



Press Release:

Systemic Deprivation Of Mid-Day Meal Cooks And School Safai Workers Is Inhumane And Illegal - Both The Center And The State Governments Are Responsible For This Wrongdoing: Swaraj India, West Bengal

- **Swaraj India stands and will continue to stand in solidarity with the movement of poor and marginal Mid-Day Meal Cooks and School Cleaners - Avik Saha, National General Secretary, Swaraj India**
- **Paying Rs.50 per day for Mid-Day Meal Cooks is equal to slavery and is a shame for West Bengal- Prof. Sanjeeb Mukherjee, West Bengal State President, Swaraj India**
- **Why the livelihoods of 16,196 School Safai Workers are being taken away, both the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister must answer - KalyanSengupta, West Bengal State Vice-President, Swaraj India**
- **When there is such shortage of jobs in West Bengal, answer must be given why 8517 posts of Mid-Day Meal Cooks are lying vacant and these posts must be filled - Dinesh Singh, Member, National Executive, Swaraj India**

20 September 2019, Kolkata:Swaraj India West Bengal,All Bengal Mid-Day Meal Cooks SangharshManch and School SafaiKarmiSangathan jointly organised a public meeting at Y Channel, Dharmatala, Kolkata to highlight the various injustices and difficulties being faced by Mid-Day Meal Cooks and School Safai Workers. The meeting started at 11 am and continued till 3 pm. After the meeting, two groups of delegates left to meet the Governor and the Chief Minister to submit Memorandums to them and bring to their notice the logical demands of the Mid-Day Meal Cooks and Safai Workers.

Speakers at the meeting highlighted the injustices being faced by the Mid-Day Meal Cooks in West Bengal, who receive only Rs.1500 per month as honorarium and that too they get it only for 10 months. For the same work, Mid-Day Meal Cooks get Rs.6,500 in Kerala and Rs.4,000 in Tamil Nadu. Hence a rightful demand has been made that in West Bengal the monthly honorarium should be increased from Rs.1500 to Rs.6000 per month. Like all other education workers, Mid-Day Meal Cooks should also receive salary for 12 months and not 10 months, as they are presently receiving. They should be given Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Maternity leave with pay and Pension.

In West Bengal, 2 Safai Workers are engaged per school, under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme of 100 days work. Suddenly an order has been passed by the Government decreasing the number of workers per school from 2 to 1. By this order, almost 16,196 Safai Workers will be thrown out of employment/income and will be deprived of their right to earn a livelihood. This arbitrary order must be immediately withdrawn in writing.

Cultural programs were held at the beginning and end of the meeting. Delegates and representatives of Mid-Day Meal Cooks and School Safai Workers from various blocks of Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin 24 Parganas and Jangal Mahal districts attended the meeting. Representatives of various workers organisations and civil society bodies also joined the meeting to express solidarity.

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