



स्वाश्रयी महिला सेवा संघ (सेवा)
Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
Regd. No. G.938



By Hand Delivery/ Email

June 22, 2024

To,

Shri Nirmala Sitharaman,
Honourable Minister of Finance
Government of India,
Ministry of Economic Development
North Block,
New Delhi - 110001

Respected Shri Nirmala Sitharaman Ji,

Sub: SEWA's Submissions for considerations for poor women of the informal sector in Pre-Budgetary Consultation on June 24, 2024

We, on behalf of the largest women central trade union we welcome the Pre-budgetary Consultations on behalf of this vast and invisible labour force of the country, especially the women workers.

Considering the condition of recovering from COVID situation, economical changes, sufferings of the migrants and now the Climate Change, India has witnessed a lot of social stress, especially the workers of the unorganised sector. The economic growth rate fails to reach this poor and vulnerable class of workers that is 93% in our country.

In any natural or human-caused disasters, unorganised sector workers are always disproportionately affected as they are ill prepared to handle such shocks. It has been reported that the incomes of these workers reduce 40-50% due to the climate shocks. Marginal workers, including farmers, salt-pan workers, street vendors, waste recyclers, head loaders, and construction workers, are often compelled to stay home or work fewer hours from 12 PM to 4 PM due to extreme heat. Street vendors face losses as perishable goods spoil quickly, while farmers struggle with compromised crop yield, water scarcity, and increased costs from brittle irrigation pipes. Cattle rearers see decreased milk yields and spoilage due to inadequate storage. As a result of this 64% of the workers reported reduced income due to shorter working hours and 44% workers said their expenses have increased in the health aspect. Consequently 78% of the workers experienced decreased work efficiency.

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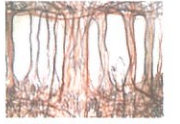
महामंत्री : ज्योति मेकवान
General Secretary : **Jyoti Macwan**

संस्थापक : इला भट्ट
Founder : **Ela Bhatt**



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We therefore propose following considerations in the forthcoming budget to improve the SOCIAL PROTECTION of the unprotected/unorganised workers.

Budget suggestions for all the workers of the unorganised sector:

- The worst sufferers of climate change and its resulting shocks are the workers of the unorganised sector. It pushes them deep into poverty and makes them more vulnerable after each episode. The impact is long lasting. Government are allocating funds to address the climate crises at speed, but these funds are mainly to invest in small or support large businesses, enterprises, corporations or small and medium sized enterprises. But there is an urgent need to form a **Climate Resilience Funds for the poor workers of the unorganised sector. A blended finance facility that can enable them to invest in tiny and micro enterprises, cooperatives, collectives, associations, federations of the poor workers. These funds should include need based, integrated insurance for the unorganised sector workers, that can cover the risks and damages caused due to extreme climate conditions including heat wave, floods, cyclones, unseasonal rains and so on. This will enable the families to meet their basic needs and invest in recovery efforts during the tough times of income loss.**
- There are various existing mechanisms like the “The Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008” or The Code on Social Security and Rules for providing Social Security to the workers of the unorganised section. 27.69 crore E-shram registrations have been completed. However, no money is put in to support it. As a result of this prescribed schemes are not implemented. **It is therefore required to make budgetary allocation in 2024-25 so that the social security reaches the workers of the unorganised sector. E-shram data should be used to frame the policies for the unorganised workers and dispensing at least the basic Social Security of healthcare, maternity benefit, education for children and insurance is extended to the workers of this sector. Required budgetary allocation should be made for the same. Specific trade wise Social security schemes can be formed after the analysis of the E-shram portal's data.**

