

# The Plight of Workers Around the World

## I. In Palm-Oil Fields of Indonesia:

Indonesia is the World's biggest palm oil producers. Palm oil is not only used for cooking and in cooking industry, but is also used in making pet food besides being used by supply chains of some of the biggest brands of beauty business including L'oreal, unilever, procter & Gamble, Avon and Jhonson & Jhonson in the manufacture of their beauty products.

An investigation by the associated press into the working and living conditions of millions of toiling women in the vast plantations across Indonesia found that these women workers are not only burdened with industry's most difficult and dangerous jobs spending hours, waist-deep in water tainted by chemical run off and carrying loads so heavy that their wombs can collapse and protrude for a paltry sum of \$ 2 a day as wages, making them ill-afford to see a doctor; but also are subjected to sexual abuse ranging from verbal harassment, beating and rape about which the victims rarely speak due to the threats. Many of these women workers are hired by sub-contractors on a day-to-day basis without any job benefits performing the same work for the same companies for years or decades. They often work without pay to help their husbands meet otherwise impossible daily quotas.

These women often suffer fevers, coughing and nose bleeding after years of spraying dangerous pesticides with no protective gear. Even pregnant women are made to work and most of these pregnant women lose their pregnancies. They work during pregnancies fearing they would be fired if they did not work.

## II. Amazon Workers:

Amazon workers in 15 countries have started 'Make Amazon pay' protests. They are demanding raising workers pay, extending paid sick leaves to all employees, ending union busting etc. They allege that in July, Amazon used surveillance technology on workers to stop them from forming unions and boost productivity. They complain that Amazon had not treated them fairly during covid.19. 'Make Amazon pay' coalition started its agitation first in Hyderabad, home to Amazon's largest office. The CEO of Amazon Jeff Bezos's personal wealth grew by 13 million per hour in 2020, but the workers saw little or no pay rise, but had to put up with dangerous working conditions.

More than 400 law makers in 34 countries have signed a letter to AMAZON CEO Jeff Bezos demanding the e-commerce giant raise its worker's pay, improve working conditions and pay due taxes where it operates. They also stated in the letter that they stand ready to act in their respective legislatures to support the movement that is growing around the world to make Amazon pay.

## III. In cotton Fields of xinjiang in China:

Washington-based think tank the Centre for global policy has accused global brands such as NIKE, GAP, and Adidas are using Uighur forced labour in their textile supply chains.

The report referenced online government documents and said the total number involved in three majority Uighur regions exceed a 2018 estimate of 5,17,000 people forced to pick cotton as a part of scheme by hundreds of thousands. Andrain Zenz who uncovered the alleged documents states that "the labour transfers for cotton-picking involve a very high risk of forced labour". But the Chinese administration states that "of all ethnicities in Xiang sign labour contracts with enterprises based on their voluntary choice of occupation refuting the allegation.

The BBC reported that it had asked 30 major international brands if they intended to continue sourcing products from China as a result of the findings-of those that replied only four said they had strict policy of demanding that sourced any were in china do not use raw cotton from XINJIANG.

Only after the rift between USA and China in trade and other relations, the US think-tank made these revelations of coerced labour in Xinjing cotton fields, which fact has to be noted.

## IV. In Garment Industry:

International Labour Organi-sation(ILO) found that COVID-19 has worsened the conditions of women in the garment industry in many Asian Countries including India due to underlying challenges like discrimination and harassment, under representation of women's voice, wage gaps as well as unevenly shared unpaid care and family obligations. The pandemic has had a significant impact on millions of women and men workers. Workers are retrenched and some of them are still owed wages for completed work, have been unable to access basic necessities such as food, rent money or medical expenses for their households.

As an example to this assertion the agitation of 4,000 women workers in Nov, 2020 of India Resigns Garment Company and Nisha Designs garments company in Parigi Mandal close to Hindupur of A.P. for more than 6 days during Nov.2020 stands before us. They are seeking minimum wages. While in Karnataka state the minimum wages were Rs.12,000 in Andhra Pradesh according to Go.No.324 as on sept.8, 2018 the minimum wage(basic) was Rs 6,211+living allowance (or DA). But the workers here are paid only between Rs.5,000 and Rs.6,000.

When these agitating workers approached the State Labour Minister, to settle their issues he coolly stated that “it is unfortunate that the minimum wages were not being paid to them during and past Pandemic” and that “it has been a difficult time for the garment manu-facturing units due to dwindling demand in European markets”. With such a vague reply he evades his responsibilities to ensure implementation of laws. On the other hand the management representatives at a tripartite meeting declared that they are not able to pay for next three months also.people’s money and public savings. Thus it is a matter of concern of people’s larger interests. Therefore every effort has to be made, to resist and oppose the move to the corporate takeover of the banks!

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