

Against the Anti-Anganwadi Caregivers Attitude of Delhi and Central Government

FROM **INDEFINITE**
31ST **STRIKE!**
JANUARY ONWARDS

**SISTERS, FIGHT TO THE FINISH!
OUR RESOLVE SHALL NOT DIMINISH!!**

Sisters, Comrades,

Our historic strike of 2017 will complete 5 years in 2022. After our marathon strike of 58 days, the Delhi government had finally surrendered before the strength of our unity. After all the failed attempts of the Delhi government to sabotage our strike, they had to issue a gazette notification declaring doubling of our honorarium. Our victory in 2017 was a magnificent one. But now the time has come to conquer new heights.

OUR CHARTER OF DEMANDS :

- Keeping in view our duties and inflation, the government must increase our honorarium with immediate effect to Rs.25,000 and Rs.20,000 for worker and helper respectively.
- The Delhi and Central Government must ensure that the arrears of the honorarium hike (Rs.58,000 and Rs.29,250 to worker and helper respectively for 39 months till January 2022) announced by the Central Government with effect from October 1, 2018 are paid immediately.
- Anganwadi caregivers must be given retirement benefits.
- The decree forcing Anganwadi caregivers into unpaid labour by opening 'Saheli Samanvay Kendra' and the New Education Policy must be withdrawn by the Delhi and Central Government. The decision to increase the working day of Anganwadi women workers must be withdrawn immediately.
- Guarantee full safety arrangements for the women workers working during the COVID pandemic and in case they become infected, the responsibility of proper treatment must be taken by the department.
- Stop the infiltration and interference of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) immediately.
- Give all Anganwadi workers and helpers the status of government employees. We must be regularised and brought under the ambit of labor laws so that we are guaranteed employment
- Withdraw New Education Policy – 2020 and stop any kind of privatisation in Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).
- Provide benefits like ESI, PF, and pension to all Anganwadi workers and helpers and issue social security cards to all Anganwadi caregivers.
- Recruitment for the vacant posts in the ICDS scheme must be done immediately. Promotion to the post of Supervisor must be done from among the Anganwadi workers, and eligible Anganwadi helpers must be promoted as workers without any cap on age limit or experience. This process must be made entirely transparent.
- Regularise the Anganwadi workers, who have been put on 'panel' or 'leave' immediately with transparency. Issue letters of panel workers regularised in 2021 immediately.
- Increase the budget of Anganwadi and regularise only dry food as supplementary nutrition in Anganwadi centres.
- Open new centres according to population and abolish the system of 'Additional Charge'.
- Restore the discontinued pension of Anganwadi workers.
- The government must bear the expenses of phone and internet bill and these bills must be paid regularly.
- Withdraw the order issued by the Delhi Government's Department of Women and Child Development on 3rd December with the intention of taking punitive action against Anganwadi caregivers immediately.
- Cancel the direct benefit transfer scheme!
- Shut down the Poshan Tracker app.

OUR FIGHT FOR HONORARIUM INCREMENT IS JUSTIFIED!

Sisters,

After the increase in our honorarium last time, the payment was fixed at Rs.9698 and Rs.4839 for workers and helpers respectively. But since then, not only has the inflation increased tremendously but our workload has also been increased continuously. *The increase in the prices of some essential goods and services from the year 2016 to 2022: Petrol 40%, diesel 56%, LPG cylinder 80%, milk 15%, mustard oil 70%, salt 10%, rice 10%, wheat 10%, bread 35%, wheat products 37%, sooji 23%, arhar dal 18%, moong dal 10%, rajma 63%, soybean 42%, onion 120%, potato 37%, tomato 100%, other vegetables (on average) 30%, salt 11.8%, chicken 30%, mutton 55%, shampoo 2%, bathing soap 9.5%, toothbrush 12%, toothpaste 17.8%, children's clothes 27%, half pant 44%, suit (for men) 27%, suit (for women) 35%, sari 25%, school dress 26%, shirt/t-shirt 15%, allopathic medicines 24.4%, homeopathic medicines 22.4%, lab testing 32%, tuition/coaching 22%, school bus 59%, college fee 25%, auto fare 37%, bus fare 32%, metro fare >100%, rail fare 27%. If we account for these figures, our real wages have in fact reduced.*

Both the Delhi Government and Central Government see us Anganwadi caregivers as a source of cheap labour. Although in the eyes of both the governments, we are mere 'volunteers' and as per our job description our responsibility is limited to health check-up and vaccination of children and pregnant and lactating mothers, supplementary nutrition allocation, informal elementary education for children in the age group of 3-6 years, and survey. But in the last few years, we 'volunteers' have also been burdened with the work of animal survey, BLO work, baby shower, and anna-prashan. Our duties have increased even more during the COVID pandemic. Apart from this, under the guise of volunteering, now the Delhi Government and Central Government want us to do unpaid labour by burdening us with the workload of women empowerment under the 'Saheli Samanvay Kendra' and formal primary education under the New Education Policy. Not only this, according to the order issued in December 2021 by the Delhi Government, the rules of discipline for us "volunteers" have been made more strict than for the government employees. We must ensure the smooth functioning of the department, must send our location daily on time, must not take any leaves, must be answerable for the quality and quantity of supplementary nutrition, must always be ready for inspections, the monitoring committee will always keep an eye on us; but the top officials of our own department are exempted from all these rules!

