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Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union

Press Note – Response to Mr. Deepinder Goyal's announcement to set up the Zomato Future Foundation

Mr. Deepinder Goyal, the founder of the app-based food delivery service Zomato, recently announced that his ESOPs in Zomato, amounting to INR 700 crores would be diverted into the 'Zomato Future Foundation'. This foundation, he said, will support education for the children of selected 'delivery partners' and livelihoods of family members of workers who have suffered death and disability as part of work.

This sudden concern for delivery workers that Mr. Goyal has expressed is nothing but a ploy to divert attention from the very recent protests by Zomato delivery workers in several cities against the 'GIGS' payment system, and the growing voices of concern, including by Justice D Y Chandrachud, about the need to protect the rights of app-based workers in India. While Zomato has not bothered responding to our Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in the Supreme Court which demands rights and legislative protections for delivery workers, this move by its founder can only be understood as an attempt to save the tarnished image of his public company, which recently also faced backlash for the rolling out of 10-minute deliveries. It is also difficult to trust Mr. Goyal's intentions as honest when his company is testing drone-delivery in a bid to minimise employing human labour for deliveries.

What delivery workers need is to be protected by labour legislation and not Mr. Goyal's charity. It has been legally enforceable laws and enhanced bargaining power which have protected the interests of workers, and not charitable foundations set up as a PR exercise. If Mr. Goyal is indeed so concerned about the children of his 'partners', how about ensure that every delivery worker, irrespective of the years spent at his company, is entitled to a living wage, does not overwork, has a social security net, and is covered under compensation laws when they suffer disability or death on the job? Mr. Goyal will not take such a step because it is cheaper and a better image-saving exercise to set up a Foundation to meet education expenses of the children of a few delivery workers (those who have worked in Zomato for more than 5 years and 10 years).

Mr. Goyal, we are very curious to know the percentage of 'partners' who have remained (or should we say survived) in your company for 5 years or more. While we're at it, how about you also make public all the delivery workers who have died on the job or suffered disabilities and the compensation you gave them. How about instead of insuring lives for 5 lakh rupees, raise it 50 lakh rupees for all partners?

The children of delivery workers will be happier if you do not cheat their parents of their earnings, and treat them like human beings deserving of dignity and rest. Children will be more grateful to see their parents at home in the evenings, or to spend time with them during weekends, experiences unknown to many children of your 'partners' because their parents have to spend most of their waking day trying to make a living because you incessantly find ways to cut their earnings.

And Mr. Goyal, while education indeed offers a chance to build a much better life, what is equally necessary are employment opportunities which abide by labour laws and live up to the spirit of



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justice enshrined in them. Companies such as yours have shown unparalleled innovation in evading legal protections for workers and finding means to continually steal from worker-incomes. We do not wish that any of our children go on join or create businesses such as yours, a hope that you express in your announcement.

And Mr. Goyal, since you have already labelled your workers 'partners', how about you translate that into reality and allot them majority shares in your public company? Maybe that would be a better way to convince us that you care for your 'partners'. It is after all their unpaid and underpaid labours which have created wealth for you and your company.

We will be happy to meet with you to discuss and settle the above demands. We reserve the right to add, amend and or alter our above demands.

We look forward to a favourable and prompt response from you.

With regards,

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