



National Alliance of Social Security (NASS) Declaration of Solidarity

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country went into lockdown on 24th March, resulting in a widespread humanitarian crisis for the many informal workers stranded without work or shelter, for many of the workers relied on a daily wage. During the lockdown, Employers, Industries and the Government showed sympathy towards the migrant workers who had to walk for miles to reach their hometowns. This sympathy only extended to some sectors and had a little impact on the government's next move. The mass migration took place not only because of the medical emergency the world was facing but also due to the lack of social security that should have been ensured for the informal workers. This crisis has highlighted the need to advocate for the rights of these workers and include them in the labor and social security protection offered to formal sector workers.

In particular, the impact has been gendered as has been the recovery, women workers have been impacted strongly (as compared to men workers). In general, women workers experience increased difficulties including increased harassment in workplace and homes, unemployment, unequal & low wages and a slower rate of recovery. The care burden of households has further added to their vulnerabilities.

The informal workers and the marginalized workers are still struggling to rebuild their lives.

Even after this display of the need to ensure social security for the workers throughout the sectors, the government through the passage of the four labor codes, has pushed the agenda of "ease of doing business" rather than ensuring worker's rights.

The National Convention of Workers which is organized jointly by the central unions and independent federation was held on 2nd of October 2020, strongly condemned the onslaught on the basic democratic and constitutional rights of workers and farmers.

Recently, the government has passed four labor codes (The social Security code, The Wages code, The industrial Relations Code and The Occupational Health and Safety Code.) ,without taking into consideration the points put forth from the worker's perspective. According to National Convention of workers the codes were designed to impose conditions of virtual slavery on workers, making formation of unions difficult and virtually taking away the right to strike, keeping large sections of unorganized sector workers, such as street vendors, domestic workers, mid-day meal workers, homebased workers, beedi workers, construction workers, rickshaw-pullers, agriculture and allied food workers and other daily wagers etc. out of their ambit.

The National Convention of Workers has called upon the people to participate in the country wide demonstration on 26th of November 2020.

The National Convention of Workers have put forward the following demands:

1. Cash transfer of Rs 7500 per month for all non-income tax paying families
2. 10 kg free ration per person per month to all needy
3. Expansion of MGNREGA to provide 200 days' work in a year in rural areas at enhanced wages. extension of employment guarantee to urban areas
4. Withdraw all anti farmer laws and anti-worker labor codes
5. Stop privatization of public sector including the financial sector and stop corporatization of Govt run manufacturing and service entities like Railways, Ordinance Factories, Ports etc.
6. Withdraw the draconian circular on forced premature retirement of Government & PSU Employees
7. Provide Pension to all, scrap NPS and restore earlier Pension, improve EPS-95

National Alliance for Social Security (NASS) stands in solidarity with the National Convention of Workers and supports the 7 demands put forward.

National Alliance for Social Security (NASS) is an alliance of six trade unions and membership-based worker organizations across India. It was founded in 2010 to generate collective interventions to assert the social security rights of informal workers. The member organizations have been instrumental in policy advocacy and also people's advocacy to demand the government to bring out pro labour policies and laws such as i.e. Unorganized Sector Social Security Act, Domestic Violence Act, Right to Information Act, MGNREGA and so on. Ever since the Government of India released the draft labour code on social security for public response, NASS has also been one of the active platforms analysing the different drafts of the code and responded to the same.

National Alliance for Social Security (NASS) being an alliance of membership-based worker organizations particularly working with informal workers, also wants to draw attention to the following demands for informal workers:

- Informal Workers need to be recognized and their contribution to the economy needs to be acknowledged.
- The informal workers need to be registered separately.
- Maternity benefit of Rs. 60,000 should be ensured calculating @ Rs10000/-per month for 6 months, for all women workers.
- A pension of Rs. 5000 per month for all informal workers should be ensured after reaching the age of 60 years.
- All informal workers should be linked to ESI schemes with benefits.
- A compensation of Rs. 500000 should be ensured in case of permanent disability or death.
- MGNREGA cards should be issued for all the rural unemployed workers and provide employment for 200 days per employee and not per family, this should also be extended to urban workers.
- Payment of equal wages to women workers and stopping discriminatory practices laying off of women workers.
- The delivery mechanism should be customized to be poor friendly, decentralized access of benefits and efficient and time-bound delivery of benefits, which can be done with the help of civil society organizations and labour unions.

National Alliance for Social Security (NASS) and its allied organizations will participate in the strike that is going to take place on 26th of November 2020 and will continue supporting the convention through longer struggles for worker's rights.

