

## **A STUDY OF TWO CASES ON CORONA VIRUS LOCK DOWN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY OF UNORGANISED WORKERS (CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER)**

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### **Abstract**

*The outbreak and spread of Corona Virus has affected all economic activities throughout the globe and has particularly affected the unorganized sector workers very adversely. In India most of the workers get employment in unorganized sector only. The Covid 19 has posed a serious threat upon their survival .*

*This is a case study on reverse migration of unorganized construction workers and other workers from Punjab to their respective native places in the state of West Bengal ,Bihar etc. due to outbreak of Covid 19 most commonly known as Corona Virus .This states the implications of lockdown on such unorganized workers income ,health and social security .This also explains how scant statutory provisions are there so far as such workers in the unorganized sector are concerned*

**Keywords:** *unorganized construction workers, social security, Covid 19, income, health.*

### **Two Stories with two different outcomes for the workers:**

#### **The case of Mr. Maya Chand :**

Mr. Mayachand had come from his native state of Bihar fifteen years back when he was twenty years old. There was a massive flood in his village and he lost all his belongings there .He had nothing to fall back upon and some of his relatives motivated to migrate to Punjab where they could get some gainful employment .He somehow managed to reach Punjab and initially started to work in a hotel as a

helper but soon he left the job and came in contact with a contractor from his native place and he provided him a job in building construction work. He started as an ordinary construction workers who worked in construction activities in different sites. With passage of time he refined his abilities and started to work as Mason .Since the work was provided by the contractor in irregular fashion he mostly got wages on daily basis .If he needed some extra money the contractor give him some advance amount of money

which used to be realized from his due wage payments .He also got married in the meanwhile and became father of three children .He used to stay in a rented house and his children got education in government school. His wife started to help her husband by doing the job of domestic maid. At times he got some work on his own where he got lump sum amount but very rarely.

Mr.Mayachand visited his native place once in a year to see his relatives and pretended to do some respectable office job in Punjab.

In the second half of the March month(2020) the government announced Lock Down and curfew was also imposed. All activities were put to standstill and everybody was forced to stay at home .No movement was allowed .Few persons avoided the lock down and got good lesson form the police Mr Mayachand had got the work on 20th of March but was paid till 19th of March. He tried to contact the contractor but he did not respond. After many efforts the Contractor paid him Rs.900 He purchased food grains and eatables for his family and returned .At home he found that he has got food grains and eatables for three days .He murmured why this lock down? His children were happy to get unofficial holidays later to be converted to vacation .He remembered that he already paid the house rent but he had to pay for next month. No worry everything would be ok next month he thought. Three days passed and all eatables finished .Hardly any money was left .The next day his wife said my employer has asked me not to come for the job and also paid my salary of Rs.500 .Now the difficult situation was very much confronting him with full might. He tried to contact his contractor and demanded some money but he refused .He talked to his friends but they were facing the same situation. He also came to know that trains are not moving to any place .Now he even tried to move outside to do some job but in vain. Somebody told him that vegetable

vendors are allowed to sell their stuff under certain conditions. They had to get pass from the police .He talked to her wife. She had saved some money amounting to Rs.5000 against rainy days .He decided what he would do. Next day he borrowed a cart from his friend for a month. He took permission from the police and purchased vegetables and fruits from the whole seller. He had to purchase a mask and sanitizer. He had to move from one lane to another from morning till late evening. He used to earn Rs.200 to 300 daily. Some NGO from his locality provided him food grains also. Now he reduced his expenditure to bare minimum. Till today he is surviving this way. Although there is unorganized workers social security act 2008 it did not help him anyway. As per the law social security of all types need to be provided to him by the state but he has to do everything on his own. He hopes to get the work when lock down is revoked. But he is optimistic.

#### **Case Questions**

1. What is the central issue in the case?
2. Whether to switch over the job was a right decision?
3. Should Mr. Maya Chand have returned to his native place.
4. Do you think the contractor played his role rightly

#### **The Case of Mr. Sohan Patidar :**

Mr. Sohan Patidar left his home in West Bengal due to a financial crisis in his family 10 years back when he was thirty years old .He had hardly any education but knew the work of cooking very well. One of his relative was working in the city of Jalandhar in Punjab for quite some time and motivated him to join him. He went there and started working as porter in a transport company. After two years he left the job and joined a food restaurant as a helper. Later on he become one of the cook and was paid Rs.8000 per mensem as salary with free food. He was already married before coming to Punjab and had two children. His children studied in local government school and his wife was not

doing any job. Apart from his salary he got some amount of money as bonus during festive season. He visited his native place once a year and his employer provided him one side fare of train. Everything was going as usual when in the second half of the March Month 2020 he heard that there is a curfew in Punjab and also lockdown. The restaurant where he was working was closed by the administration. He got his salary for that month .After few days his employer called him and gave him Rs.1000 and some food grains and said you are no longer in job. He stayed at home waiting for opening of the restaurant but even after a month nothing changed .Now he was very worried he had no money left. He was staying in a rented house and the owner demanded the rent .He somehow managed to pay the rent. In the meanwhile some food stuff was provided by local authorities. He heard that some of the persons are going home

on special trains meant for migrant workers. He reached the station with wife and children .There was real chaos. But he along with members of the family managed to get in the train and reached Jharkhand. From Jharkhand he managed to reach his native place on a goods truck. Now he thinks as to what he will do in the village. He has a house to live in with a small plot of agriculture land .He does not know whether he should return to Punjab or will he ever get his previous job. What about the education of children? He is just puzzled and hopeless.

**Case Questions :**

- 1.What is the central issue in the case ?
- 2.Was the decision to return to the native place by Mohan Patidar right?
- 3.Was there any alternative course of action available ?
- 4.What can be done by Mohan Patidar to survive in his native place ?