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Date: 1.04.2020

Shri Santosh Gangwar  
The Minister for Labour and Employment,  
Govt. of India  
Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg  
New Delhi - 110001

Sir,

We the Central Trade Unions would like to draw your attention to the complaints/information/grievances being received by us from the workers, employees and our unions from all over India. On our part we are doing whatever possible at our level in contacting the concerned officials of various government/state enterprises/institutions/industries/sectors and the state & local administration for the redressal. Our unions and activists are also involved in the relief work despite constraints of movement.

However we are bringing to your notice for seeking your immediate intervention at your level.

At the outset we would like to point out that we had raised several issues in our joint letter addressed to the Prime Minister on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (letter attached) . We had demanded immediate announcement of strong statutory enforceable measures to arrest and put a ban on the ongoing spree of retrenchments, wage cut, forced unpaid leave etc being perpetrated by the employers on the workers, particularly contract/casual/temporary/fixed term workers in various establishments, particularly in private sector throughout the country to be enforced both by central and state governments. We are still regularly getting information of forced unpaid leave etc. including from NCR region. Appeal/Advisory by the Govt, both the Labour Ministry and Home Ministry is not at all working at ground level to prevent loss of employment and earnings and also eviction from local residence in the process of lock down. We had detailed the demands about the immediate packages for various sectors of workers.

The experience of the past seven days unfortunately bears out our apprehensions. We give some instances:

Employees manning essential services run in the public/government sector being stopped and detained by the police, in spite of their holding valid Identity Cards issued by the concerned authorities, the contract/outsourced workers mostly not being provided any protective gear. Even the ASHA and Anganwadi workers who are working in the frontline in combating Corona are being tortured and manhandled in various states by Police and local miscreants with impunity.

A vast number of workers, not even registered in any of the welfare boards and for whose benefit the Government claims to be putting in place the Social Security Code, suddenly find themselves without work, without any support system to feed them and cut off far away from their native places. There are reports pouring in from all the States that workers' services are being dispensed with in total disregard of the "Advisory" by the Secretary Ministry of Labour and also by Home Secretary.

The government has not mobilized any machinery to transport grain supplies in their Godowns to various rationing outlets in States. Restriction on inter-state transport movement made the situation difficult further. Hoarding is rampant and the prices of essential commodities are shooting up which is causing further hardship to the working people.

We urge you to impress upon the concerned departments to deal with those seeking opportunity in this hour of crisis or being callous to the plight of the masses, by enforcing the message of government advisories, to ensure that everyone has the means to feed himself/herself.

The migrant workers are in deep distress with no work, no money and removal from their work places and in many cases eviction from the rented accommodations, and have nothing to depend upon for stay and food and are desperately attempting to reach back to their home facing police highhandedness. Due to sudden lock down, the rail and road transport shutdown, they are walking on highways hundreds of miles, some of them along with their families including small children. Many of them are stopped/detained, insulted and humiliated by police particularly on the inter-state borders and are now staying under the sky midway. And above this, there are reports of deaths due to accidents and hardships.

We urge you that the government must act urgently to rescue them with necessary transport facilities and they should be provided with food, shelter water and required health services. This is in line with the directions/advisories issued by the Home Secretary to all state govts. But Central Govt also must take the responsibilities to facilitate implementation of their own advisories/directions.

Please also ensure that all the unorganized workforce, registered and un registered, the daily/casual/contract/outsourced and piece rated home based workers, agriculture workers, MGNREGA and scheme workers including ASHA, Mid day meal, Anganwadi and others in such a category, those who are truck drivers and helpers, coolies/porters/loaders unloaders, construction & beedi workers, the domestic workers, waste pickers, self employed as hawkers-vendors, rickshaw pullers, e-rickshaw/auto/taxi drivers etc. are covered for the cash and ration relief at the earliest. Public Distribution System be used effectively and universally for all these needy people. Opening of procurement centers for the farm produce near to villages and towns could also help the accessibility to the producers and buyers. A comprehensive income-support scheme for all the unorganized/informal sector workers is the urgent need of the hour and we urge the Govt to urgently act upon the same to save overwhelming majority of the country's workforce from biggest human disaster. Bank branches in some cases are 40 – 50 kilometer from the place of workers/their families, hence the other methods of disbursal of cash transfer should also be devised.

The ESIC hospitals and dispensaries be furnished with all necessary protective equipments for the safety of medical, paramedical, safai karamcharis and other staff while giving their services. The necessary inputs of medical facilities be taken care off. They should also be considered for insurance cover.

In view of the ever-growing scale and spread of the problems of these workers particularly migrant workers, and the trade unions being in the thick of things we request you to ask the counterparts in ministry of labour in respective states to communicate and coordinate with all the trade unions in their states including formation of trade union committees and issuing valid passes to office bearers of trade unions for addressing the above mentioned issues including their participation in relief work.

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