



December 19, 2016

### Press Release

- **Abolish Triple Talaq, Halala, Polygamy (as practiced)**
- **Stop communalising, politicising gender justice issues.**
- **Ban FMG/FGC**
- **Codify Muslim Personal Law**
- **Muslim women have the right to pray inside mosques**
- **Women's right to equal access to dargahs, kabrastans**
- **IMSD rejects all versions of a theocratic/majoritarian state in India and elsewhere**
- **Condemn all acts of intolerance, extremism, terrorism in Islam's name.**
- **Stop discrimination against and attacks on Muslims**
- **Rejuvenate Islam's tolerant tradition**

Over 100 Muslim women and 100 men from over a dozen cities across India launched an organisation, Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD), on December 18 (International Minority Rights Day) following a two-day Inaugural Conference in Mumbai.

IMSD endorses the idea that the core values embedded in the Indian Constitution and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – right to equality, non-discrimination and justice; right to personal liberty, free choice, freedom of expression and conscience, pluralism, secularism – are consistent and in consonance with the core teachings of Islam.

IMSD endorses the idea of a secular-democratic, non-theocratic, non-majoritarian State, whether in India or elsewhere across the globe.

IMSD is fully conscious of the persistent institutionalised discrimination against, the continuing political under-representation and targeting of, Indian Muslims by right-wing Hindutva forces. IMSD is committed to joining hands with other secular-democratic individuals and organisations to combat all such attacks on minorities, whether through hate speech or violence with state connivance).

But as an organisation of Indian Muslims, our prime responsibility lies within the community.

**Our aims:**

- To combat within the community tendencies of religious supremacism, exceptionalism, bigotry, intolerance, extremism and terrorism;
- To promote gender justice;
- To rejuvenate Islam's tolerant tradition and celebrate diversity.

**Agenda:**

**IMSD fully endorses and supports,**

- The demand of the three Muslim women victims of triple talaq backed by three Muslim women's organisations (Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, Bebaak Collective, All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board) who have petitioned the Supreme Court for the declaration of triple talaq (instant divorce), halala and polygamy (as practiced in India) as unconstitutional.
- Codification of Muslim Personal Law to ensure gender justice and parity. IMSD condemns attempts by the BJP government and the sangh parivar on one hand, Muslim religious and political leaders on the other, to communalise and politicise the issue of uniform gender justice.
- The abolition of the abhorrent practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Female Genital Cutting among sections of the Muslim community.
- The right of women to equal access, on par with men, to all sacred and community spaces, including dargahs and kabrastans (graveyards).
- The right of Muslim women to pray inside mosques.
- Muslim women's right to choice of dress and condemns any attempt to enforce any form of dress code.
- Muslim women's right to equality in all aspects of life.

**IMSD condemns:**

IMSD condemns all words and deeds by Muslim organisations or individuals who through word or deed promote bigotry, intolerance, hatred, extremism, terrorism or violence of any kind in the name of Islam and Muslims.

Equally, IMSD condemns the constant taunting, haunting, targeting of Indian Muslims by right wing Hindutva. While fully supporting the prosecution and punishment of all perpetrators of violence, we demand that the security agencies act impartially which is often not the case.

**IMSD stands for Celebration, Rejuvenation of the tolerant traditions within Islam:**

There is nothing very novel or original in the values IMSD upholds and proposes to live by. It merely seeks to rejuvenate the tolerant traditions within Islam and to generate a progressive and liberal voice within the Indian Muslim community so that Muslims in India are able to live in dignity, at peace with self and with all fellow citizens.

We seek to regenerate those centuries-old traditions of 'Lived Islam' which in recent decades have been sought to be uprooted and destroyed in India and elsewhere by bigoted, intolerant, extremist and terrorist sections among Muslims.

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