

# **DOMESTIC WORKERS' LINK**

(A Bi-Annual Publication of the National Domestic Workers' Movement) Vol. 32 - No. 10 (April-Sept. 2020)

### When the going gets tough... Giving up is Not an Option...

### Editorial...

The year 2020 started out on a promising note. Just as 20/20 stands for perfect vision, this year was hoped to be an eventful one. It turned out to be eventful in ways we did not imagine and it has also changed our vision of what the future can be.

The pandemic led to one of the worst crises in the history of NDWM. The prolonged lockdowns all over the country dealt a devastating blow to the livelihoods of millions of informal workers all over the country. Domestic workers are among the worst hit as they were confined to their homes and locked out of their workplaces. Without advance warning, they were suddenly deprived of their livelihood. Because of the fear of infection, domestic workers were no longer welcome even in houses where they had worked for years.

With no jobs and salaries and the erosion of their meagre savings, most domestic workers especially the elderly and those with small children faced the deadly prospect of starvation and even being homeless as they were unable to pay rents. Thanks to the generous contributions of benefactors from India and abroad, NDWM was able to swing into action supplying life-saving dry rations to nearly 35,357 beneficiaries in all 15 states of their operations. Volunteers observing basic safety precautions and braving the risk of infection ensured the distribution of these dry ration kits even in remote areas.

While the immediate priority of NDWM has been to enable survival of the domestic workers and their families, the task of ensuring their ongoing livelihood continues to engage our efforts. Even before the pandemic, NDWM had launched 2 initiatives for the economic empowerment of domestic workers, namely workers' cooperatives and income generation programs. Cooperatives have been restarted in five States and are running successfully. The supplemental income generation programmes have proved to be a boon to workers' families who were suddenly deprived of their wages from employers due to being locked down by the pandemic. With the help of seed capital, they have been able to start small ventures like selling vegetables, snacks, readymade clothes, masks and sanitizers.

Our lobbying and advocacy efforts continue, as the Governments at the State and Central level have to act effectively to meet the challenges of rising unemployment. NDWM continues its efforts to keep the issues of workers alive in the corridors of power. Side by side, it continues its training and awareness building activities in online forums to be in line with social distancing mandates. The pandemic has forced everyone to reflect during their forced isolation and change tracks to build a more cooperative and inclusive society. There is a renewed sense of generosity and caring for those in need. This could be the silver lining on the dark cloud of the pandemic.

A bend in the road is not the end of the road, provided we take the turn in our stride! We have no option but to carry on our struggle with hope and determination.

# Effect of the Pandemic on the employment of domestic workers

As a healthcare measure to halt the spread of the infectious Coronavirus, a nationwide lockdown was mandated from March 26. 2020. It caught everyone unprepared as it was imposed with very little advance intimation. This has had a disastrous effect on domestic workers who were confined to their homes, cut off from their sources of livelihood and forced to spend their meagre savings just to survive. Coupled with unemployment, workers were also affected by the Coronavirus with some fatalities. In Maharashtra, a survey was conducted on Impact of lockdown on domestic worker's life - A study Analysis and Demand. The findings revealed that 62% domestic workers members had lost their employment partly and 24% had lost their employment fully.

State	No. of workers who lost work
Kerala	17 above 65 yrs age lost jobs
Karnataka	1500 workers lost jobs
Delhi	600 workers lost jobs
Nagaland	250 workers lost jobs
Bihar	2500 lost jobs
UP	540 workers lost jobs
Madhya Pradesh	800 workers lost jobs
Manipur	200 workers lost jobs
Goa	55 People completely lost their job
Meghalaya	55 lost jobs, 9 rejoined
Odisha	200 workers rejoined, 100 sick and above 60 yrs lost jobs
Rajasthan	400 workers lost jobs
Tamil Nadu	4386 workers out of work
Maharashtra	1349 workers lost jobs
Jharkhand	36 lost jobs, 259 uncertain due to lockdown.

### Relief Work...

NDWM was able to reach out and provide dry rations, masks, sanitizers and gloves to the most affected families. The beneficiaries were saved from severe food insecurity and starvation. Our intervention and assistance protected them from distress.

State	Relief work beneficiaries
Kerala	800 beneficiaries
Karnataka	530 beneficiaries
Delhi	843 beneficiaries
Nagaland	800 beneficiaries
Bihar	5300 beneficiaries
UP	4000 beneficiaries
Madhya Pradesh	1866 beneficiaries
Manipur	828 beneficiaries
Goa	2000 beneficiaries
Meghalaya	2000 beneficiaries
Odisha	1300 beneficiaries
Rajasthan	1000 beneficiaries
Tamil Nadu	6000 beneficiaries
Maharashtra	4000 beneficiaries
Jharkhand	2610 beneficiaries (Dry), 3480 for (cooked food).



