

Exams fail to dampen DU students' initiative

The collective has fed over 1,630 out-of-work daily wagers since second wave began

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A collective of students from across Delhi University has managed to feed over 1,630 out-of-work daily wagers and labourers, over the series of lockdowns in the Capital since the second wave wreaked havoc. Thanks to funds generated via online crowdfunding.



Volunteers of the 'Feeding the Workers in Delhi' initiative help the needy in the city. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Efforts move online

With the exams round the corner, their visits to distressed workers have been restricted for the better part of this month.

However, their efforts have moved online and they continue to bear their newfound responsibility towards distressed workers by making digital payments to neighbourhood shop owners as and when required.

The 'Feeding the Workers in Delhi' initiative has seen the collective assist everyone

from a family in Sangam Vihar, who lost their source of income during the pandemic even as they welcomed a child last May, seek regular medical treatment despite the circumstances to workers at Azadpur Mandi, Wazirpur and other areas where daily wagers earn just ₹4 for lifting 50 kg of weight.

"During distribution, we keep in our mind that ration should be ensured to the most needy first. Our priori-



ty consists of specially abled, elderly, widows, families who lost their earning member and people who lost their jobs during the pandemic. For need assessment, we take help of trade unions or local community leaders," said Roshan Pandey from the Delhi School of Social Work (DSSW).

The biggest challenge they faced during the drive, according to Ankur Agraj from DU's Law Faculty, was

that of supply. "We are a student collective which solely depends on generosity of our online donors. We never have enough to give kits to all those who need it. The problem of joblessness is a big one. The government is not doing enough," he said.

The initiative has been tremendously affected by the Delhi University's Open Book Examinations (OBE), said Ananya from DSSW, with many students from Delhi who are part of the initiative in the final-year of their respective courses, making it difficult to visit workers in distress.

"We cannot stop assisting those in need. Given our exams, we have begun making online payments to shopkeepers on behalf of workers as and when they buy essential items from them till the time we can take up the distribution drive ourselves," Mr. Pandey added.