



# Right to Food Campaign

## Secretariat

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10th June 2021

To:

The Chief Minister

Government of Uttarakhand

***Sub: Key steps regarding nutrition and food security in Uttarakhand in the current crisis***

Dear Sir,

As a nationwide coalition of organisations working on the right to food, we write to express our deep concern at the consequences of the ongoing second wave of the coronavirus pandemic and consequent curfews on the access to food and nutrition of people in the state of Uttarakhand. As in other parts of the country, the situation in the state may lead to mass malnutrition and deprivation of food security, with particularly severe consequences for children.

We note and welcome that the State of Uttarakhand has commenced provision of free ration to ration card holders in the state. But this appears to have begun only around the end of May, and still has not reached some areas. This is more than a month after the second wave began to impact livelihoods and several weeks after curfews were declared in several of the state's major cities.

However, we are very concerned to note that aside from this provision of free ration for ration cardholders, it appears no other measure has been put in place to provide either financial or in kind assistance to the vast majority of residents of the state. No mechanism has been put in place to provide rations on a monthly basis to non ration card holders including migrant workers, daily wagers and other vulnerable people who do not possess ration cards. Limited distribution of ration kits on ad hoc basis is woefully inadequate given the scale of the crisis as also documented in a survey. As per a survey of 900 people in Uttarakhand by KISLAY Social Research Collective in the third week of May, **83% of respondents among workers in Dehradun and 93% among workers and small farmers in the districts of Tehri Garhwal and Rudraprayag reported that they had had to reduce the consumption of at least one food item between April 1st and May 15th.** Of particular concern is that more than half of those interviewed reported that they

had stopped consuming fruits, 52% in the hills and 31% in Dehradun reported reducing consumption of oil, 16% in the hills and 39% of those in Dehradun reported reducing their consumption of dal, and 38% of those in the city reported reducing consumption of milk. This will have a huge adverse impact on nutrition and health.

Hence we urge the government of Uttarakhand to:

- Ensure immediate implementation of the May 24th order of the Supreme Court, in *In Re Problems and Miseries of Migrant Workers* (Suo Motu WP(C) 06/2020), wherein the Court directed that dry rations should be provided to all migrant workers being non ration card holders and that community kitchens should be opened to provide cooked food to people in need. The provision of community kitchens, if carried out across the state, may improve access to food and nutrition for those able to come to them as well. This order has not yet been implemented in Uttarakhand.
- Ensure that non-ration card holders are provided free rations through ration shops for the next 6 months and not through ad hoc arrangements or political leaders. This will reduce the dangers of bias and crowding. As directed by the Supreme Court and, in orders last year, the Delhi High Court, provision of free rations should be done on a self-certification basis. Aadhaar or other documents should not be made mandatory.
- Ensure home provision of nutrition kits to children enrolled in government schools and anganwadis.
- Include provision of cooking oil and pulses in all free rations, given the steep rise in the price of oil recently.
- Implement cash transfer schemes to daily wage workers, returning Uttarakhandi migrants, MNRGA workers, women and other vulnerable sections. The Supreme Court has also directed State governments to report on implementation of such schemes.

Considering the nutritional emergency in the state and the country, we hope that you will consider these proposals and act on these issues with urgency.

Sincerely,

Gangaram Paikra, Aysha, Kavita Srivastava, Dipa Sinha, Anuradha Talwar, Mukta Srivastava, Amrita Johri

(On behalf of the Steering Committee of Right to Food Campaign)

Enclosed- Letter sent by intervenors to the CM of Uttarakhand highlighting the key directions in the case titled, *In Re Problems and Miseries of Migrant Workers* (Suo Motu

WP(C) 06/2020).