# **Skilling Programmes**

To develop economic empowerment, NDWM has been conducting several skilling programmes to equip workers with additional capacity for earning their livelihood. These were especially helpful during the pandemic as they enabled workers deprived of their jobs to learn new skills that they could utilize to earn some income to keep their home fires burning. We organized skill trainings like fish processing, cooking, making of detergent, bags, shoes, dish wash liquid and soaps, weaving, and basket making, making surf, phenyl, detergent and dish wash liquid, making cement flower pots, stitching baby clothes, napkins, masks, making cloth and paper poly bags, multi cuisine cooking, housekeeping, etc. Through these trainings 1750 domestic workers benefited.









## **Income Generation Programmes**

Domestic workers who face the risk of losing their jobs and livelihood face financial emergency and vulnerability to debt. To promote sustainable livelihood options and to improve their quality of life, our focus was to support them financially to start self-employment activities. With the help of seed capital provided by NDWM along with training on basic business skills, workers have been encouraged to start small ventures that bring in much needed supplemental income and also boost their self-reliance. The income generating activities we have initiated are; mask stitching, food processing, making nutritional powder with multiple grains, making LED bulbs, weaving, basket making, tailoring, embroidery, stitching gowns and shawls, selling vegetables, fruits, snacks, small eateries, setting up shops, serving tea, weaving, plastic stools, making candles and detergents, selling groceries, idli, wada, dosa and ready-made clothes, setting up petty shop etc. 750 workers and their families have benefited greatly from this scheme.







## **Other Activities**

Due to pandemic and lockdown we were unable to organise our regular activities. The focus was on coordinating with the groups through online meetings to identify the problems they face and to intervene. The domestic workers were helped to learn to participate in online meetings. After the unlock phase began we could conduct activities with limited capacity. The key activities implemented are;

Activities implemented	No. of Participants
Trainings on capacity building, Leadership skills, Communication Skills	363
Trainings on Stress management,Mental Health, Counselling	338
Awareness on Covid 19	16062
Training on Labour Right, Housing Right, Right to food security	439
Awareness on Gender Based Violence	368
Training on Workers' Co-operatives	570







5

## Lobbying and Advocacy

Demands were raised before the Govt. of India and the State Governments to register the domestic workers in the Welfare Board, transfer cash to their account to survive the pandemic, to ensure that they are paid fair wages and to ensure health, food security and other social security provisions

- In Manipur, during the lockdown domestic worker leaders visited the ADC (Autonomous District Council) Chairman and members in their respective quarters to discuss their issues. They also contacted the Labour Minister about fixation of minimum wages for domestic workers.
- On May 17, the Advocacy team of Odisha along with domestic workers met Rourkela MLA Mr. Sarada Prasad Nayak and discussed issues of domestic workers including food grains for migrant workers without ration cards, violence against domestic workers at home and working place and providing unemployment pension for Domestic workers.
- In Rajasthan a meeting was organised with 3 political leaders to discuss the demands of domestic workers and discuss about the wage and labour codes.
- NDWM-Maharashtra team sent letters to MLAs/ MLCs to support the demands and to make recommendations to the CM to give financial support to domestic workers through Welfare Board. Shri. Bhai Jagtap, MLC, had given supportive letter to CM.
- Evidence Based Advocacy; NDWM- Maharashtra conducted a survey to assess the impact of covid-19 on domestic workers, the extent of loss of livelihood, children being dropped out of education, homeless domestic workers etc. The findings of the survey were presented to the press during the press conference and submitted to the Labour Ministry, Women and Child Development Ministry, the Chief Minister and the MLAs.
- NDWM-Delhi sent memorandum with the demands to the Government to provide financial help.
- NDWM-MP team submitted the list of domestic workers who don't receive the relief packages to the ration officer to provide ration. A Public Interest Litigation was also filed in High Court to provide ration to the non-ration card holders. Court asked the petitioner to submit the list to District Collector, which we did. We are waiting for a positive reply from the District collector.



