



## **NCW submits 'Inquiry Report' on atrocities against women during Gorkhaland agitation to Home Minister Rajnath Singh**

### **PRESS NOTE**

**4 May 2018:** The National Commission for Women (NCW) submitted its 'Inquiry Report' on Darjeeling agitation to the Hon'ble Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh today in Delhi. The Inquiry Report looks into atrocities against women, especially by the State administration during the Gorkhaland agitation in Darjeeling that lasted from 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

The NCW constituted a two-member Inquiry Committee, led by Chairperson (I/c) Smt. Rekha Sharma, to examine the complaints received from several civil society organizations about the deplorable plight of women post the indefinite strike in Darjeeling town that lasted for 105 days. Last month, the committee visited Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong to get an insight into the matter as well as to understand the prevailing scenario. The Committee met and interacted with over 150 victims, complainants, human right activists, representatives of political and apolitical organizations, and civil society organizations.

#### **The main observations and findings in the Inquiry Report are:**

1. The administration was hostile and non-supportive of the inquiry.
2. Most of the officials were either on leave or refused to meet the Inquiry Committee.
3. Most of the victims were threatened not to interact with the team.
4. There is complete state anarchy and chaos in the hills with no support from the administration.
5. The civilians are living in a state of complete fear, trauma and helplessness. Many have developed psychological issues especially anxiety post the strike.
6. Almost all the complaints highlighted atrocities committed by the Police.
7. Most of the civilian houses and one primary school in Mirik have been occupied by the police.
8. Innocent civilians including women were implicated under a large number of cases and are languishing in jails or out on bail. There were a number of women, each of whom had over 10 to 15 different charges against them.
9. Notices were being issued to many civilians regarding striking down their name in electoral roll.
10. Aged women and children have been affected the most.

#### **The Inquiry Report's main recommendations are as follows:**

1. Immediate medical and psycho-social counselling/intervention should be provided to the victims.
2. Officials against whom departmental inquiries are pending, should be expedited.
3. Proper inquiry should be conducted in cases where women are implicated as criminals and languishing in jails or have to visit courts frequently because of a large number of cases against them.
4. The cases of specific women victims highlighted in the present Inquiry Report need to be taken up by the State Government and provide immediate relief.
5. The issue of arbitrary removing of names of civilians from the electoral roll needs to be brought to the notice of the Election Commission.
6. Inquiry into the death of the civilians should be taken up by independent agency.