In view of the rising inflation and our workload, our demand for an increase in honorarium is absolutely justified. It's a cruel joke for all the ministers-MPs-MLAs and top officials who receive salaries in lakhs of rupees to tell us to run our household expenses in a city like Delhi in just Rs.9,698 and Rs.4,839 a month. Our honorarium at the Central Government level was last revised in 2011. After that, in 2018, Prime Minister Modi had announced a marginal increase of Rs.1500 and Rs.750 in the honorariums of workers and helpers respectively, which has proved to be a 'jumla' like all other announcements of the Modi government. At the same time, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi is making claims of being a supporter of scheme workers in all poll-bound states, but has been silent on the demands of the scheme workers in its own state. Apparently, the Delhi Government is "committed" to women empowerment and "unfortunately" cannot give us the status of employees! But the decision to increase our honorarium is entirely in the hands of the Delhi Government. Whenever the question of salaries of ministers-MLAs-councillors comes up, the Delhi government is very prompt in passing the bills to raise their salaries. But it is forcing the Anganwadi workers to slog at the same old honorarium. In 2017, the Delhi government had passed a bill seeking a 400% increase in the salaries of its MLAs, which it had to scrap later. But according to a bill re-introduced during the pandemic in August 2021, the salaries of MLAs have been increased by 66%. But Kejriwal 'Sir' and his lackeys are not satisfied with this 66% hike either. Whenever we raise the demand for our honorarium hike, Kejriwal 'Sir' feigns helplessness. But the Aam Aadmi Party doesn't show any hesitation in spending on its promo-advertisements. From March 2020 to July 2021, the Aam Aadmi Party has wasted Rs.490 crores (or Rs.29 crores per month) of Delhi people's money on advertisements, which is twice the amount of honorarium of 22,000 Anganwadi workers of Delhi. On top of this, in Punjab and Uttrakhand, the Aam Aadmi Party is promising to increase the honorarium of scheme workers and to give a sum (actually bribe) of Rs.1000 to each woman, but is turning a blind eye to scheme workers in Delhi. The honorarium hike in 2017 was won by us on the strength of our hard work and struggle, but the Aam Aadmi Party is making all efforts to carve a niche for itself in electoral politics by robbing the credit of the honorarium hike.

ANGANWADI CAREGIVERS OF DELHI TO LAUNCH AN INDEFINITE STRIKE FROM 31ST JANUARY!



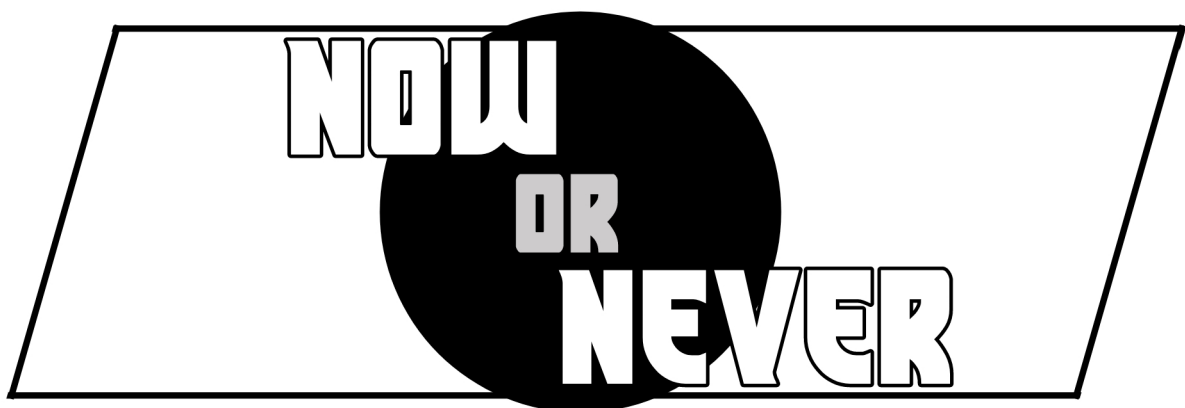
Sisters, Comrades!

Now it's again time for us to bring the Anganwadi centres in Delhi to a standstill with even more strength and in a more organized manner than ever before. This is the moment for us to give an ultimatum to all the bourgeois electoral parties in Delhi and in the rest of the country through our strike. Since these seasonal frogs will come out this election season and not only bow down at the feet of the masses, but will be seen pleading for mercy before us scheme workers, who have an access to every nook and corner of the country. In such a situation, we declare that we will completely and actively boycott the parties that ignore our charter of demands. To vote or not to vote is a different matter. All those parties that do not promise to fulfil all our demands within a stipulated time frame in writing, we will not only boycott them in the Municipal Corporation elections of Delhi, but also in the wake of the Assembly elections in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, and Uttarakhand, we will expose their true colours by sending teams of Anganwadi workers and through social media.

Sisters, if we let up this time, there will be no chance for us until 2024. It is up to us to stand on the strength of our unity and union, and once again compel the Delhi and the Central Government to bow down to our demands. Sisters! The previous strike was successful only because of the unity of all of us and will be successful this time too! For a while, we will have to work hard and make some sacrifices and surely all the sisters are ready for it. Undoubtedly, the fruit of this hard work will be sweeter than 2017!

COME LET'S DECLARE

WE REFUSE TO BE SLAVES OF THE GOVERNMENT, WE WILL NOT DO UNPAID LABOUR!



DELHI STATE ANGANWADI WORKERS AND HELPERS UNION

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