## Various Campaigns

- In Kerala, 500 Post Cards were sent to the Chief Minister and 500 to Labour Dept highlighting the issues of domestic workers.
- NDWM- Karnataka organized Post Card Campaign on Domestic Workers Demands. 3000 Post Cards were posted to Prime Minister and to the Chief Minister of Karnataka.
- In Nagaland, Poster campaigns on the Rights of the domestic workers, ILO C-189 and ILO-C 190 were organized to make the general public aware of the rights of domestic workers and their issues.
- In Goa, Post cards were sent to various ministers to implement the minimum wages and Initiate registration of Domestic Workers in the Unorganised Workers Board. A delegation met the Labour minister, Labour commissioner and other officials to redress the problems faced by the workers especially the need for social security at this time of emergency.
- 5000 domestic workers sent post cards to Chief Minister of Maharashtra and State Labour Minister demanding cash support of Rs.10,000.
- Media persons were contacted to cover the plight of domestic workers and the impact of Covid 19 on domestic workers' lives. Many print and electronic media covered their issue.
- NDWM-TN along with Action Aid Association conducted a missed call campaign to high light the issues of the domestic workers and the demands have been sent to labor minister.





## Networking and Alliance Building

- NDWM-Karnataka participated in a networking meeting along with 6 union leaders to discuss the advocacy plan to send memorandum to the Chief Minister of Karnataka and former Prime Minister and Member of Rajya Sabha, demanding relief and legislation for domestic workers.
- Nagaland team participated in a consultation and networking meeting organized with the stakeholders and local Govt. authorities at Dudu Colony, Assam. The main speaker was Shri. Padma Kumar Pegu, APS SDPO. He called upon the Police Dept., VDP and local community to be more responsible and aware of the trafficking issues that happened daily in the surrounding localities.
- During the lock down NDWM-Odisha leaders joined the Peripheral Development group of Rourkela steel plant to distribute cooked food among the needy people. Many companies like TVS, Hyundai, Rotary club also distributed food items to 500 needy people with the help of Domestic worker leaders.
- In Tamil Nadu, the Post card campaign was organised by the network partners and members of the State platform. Many print and visual media covered the issues.
- NDWM Tamil Nadu joined Unorganized workers Federation, and trade unions to send memorandum to the Chief
  minister of Tamil Nadu and Labour minister for increase of cash assistance to the domestic workers, safe and
  secure transportation, state laws to protect the domestic workers and to revise their minimum wage. A Signature
  campaign was also organised and a symbolic demonstration was held.
- In Delhi, the staff and the 14 domestic workers took part in a dharna conducted by a networking organization in demand of domestic workers and other unorganized workers at Jantar Mantar.
- On August 28 the women led organizations in Bihar called for a nationwide protest against inaction of the state and central governments to rehabilitate the unorganized workers during the pandemic, especially migrant workers. They demanded loan waiver of self- help groups of women, compensation for the job loss of domestic workers and implementation the public distribution system. Aound 150 domestic workers from NDWM-Bihar participated in the rally.
- NDWM-Maharashtra has built its network and alliance with various groups like community youth group and social activist mandals. They helped to communicate with the rationing department, other Organisations for relief support. Support group with Lawyers and women activists extended their support to file writ petition in the court for proper functioning of Domestic workers Welfare Board.
- Nationwide protests were held by NDWM and NDWF under NPDW in different forms in the States of Maharashtra, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Orissa, Jharkand, Karnataka, Delhi, UP, Kerala, MP, Goa and Rajasthan to demand National Legislation for Domestic Workers, Cash transfer to the domestic workers affected by Covid crisis and to implement urban Employment Guarantee Scheme. Memoranda were submitted to the MPs, Labour Ministers in different States, Labour Commissioners and District Collectors.



## NDWM - CRM Programmes

 World Day against Child Labour was observed on 22nd June 2020 in Nagaland. The children held Child Awareness placards during the programme. Mr. Toka enlightened the children on COVID-19 safety measures and protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Sr. Mary Dukru made them aware of the advantages and disadvantages of mobile usage. A poster campaign was held on Child labour, child rights and issues faced by children during the pandemic. Drawing and poster competitions on issues of children were also held to enable the children to display their talents.