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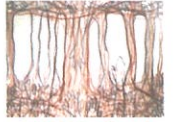
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- Migrant workers constitute a vital portion of India's workforce, contributing across various sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing and other services. 2011 Census estimates 450 million internal migrant workers. But their journey in pursuit of livelihood opportunities are often full of sufferings, is strenuous, fraught with numerous challenges. They have literally no access to basic amenities, lack of social security, exploitation by employers and limited legal protection **Budget should be allocated to ensure technical coherence and interstate management mechanisms to ensure portability of ration cards and other identity cards. This will enable the migrant workers to entitled social security benefits at their source and destinations**
- There is high unemployment in the urban areas. **The Secured Employment scheme like The National Urban Employment Guarantee Act (NUEGA) should be declared in the urban areas for the unorganised sector workers as per the unanimous recommendation in 43rd ILC. Budgetary allocation should be made for same.**

Budget suggestions for particular section of unorganised sector:

- **Social Security for the construction workers should be linked with Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) for their wholistic health care. Their contribution should be paid from the cess collected in "The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board", so that there is no extra budget allocation required for this.**
- **There are 750,000 Beedi workers in our country. They are unable to avail the benefits of the Beedi Welfare schemes as this Act has been repealed by the Government with the advent of GST. It was promised that the Welfare schemes to these workers will be made available through the recovery of the taxes. However, the budget has been withdrawn and these workers are refrained from their basic rights. Funds should be reinstated from the Central budget to the Welfare Board so that the workers can avail the welfare schemes.**
- **Agriculture remains the largest industry providing livelihood to the workforce. Majority of farmers are small farmers or family farmers. Therefore, they also have to work as agriculture workers or share croppers to have round the year work. These small farmers/ agriculture workers/ share croppers should also be included under the Kisan Sanmaan Yojana. Especially the money should be transferred in joint**

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accounts of wife and husband. Similarly, the agriculture workers/ share croppers should also be included under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

- The Domestic workers continue to be undervalued and invisible. The large-scale migration is seen in the COVID crisis. They suffered much during the migration. There is a number of interstate migration amongst the domestic workers in the State of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and huge number of overseas migrations in the State of Kerala and Tamil Nādu.
- There is a need to enact a Central Law for them and create a support system of them in both home town and Work state. The facilitations centres should be created at both the places. Budgetary allocation should be made for the same.
- There are around 5 crores home based women workers in our country coming from various trades. They live in scanty homes and that is their place of work also. These workers are paid wages on the piece rate basis and work for long hours and have no social protection. These women workers also face many occupational health hazards due to their working conditions. **There is need for comprehensive national policy for these workers that can recognise and safeguard the rights of these workers as well as provide social security to them. Budgetary allocation should be made for same.**
- There are around 3 corers street vendors in India there is need to strengthen these self-employed workers further by allocating special vending spaces to build climate friendly markets. These markets will allow the street vendors to vend under covered roofs protecting them from direct sunlight or rains, special platforms to resist emission of heat from ground, toilet & storage facility, parking space and proper solid waste management. **The Budgetary allocation should be made for the formation of these markets through the TVC mechanism as mentioned in the "The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 to protect their livelihoods as well as strengthen the self-employment.**
- The salt/framers/salt workers are the self-employed workers who in very tough conditions. They face many occupational hazards and the current climatic changes affect their salt production adversely and they suffer losses. The salt farmers/ salt workers must be given long term lease of land - Revenue land. **Financial Assistance should be provided to them to carry out their livelihood. The Government must also include salt under MSP being an essential commodity.**

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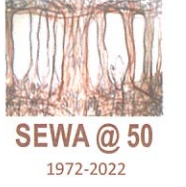
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- Currently the Government of India has revised the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. One of the provisions is to ensure that the traditional waste recyclers collect waste from the source. This provision of Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 should be implemented to enhance and ensure the livelihoods of unorganized sector waste recyclers by including them in all levels of City Solid waste collection. **Privatization of the Door-to-door waste collection system should be stopped and Government should direct all Urban Local bodies to employ traditional waste recyclers and their cooperatives in the door-to-door waste collection. There is need to invest in the community-based technology and skills upgradation.**

We, request you to consider and incorporate our suggestions in the forthcoming budget for the benefit of the poor and vulnerable workers of the unorganised sector.

Thanking you,

With Regards,

J. S. Macwan

Jyoti Macwan

General Secretary, SEWA

Manali Shah

Manali Shah

National Secretary, SEWA