

Circular No – 090 / 2023

KEA IN THE NEWS

AGRI SECTOR FEARS POLL GUARANTEES CREATING LABOUR SHORTAGE IN STATE

The Times of India Bengaluru, edition has published the above news report stating that “With the Congress government in Karnataka earnestly implementing its five pre-poll promises which ensure limited free power, food grains, bus travel and unemployment dole, the agricultural industry is fearing shortage of skilled labour force amid demands for higher wages and an extended welfare cover” The alarm has been raised among the farmer associations and coffee industry across the state by coffee growers and their associations, the statement of Mr. B C Prabhakar President KEA is reported as under :

“Describing operational challenges, Mr. B C Prabhakar President of the Karnataka Employers’ Association said it is an uphill battle to secure local labour from tier-II cities “Labourers from regions like Hassan and Kalburgi have refrained from work after the poll guarantees were fulfilled ... MNREGA scheme has discouraged individuals from migrating outside their home region. This has significantly burdened the farmers.”

1. The Times of India

[Agri sector fears poll guarantees creating labour shortage in Karnataka | Bengaluru News - Times of India \(indiatimes.com\)](#)

2. A clipping of a news report published by the Times of India is given below:

Agri sector fears poll guarantees creating labour shortage in state

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Bengaluru: With the Congress government in Karnataka earnestly implementing its five pre-poll promises which ensure limited free power, foodgrains, bus travel and unemployment dole, the agriculture industry is fearing shortage of skilled labour force, amid demands for higher wages and an extended welfare cover.

Sources said the agriculture industry in the state employs 30 lakh labourers, and the coffee industry alone employs over 5 lakh of them. Some of the new demands by labourers are an increase in minimum daily wages from Rs 360 to Rs 460 for 8 hours of work, introduction of benefits like bonus and PF.

This has raised alarm among farmer associations

WHAT FARM WORKERS WANT

30L Agri labourers in K'taka

5L in coffee industry

Increase in wages from ₹360-₹460 for 8 hours of work

Extra benefits like bonus, PFs and others; decrease in work timings

“Labourers from regions like Hassan and Kalaburagi have refrained from work after the poll guarantees were fulfilled... MNREGA scheme has discouraged individuals from migrating outside their home region. This has significantly burdened the farmers”

BC Prabhakar PRESIDENT OF K'TAKA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

and coffee industry across the state. Bose Mandanna N, a coffee grower and former vice-chairman at Coffee Board of India, told **TOI** from Kodagu district that there is a shortage of labourers as the government is giving “a lot of freebies”. “This has impacted the estates. If this continues, it will be tough to run plantation business,” said Mandanna.

Sri Gowra, a coffee grower from Chikkamagaluru, said the industry has for long faced labour shortage. “Thanks to freebies, local labourers have stopped coming to work now. To tide over the crisis, we hired labourers from other parts of the country. But the problem is they are not skilled labourers. The situation is dire.”

▶ **'Positive impact', P 2** ▶

For KARNATAKA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION
Sd/
[B C Prabhakar]
President