- Girl child day was observed by NDWM-Nagaland on Sept 8 in Naga colony where fifty girl children gathered, and were enlightened on gender equality and also importance of being equal in the society, empowering them that girl is not less than a boy child in any field.
- 30 CRM children from Varanasi were taken for the exposure to the Juvenile home at Ramnagar on March 8. Mr. Ashok, the in charge of the Juvenile home educated the CRM children about the Home, its functions and the type of children sent to the Juvenile home. CRM children interacted with the children and conducted some games with them.
- In Maharashtra, Community awareness for CRM members on covid-19 and safety measures, trainings on New Education policy 2020, gender equality and right to education were given. On the occasion of anti-child Labour Day, the CRM members held awareness campaign on covid-19 through Poster, painting and Video campaign. In October delegation of CRM leaders met stake holders like District Collector, District legal aid judge, Police officer to Unicef -Mumbai, asst. labor commissioner to discuss the problem faced by children during lockdown, the inability of children to access online education and to seek support to revoke fees charged by the schools for 2020-21 academic year
- NDWM-Jharkand team conducted two exposure visits for the members of the CRM to make the children aware of
  various legal aspects related to children. 42 CRM members visited the District Correctional Home where children
  in conflict with law are remanded for their correction. The team also met the Juvenile Justice Board members
  and also the Member Secretary of DLSA. A team of 21 children of CRM visited the Child Welfare Committee in
  Ranchi Collectorate Office. The 5 membered CWC met the children and explained about the different functions
  of the CWC. They narrated the legal procedure and the various rights offered to these children as per the law of
  our country.



## **Success Stories**

- Asha Devi is a domestic worker aged 58 from Patna. She has been working as a domestic worker since 25 years. She was part of the self-help groups formed by the National Domestic Workers Movement with the support of Bihar Government. Later when the Bihar Domestic Workers' Union was formed in 2011, she became member of the union. Since she was not able to cope up her family expenses with the meager salary she received, she started selling vegetables and later with the help of selfemployment support by NDWM she strengthened her business. During Covid-19 when she partially lost her job, her vegetable shop supported her financially and with the earning she started another shop selling snacks where her son assists her to run the shop. Through her earning she educated her daughters and her family is now in a better condition.
- Ms Usha a widow lives in North Delhi in a small house. She has three children. She works as a part time domestic worker and the remaining time she stiches clothes. She is the leader of domestic workers group. She mobilizes the domestic workers for meetings and programmes of NDWM. She was supported with the seed money to buy one more machine to improve her work and economic status. She intervenes when there is any problem for domestic workers. She also mobilised all the domestic workers in the area to go to the electricity office to get meter for them in the area for proper electricity and helped to identify the most affected people to reach relief service during the pandemic.

#### 2 CITY

#### NIKHIL M BABU HEMANI BHANDARI

Are oran A for her husband died in 2012, Rite Devi, 26, vent wer her husband dieg in Chargen, Bihar With opportunities to elec out a living searce, in 2014 she boarded a train to Delhi with her four children to seek em-ployment as a domestic worker. By March 2020 MS. Devi was working part-time in free homes, but when the novel co-ronavirus hit the country and a nationwide lockdown was an-nounced, she suddenly became jobless.

jobless. "I came here to earn as there was no work in the village. I nev-er foresaw a situation like this when 1 left my village," said Ms. Devi, her elder daughter looking

Devi, her elder dughter looking on. The family lives in a one-room house at Devi in south Delhi and has not been able to pay the rest for the past three months. Ms. Devi has borrowed Etde over the addown don-turn. "The government should help us," she sold. Ms. Devi's is not a lone case. Many of the doaren dod mes-tic workers The Hindu inter-viewed said they have loot their employment due to the virus outbreak and are finding it hard to make ends meet despite hor-rowing money.

<text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text>

Domestic workers struggle to make ends meet as employers choose to keep them away even during the 'unlock' phase. The lack of government welfare schemes or one-time monetary assistance has

only compounded their woes all a sea

out of job since the pandemic hit the Capital. •V.V. KRISHNAN

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020

to the Law Department [Delhi government] and kept going back and forth."

Change in policy The Narendra Modi-led NNA go-verment, after coming to pow-er in 2014, started working to codify and simplify 44 existing labour laws into four codes. The Code on Wages Bill, has been cleared. But the other three codes are yet to be passed by Parliament. The Code on Social Security, 2019, introduced in the Lok Sab-ho but not oyte passed, will abb

The Gode on Social Security, 2009, introduced in the Lok Sab-ba but not yet passed, will sub-sume eight have, including the unorganised Workers' Social Se-curity Act, 2008, as it will be subsumed by the new code. We are also not registering workers and the the Act 2008 as it will be subsumed by the new code. We are also not registering workers the the Act was passed in 2008 and had the Delhi govern-ment, wanted, it could have re-gistered workers under it and the simplification of have began formed weaker bearss ... the simplification of have began in 2015. The Delh Assembly can still pass a separate legislation for welfare of domestic workers like Maharashtra has done, if it wants," she said. The Delhi government has al-ion on allowed forming of un-tions for domestic workers and the marter is currently pending "-- tright Court, according -- tright Court, according -- to -- the second second second second second -- the second second second second -- the second second second second second second second -- the second second second second second second second second second -- the second ered workers under it and ned welfare boards before



## NDWM MEDIA

Eviction during pandemic adds to challenges faced by city's slum dwellers



#### **NDWM Nagaland region** observes IDWD at Dimapur



DIMAPUR: National Pramila expressed that Domestic Workers Move-inspite of COVID-19 pam-ment (NDWM) Nagaland demic, the NDWM will region in collaboration stand united and fight with Assisi Centre for the rights, dignity, Integrated Development respect and recognition commemorated "Interna-tional Domestic Workers we won't give up lets stand Daw" (IDWD) on June together Day" (IDWD) on June together.

