

Women in garment sector lack access to welfare schemes, finds study

- Staff Reporter

Owing to reasons ranging from tight work schedules to the lack of awareness, garment workers in the city continue to be out of the ambit of many welfare schemes floated by the Union and State governments as well as local bodies. A community-centred baseline study – “Extent and quality of access of marginalised women to key welfare schemes, programmes and entitlements” – found that a large number of women in the garment sector in Bengaluru, along with domestic workers, did not know how to apply or access schemes.

Covering 600 women in eight settlements within the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits, the study, conducted by the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) and Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives, surveyed women working as construction workers, daily wage workers, domestic workers, garment workers and home-based workers.

Women-headed families

Among the women surveyed (75 from each settlement), 83 per cent were employed outside their home while 33 per cent were doing home-based work. Interestingly, 117 (19 per cent) of the respondents belonged to “women-centric” families wherein women were raising children and taking care of dependents without any support, and 213 (35 per cent) were from women-headed families.

Aadhaar reach

Though healthcare and nutrition schemes were ranked as top priorities among the women surveyed, exclusion from Aadhaar is said to have caused a domino effect. Nine per cent of the women (57 of 600) were excluded from Aadhaar. But even those who had Aadhaar numbers, but had not submitted them (53 of 106 who did not have ration cards), had either been denied new cards or had their existing cards cancelled. Without ration cards, these women cannot access healthcare services, the study pointed out.

“Even in the much accessed Aadhaar scheme, 26 (22 per cent) of respondents had not secured their Aadhaar number and 39 (33 per cent) of garment workers and 43 (63 per cent) of domestic workers had not succeeded in accessing ration cards. With more than 95 per cent of garment workers being women-headed families, such exclusion could prove extremely detrimental to them,” the study said.

BOX:

Sahaya single window from Thursday

Aiming to be an “interface” between the government departments and the general public, a single window system called *Sahaya* will be pressed into service from September 1 (Thursday). To begin at two locations – Vijayanagar and Rajkumar Road – focus will be on making 23 welfare schemes reach the beneficiaries, said Prabhanand Hegde, Centre for Advocacy and Research.
