

Left Invisible, Starved And Abandoned By COVID-19 Second Wave: What Do Domestic Workers Want?

COVID-19 second wave and the current lockdown has been like a nail in the coffin for domestic workers since they are likely to have the longest delay in return to work. They are left stranded to struggle without access to immediate relief measures and social security schemes. We have personally witnessed their hardships and trauma. Without immediate, concrete steps by the government and support by employers, the DWs will continue to face lack of food, income and social security combined with fear and stigma. As part of the *Network for the Rights and Voices for Domestic Workers in Delhi-NCR*, we raise following demands on behalf of 15,000+ domestic workers we work with across 70 + locations:

1. DWs should be considered as essential/frontline workers and should be given priority in vaccination
 - a. Vaccination should be either doorstep or through walk-in-centres.
 - b. Provide mobile vans for distant centres.
 - c. Provide one open counter at each centre for those who don't have access to online registration facility. They should be provided on the spot registration by the volunteers at the centre.
 - d. Those DWs who do not have any mobile phone should be provided slips for next date instead of SMS on mobile phone.
 - e. Provide simple and clear information to reduce hesitancy and fear.
 - f. Make information accessible to all informal workers
 - g. A comprehensive monitoring system in case of adverse effects, following vaccination.
 - h. Trade unions and organisations working with DWs are willing to help the Government to ensure smooth process of vaccination.
2. Provide an unconditional cash transfer of Rs 7500 per month for at least three months to each worker with immediate effect.
3. Distribution of immediate relief packages of food and other essential items like sanitation products and condoms.
4. Mohalla clinics should be made functional immediately. They can play an important role in providing public health care (including essential medicines, access to doctors) for non-COVID needs, information and referral for testing, hospitalization etc. for COVID care.
5. For DWs' children:
 - a. Ensure that all are linked with local ICDS centres.
 - b. Provision of day-care facilities.
 - c. Immunization and growth monitoring to be continued.
 - d. Anganwadi centres could act as isolation centres in resettlement colonies and other informal settlements.
6. Employers should provide paid leave in case of illness with COVID symptoms.
7. RWAs can facilitate camps for vaccination within their colonies.