16. She appealed the em-NEWM Nagaland region coordinator, Sr. Pramila to bostated that, pro-gramme was held under amme was held under theme, "Making de-ene tunor a rolline barrowich." So and the members regard-ene tunor a rolline barrowich. cent work a reality beyond COVID-19 pandemic". Sr.

all the directions given by the government. Rev. Fr. Paul Inashe Sumi expressed that dignity of la-bour should be recognised first by oneself, whether the work was small or big as employees contribution added to the economy of

Programme con-cluded with distribution of dry ration supported by NDWM, while light refreshment and safety kits like mask, sanitiser and water were provided to police personnel.

She appealed the emthe nation.

ployees and direct them properly so they may be able to sustain their life. Aobendang enlight-ened the members regard-ing safety measures of COVID-19 and to follow



#### श्रम कार्यालय पर ओडिशा गृह मजदूर सभा ने किया प्रदर्शन



टाउटकेला. अखिल ओडिशा गृह मजदूर सभा की ओर से अपनी मांगों को लेकर गुरुवार को श्रम कार्यालय के समक्ष प्रदर्शन किया गया. सभा की मांगों में कोविड-19 को लेकर डोमेस्टिक वर्कर्स को घर चलाने के लिए प्रति महीने 6.500 रुपये की राशि देने, कोविड काल खत्म होने के बाद घर मालिकों द्वारा डोमेस्टिक वर्कर को फिर से काम पर रखने. सभी डोमेस्टिक वर्करों को राष्टीय खाद्य योजना के तहत राशन कार्ड देने, इन वर्करों को सरकार की ओर से स्पेशल फंड प्रदान करने की मांगें शामिल है. प्रदर्शन में सभा से जुड़े दिगंबर महंती समेत अलग-अलग अंचलों से आये डोमेस्टिक वर्कर शामिल हए.



National Domestic Workers Welfare Trust 104/A, St. Mary's Apartments, Nesbit Road, Mazgaon, Mumbai - 400 010, INDIA Tel.: +91 22 2378 0903 Website: www.ndwm.org

Ξ

### कामगारों को मुआवजा देने की मांग



शुक्रवार को अपनी कई मांगों को लेकर प्रदर्शन करते महिला संगठन .

महिला संगठनों ने संयुक्त रूप से मार्च निकाला

संवाददाता > पटना

महिलाओं के जीवन, जीविका और लोकतांत्रिक अधिकारों की रक्षा की मांग को लेकर महिला संगठनों ने शुक्रवार को संयुक्त मार्च निकाला. मार्च में महिलाएं अपनी मांगों के समर्थन में पोस्टर और बैनर के साथ शामिल हई, डाक बंगला चौराहे पर कार्यक्रम

को संबोधित करते हुए महिला संगठनों की प्रतिनिधियों ने कहा कि कोरोना महामारी के दौर में सरकार ने जिस राहत पैकेज की घोषणा की, वह आम लोगों के लिए नहीं था. आज प्राइवेट जॉब करनेवाली महिलाओं से लेकर गरीब घरेलू कामगारों का रोजगार छूट गया है, लेकिन सरकार ने इन्हें कोई मुआवजा नहीं दिया.

उन्होंने मांग करते हुए कहा कि स्वयं सहायता समूहों व माइक्रो फाइनेंस कंपनियों से कर्ज लेने वाली

उन्हें रोजगार दिया जाये. छोटे कर्जों की वसूली पर 31 मार्च 2021 तक रोक लगे. इस कार्यक्रम में ऐपवा की मीना तिवारी, एडवा की रामपरी, बिहार महिला समाज की राजश्री किरण एआइएमएसएस की अनामिका कुमारी ,घरेलू कामगार यूनियन की सिस्टर लीमा, बिहार मुस्लिम महिला मंच की शीमामा और एएसडब्लूएफ की आस्मां खान समेत कई संगठन की सदस्य प्रामिल शीं

महिलाओं का कर्ज माफ किया जाये