



सत्यमेव जयते

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Defence
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps
Co-Chairman, District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee, Bengaluru Urban District

4th January, 2017

Excellency

I commence with a warm greeting to you on this New Year and as I wish you all peace, health and prosperity, I cannot help but be reminded of a rankling taste of abject disillusionment with the present state of affairs in our beloved city of Bengaluru. Surely, not all is well with this city and the State at large, and something is deeply rotten in its state of affairs when the State and its administration cannot grant protection to its women and children; a protection to celebrate the ushering in a new year, which ordinarily one would assume as an innocuous expectation from the mighty State. While a New Year to most of us signals a renewal of life and hope, I cannot bear to imagine the ignominy which we all today are made to suffer when our 'civilized society' with all its trappings of a responsible government embraces callousness and apathy for the bare minimum safety and security of our women and children.

As you may be aware, the mass assault on women in Bengaluru's Central Business District during New Year's Eve has shamed the City. Bengalureans are shocked and disgusted at the incident where women, instead of experiencing the simple joys of ushering in the new year, had to face the horror of mass molestation. What appals the conscience of a citizen today is the utter lack of sensitivity and preparedness, demonstrated by the governing dispensation, and its various instrumentalities including the police, in the face of such a crisis which begs one to consider if at all we are denizens of a civilised democracy under the rule of law. The incidence of such large scale and rampant breakdown of the law and order machinery during New Year revelries at the very heart of the city compels one to pause and ask questions about the preparedness of the Administration, and its various instrumentalities, to provide governance and its failure to enforce accountability.

Bengaluru has always been revered for its cosmopolitan heritage where people from diverse social dispensations had converged over the years. The



administrative machinery of the State must be, as they rightly *ought* to be, cognizant of the said fact. Similarly, the State must be aware of the preparedness which the Central Business District demands to contain the revelries during the ushering in of a new year, each year. The dismal preparedness and the abysmal management of the same, in the face of the fact that the areas around MG Road, Brigade Road and by extension Indiranagar are traditionally known to be hotspots for New Year celebrations demonstrates an utter lack of regard for the sensitivities and demands of responsible governance in the city. The attempt by the State through some of its Ministers to now turn around and furnish justifications in the form of blaming the victims themselves is reprehensible. This also demonstrates the rampant politicization of the State's instrumentalities, including the police. One wonders when a highly-politicized State machinery fails and surrenders its responsibility to protect womenfolk and provide a platform where every citizen is allowed to enjoy all permissible pleasures known to law, where one may turn to? I have also heard some people within the government attempting to make this an 'outsider vs insider' debate or worse still a 'rich vs poor' one. All these are poor attempts at ducking responsibility for the heinous crimes that were perpetrated in general and upon our women, in particular, with impunity.

The gradual degeneration of responsible and responsive governance in this State is probably the logical fall out of politicization of the administrative mechanism at large and the police force in particular. When political expediency and considerations are given a premium over efficiency and merit, when appointments are solely judged on the touchstone of political leanings, and when every department and every branch of the government is staffed with political stooges, such glaring failures and such subsequent indefensible attempts to normalize blatant lawlessness are bound to become the order of the day. Your Excellency shall appreciate that lawlessness and break down of public order does not always assume the shape and form of violent attacks from external forces such as terrorism. When an elected government fails to contain upward throes of violence from within the electorate it governs; when it fails to protect its women and children from peaceably celebrating an annual event; when it deserts its responsibility to instill the fear of law in those who dare to so blatantly outrage the modesty of women, the same is a far more egregious break down of the rule of law and is an affront to the constitutional protections which govern this country. The State probably needs a reminder that the Constitution and indeed the laws of this State require the Government and police to provide protection to all citizens and this Fundamental Right does not get diluted based on gender or dress code.



There is no dearth of laws which has been enacted to grant protection to our women. The sensitive requirement of the time is its stringent enforcement at the hands of the police force who are reposed with the public trust to protect the life and liberties of its citizenry. The Commissioner of Police's statement claiming that victims should go to the police in order to initiate investigation is shocking, insensitive, unbecoming and unprofessional. The police have the powers to *suo moto* take cognizance, file FIRs, and investigate these offences, especially when media, both TV and print have adequate footage of the crime. It is clear that crimes were committed on the night of 31st December and I can quote in *extenso* various provisions of the Indian Penal Code, and other legislations, that were violated that night including outraging the modesty of women, attempted rape etc. involving sections 294, 354, 354A, 354B, 354D, 509 among others. These crimes need to be investigated and criminals identified and prosecuted.

The signs of apathy and neglect of Bengaluru and its citizens are just too frequent to ignore with this Government. Childrens' safety, environment, zoning laws and the list goes on endless. However, when it comes to crimes against children, women and the elderly – a Government is expected to have a zero-tolerance approach to fulfilling its constitutional duty to protect them – which it has failed to do on the New Year's Eve, leaving many innocent girls and women scarred and abused. The larger questions remain - why is the Government dithering on investigating these crimes? Why did the Government not give clear directions to the police about the safety of people on New Year's Eve? Is Bengaluru becoming a city where women have to now worry about where they go, what they wear, and, in general, worry about their safety.

I urge your Excellency, to intervene and require the Chief Minister, his Government, and its various instrumentalities, to accelerate the process of identifying and bringing to book the perpetrators of crimes committed on 31st December and take all necessary actions so that our women feel safer and protected in our home city, Bengaluru.

Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

His Excellency Shri Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala
Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka
Raj Bhavan
Bengaluru