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Migrant Workers Solidarity Network

To:

Shri Arvind Kejriwal

Chief Minister's Office

3rd Delhi Secretariat, IP Estate

New Delhi 110002.

Date: 24.05.2021

Subject: Ensure Ration for Migrant Workers According to SC Order dated 13.05.2021 and 24.05.2021

Sir,

Supreme Court order dated 13.05.2021 directed that dry ration and transport to be provided to migrant workers in the National Capital Region by governments of NCT of Delhi, UP, Haryana and the Union of India. Since the order, different state governments made announcements, but they have not reached the people on ground. The Government of Delhi in an announcement six days ago assured that ration will be provided to migrant workers in the state, as per procedures set in place during the previous lockdown in 2020. No implementation of the same has happened.

At *Migrant Workers Solidarity Network (MWSN)*, we have continued to receive distress calls from migrant workers across NCR on our helpline, asking for ration. Based on our data, we have received requests from over 4,600 workers and their families are in immediate and urgent need of ration. These calls are primarily from the following areas of Nangloi-Rajdhani Park-Mundka Area (410), Dwarka (846), Patparganj (854), Khanpur-Sangam Vihar Area (535), Vasant Kunj JJ Clusters (2156), Gandhi Nagar (116). However, it is without any doubt a conservative estimate of the real food insecurity crisis facing lakhs of migrant workers in the city.

The lockdown was announced in Delhi on 19.04.2021 and in the ensuing period of nearly one and half months no measures have been operationalised towards addressing this growing crisis. On 24.05.2021, the Supreme Court has reiterated the growing need to ensure food security. The court has directed that provision of dry ration and functional community kitchens needs to be extended to migrant workers across all states. In the previous lockdown in March-June 2020, the Delhi government had started provision of ration through e-coupons. However, across the state workers faced difficulties in procuring e-coupons. Data received from workers also suggests difficulty in procuring ration even after getting an e-coupon due to the less number of distribution centres in the city. The large distance between place of residence and distribution centres also means that transport costs created problems in procurement of ration. Therefore, we appeal to the Government of NCT that more distribution centres need to be set up at closer distances to ensure ease of procurement.



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Another pressing concern is the burden of rent, which needs immediate attention. From our distress calls and survey, we have gathered that with job loss, payment of rent has become a major financial burden. Urgent intervention is required to ensure that migrant workers' right to housing is protected. Towards this we appeal to you that steps must be taken for rent waiver for workers or provision of a rent allowance for the period of the lockdown to all migrant workers.

Our data on the present situation of migrant workers in Delhi suggests that workers have faced massive job loss, loss of income and many are still reeling under the pressures of indebtedness from the last lockdown. Savings of migrant workers are also extinguishing fast and the distress cases we have addressed show that workers do not have the resources for meeting food expenses. Delhi is a one of the biggest destination states for migrant workers in the country. It is the labour of this vast majority of workers upon which the city is sustained. According to figures provided by the Government of NCT itself, 8 lakh migrant workers have been forced to return home during this lockdown. Loss of income, food insecurity and the pressure to pay rent are some of the major factors in this mass exodus of workers. The combined effects of the two lockdowns have pushed lakhs of workers towards further precariousness and destitution. In the months succeeding the first lockdown of 2020, 23 crore more Indians have been pushed below the poverty line. It is the duty of the state to ensure that requirements of workers for basic sustenance are met in times of unprecedented crisis. In this situation it is more urgent than ever that immediate provision of ration is ensured for migrant workers, without the requirement of IDs as per court order of 24th and 13th May.

Thanking you,



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