

06 April 2020

To

Shri B. S. Yediyurappa

Honourable Chief Minister

Government of Karnataka

Bengaluru

Subject: Suggestions for being considerate to the needs of migrant workers, single women, children and the aged in the COVID 19 relief operations

Respected Sir

We appreciate the COVID 19 relief operations undertaken by the Government of Karnataka and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Pallike (BBMP). We have few suggestions to expand the relief operations for including inter-state migrant workers, single women, children and the aged. We have been working with the waste-pickers and informal waste collectors in the city for almost a decade. A lot of them are inter-state migrant workers, single women with children and aged. In the ongoing relief operations, BBMP is seeking either the Aadhar number or phone number as base information for providing food. This measure may exclude single women, children and the aged, who may not have either Aadhar number or phone. Their unintended exclusion may push them into dire consequences. Therefore, we recommend the following measures:

- Universal distribution of food, including a small food kit for children which includes protein-rich food items like groundnuts, eggs and milk.
- For Bangalore, Indira canteens are spread all over the city. They can be used to provide both cooked food for the workers and their families as well as a distribution channel for supplying raw food as a part of the Public Distribution System.

In the case of inter-state migrant workers, a lot of them have Aadhar Number and other identity documents from their place of origin. At present, those documents including Aadhar number are not valid to avail benefits of various social welfare programmes instituted by the Government of Karnataka. We suggest that the Aadhar Number issued from the place of origin can be used to provide food through the Public Distribution System. This measure will be in line with the Draft Social Security Code, prepared by the Union Labour Ministry. Further, due to lack of work, a lot of them have no money to buy cooking fuel. We recommend that based on their existing identity documents, they should be included in Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, so that they can get gas cylinder for cooking at a subsidized price.

In many communities, it is found that due to the lockdown, cases of domestic violence against women and children are increasing. We request you to start a helpline number for survivors of domestic violence. In addition to helpline number, in the absence of a physical meeting, we request that the survivors of domestic violence be counselled via phone. The state government must create a protocol for immediate removal of the survivor without putting the burden of proof. Wherever possible, as a part of the relief operations art therapy kits be provided to the domestic violence survivors.

Yours Sincerely

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Co-founder & Executive Director
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