

## **Gujurat Agriculture Labour Union (GALU)**

### **MEMORANDUM:**

#### **\*For Construction Workers:**

1. There are 1.5 million construction workers in Gujarat, out of which about 650,000 workers have been registered in Gujarat Housing and other construction labor welfare boards. The Board has a welfare fund of about Rs 2900 crore and is to be used only for the social security and welfare of the workers. Therefore, we demand that all beneficiary workers enrolled in the board take into account the days during lockdown and deposit 50% of the existing minimum wage directly into their account. The Government of India has directed the Ministry of Labor and Employment Department of each state to utilize the unused welfare funds for the construction workers.

We would like to point out to you that the Punjab Government has announced a deposit of Rs. 1,000 in all the construction workers' bank accounts registered in the Board.

2. Due to the lock down, it is necessary to stop the workers from gathering in the morning to find employment in the city. Therefore, the food-based Annapurna Yojana, which provides food at Rs 10, should be suspended immediately and the beneficiary workers should be given a Ration coupons.
3. The board has more than 9 Dhanvantri Arogya rath available; these should be used for health awareness of the workers, and for distributing masks and sanitizers to the construction workers.
4. We estimate that more than 60 percent of the nearly 650,000 registered beneficiaries in Gujarat Housing and Other Construction Labor Welfare Boards have not renewed their Card and so are not eligible to get benefits. We request you to provide benefits to workers who have been registered from the year 2014 without keeping criteria of renewal of card.
5. We request you to kindly add Coronavirus under the list of fatal and occupation diseases and workers should declare Rs.300,000 Sahay yojana for workers who are victims of coronavirus.

#### **\*For workers registered in Gujarat Unorganized Village Workers Welfare Board:**

1. Gujarat Government has constituted Gujarat Unorganized Village Workers Welfare Board on February 2007. The Board covers Rag Pickers, Street vendors, Agarbati Manufacturers, BrassPart Workers, Bandhani Workers, Kite Makers and Individually Cleaning Workers working in the Societies in Ahmadabad, Surat and Jamnagar. They include over 500,000 workers have been registered under this board. Therefore, these

registered workers should be declared as living subsistence allowance of 5% of the existing minimum wage during the time the lock-down is run by the board. Therefore, these registered workers should be declared as living sustenance allowance of 50% of the existing minimum wage during the time the lock-down is run by the government.

In addition, the state government started issuing UVIN cards in year 2014 to connect the unorganized sector workers with the benefits of social security planning and more than 200,000 UVIN cards were issued. The state government, with the support of UVIN cards, should announce a living allowance for workers in urban unorganized areas.

### **For farm workers and other rural workers:**

1. Of the rural workers working in the unorganized sector in Gujarat, about 10 million rural workers including farm labor, sugarcane harvesting, brick kiln workers, workers in fisheries industry, nursery, poultry farming, animal , sugarcane plantation, cultivation of sugarcane, cleaning workers etc are working. Rural workers from the eastern belt of the state migrate to Saurashtra, North Gujarat as well as where the agriculture is rich. Seasonal migration for farm labor and other labor are done by workers.
2. The current lockdown will affect the large number of above mentioned workers. As the government is providing Rs. 6000 to farmers and in the same way we request govt. to kindly put 50% of the minimum wage into landless farm workers' bank account.

### **For Casual Labourers:**

Gujarat is the growth engine of development of the country and hence Gujarat is the hub of inter-state migrant labors. More than 5 million migrant workers are working in the state. In the state workers are working in industries, or are largely employed by the contractual practice, occasionally as laborers, as well as self-employed.

From today onwards a complete lockdown has been implemented which is a necessary step to control the disease. But the move has put the migrant workers in trouble. Workers in construction work in Gujarat, workers in ceramic industry in Morbi working in Rajkot's foundry and power loom in Surat and GIDC around Ahmedabad will face challenging conditions.

The below mentioned are special suggestions for such migrant workers:

1. In every city, town and metropolis of the state, these migrant workers are living in sheds or rented rooms as well as in kutchha houses in government-owned premises. In this way, how can one maintain a social distance where there is between 3 and 8 people staying in one room? This is why most workers living in this state want to move to their homeland. Because there is no work right now and unsure if they will get paid, and there is danger of getting sick as well as worrying about family and the family worrying about them. In this case, it is necessary for the government to arrange special buses for the migrant laborers if they want to

go to their homeland. In this way, an arrangement can be made to send the migrant workers safely to their homeland before an atmosphere of chaos ensues.

2. Immediately, a list of the laborers working in every city, town and metropolis of the state (living in raw huts in rental rooms and in government housing areas) should be prepared and ration supplies should be provided for them. A list of workers living on the site should be prepared by sending inspectors to the construction site operating in the cities. These workers live in an un-hygienic state and precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the virus.

The state government is fighting the corona epidemic and all the people of the state are taking self-discipline to curb this epidemic and cooperate with the state. If the lockdown goes on for a long time, the poor working class must be financially supported to survive otherwise there will be no money to eat at home and they will have to compromise health and go out earning their living, and if this happens then there will be big explosion of Corona pandemic. Just a reminder that currently the disease is limited to prosperous upper middle class families, we can imagine the consequences if the virus appears in the person living in the Urban slum areas.

Therefore, it is our humble request that the State Government takes our above suggestions and demands seriously and takes steps to reduce its impact as soon as possible.