

# **Bangalore: ASHA workers protest against Government Stepmotherly Treatment**

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**As the legislative session is going on, Bengaluru is becoming a focal point for many struggles against the anti-people bills being passed by the state and central government**

Bengaluru: As the legislative session is going on, Bengaluru is becoming a focal point for many struggles against the anti-people bills being passed. Asha health workers who are at the forefront in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic have launched a struggle to fulfill their demands at freedom park.

The health activists who are playing a vital role as a key medium between the health care system and the rural population have been working without a salary for the past few months. Among one of their demands is the payment of a fixed honorarium of Rs 12,000 and the release of arrears that is due.

The ASHA workers had organised a Bengaluru Cholo agitation and to protest in front of deputy commissioners offices in respective district headquarters of Karnataka.

Activists from across various districts were traveling to the state capital to join their counterparts to participate in the massive protest at freedom park in Bengaluru. However, the state government using the police machinery has tried to subdue their agitation by restricting the activist from traveling to Bengaluru. Health workers who have been stopped by police at Tumkur, Maddur, Mandya districts have condemned the highhandedness of government.

Under the banner, Karnataka State United Asha Workers Association supported by All India United Trade Union Center (AIUTUC) had given a call for the agitation after the government failed in keeping its promises of addressing the demands of the health workers.

“We have been effectively working as forefront warriors and fighting against the unprecedented Corona pandemic and in reaching government health care schemes at the grass-root level. Over 42,000 Asha workers across the state do the difficult work of door to door surveys, detecting positive cases, tracing primary and secondary cases. However, activists have been deprived of all protective gear. The government is showing a step-motherly attitude by adopting a dilly-dallying approach in revising the honorarium which has forced the health workers to launch the agitation.

Presently the government which is paying Rs 6,000 as honorarium had announced of providing Rs 3,000 additional incentive in view of the corona crises but has not fulfilled its own decision. It merely indulged in lip service calling us frontline workers and applauding our service but none of our demands are being fulfilled rued Asha workers association state unit secretary Dr. Nagalakshmi.

The protesters strongly condemned the attitude of the government that has stopped Asha workers and its leaders from traveling to the state capital. Such restrictions will not deter the workers from continuing the agitation. The government should immediately respond to their justified demands

failing which would force us to launch an indefinite agitation they warned.

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### **Nagaraj Tuppad**

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