fear of being criminalized.

Disciplining and punishing women's bodies and choices is most curtailing not to way towards equality or progress.

The ministers should know that Hijab wearing girls are not "spokespersons for the Taliban", and they can never be. It is really ironical that the Taliban as well as the Hindu fundamentalist forces against women's education.

NFIW would like to reiterate that no religious fundamentalist group, neither the BJP-RSS nor the Taliban, or any other patriarchal body, has the right to regulate a woman's body or mode of attire.

This is tantamount to depriving the women of the country of their right to equality and justice. Our Constitution guarantees gender equality and also safeguards the rights to life with dignity. Denial of Constitutional Rights to women is violence.

By making inflammatory statements, the BJP is waging a war on the freedom of women and fostering an education system that is discriminatory, unequal, misogynist and communal.

NFIW expresses its support and solidarity with the Muslim women students who are fighting for their right to educate and have a right to life with dignity.

We demand that the state government should take immediate, necessary steps to ensure the right of all women to dress according to their choice. It is also their constitutional mandate, and in the interest of the nation,

to create a conducive atmosphere to enable Muslim women students to continue their education without any discrimination and violence.

Aruna Roy Annie Raja

President, NFIW General Secretary, NFIW

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