

Govt. decision brings angst to anganwadi workers

• [Firoz Rozindar](#)



Some 1.25 lakh anganwadi workers are up in arms against the State's decision to consider them as government employees.— file photo

The government's direction to consider anganwadi workers as 'government employees' could spell big trouble for workers, who have availed themselves of below the poverty line (BPL) cards for getting subsidised ration.

Some 1.25 lakh anganwadi workers of the State are now up in arms against the decision, and are demanding that the government withdraw it.

The Department of Food and Civil Supplies had issued notices to anganwadi workers asking them to either surrender their BPL cards or pay fine.

"This is an absurd order. Technically, they are not government employees as they do not get social security benefits from the government. All they get is a meagre honorarium of Rs. 6,000 a month. Most of the anganwadi workers are financially weak," says S. Varalakshmi, State president of the Anganwadi Nourishara Sangha.

She said after the notice was issued, several anganwadi workers surrendered their cards fearing penalisation.

"Anganwadi workers are able to save part of their earnings when they get ration. If that is also withdrawn, then they will have to live in sheer penury," she said.

Meanwhile, defending the decision, an official in the Food and Civil Supplies Department said since anganwadi workers receive honorarium from the government, they are treated as 'government employees', who are not entitled to BPL cards.

Umashree, Minister of State for Woman and Child Development has a different view.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, she admitted that anganwadi workers cannot be considered as government employees as they do not get the same benefits that others.

“However, since it is a tricky issue, and the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies is involved, I will bring this matter to the notice of the Minister concerned to find a solution,” she said.

Meanwhile, Ms. Varalakshmi said that they would fight till the government exempts anganwadi workers from the order. “We are ready to surrender our BPL cards if the government hikes our monthly salary to Rs. 15,000 a month, with other facilities,” she said.

***The workers have been asked to either surrender their BPL cards
or pay fine***

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