

Joshua Farinella spoke with welfare officer Dar**** in January 2024 about the facility's policies on permitting workers to leave the grounds and providing them with living necessities.

[00:00:03] Joshua Farinella: So it bothers me not having beds for everybody that we have. Like, what's the expectation that they have before they come here? Like, does the contractor or recruiter or whatever they are say, hey, we have this job for you and you know, you have your own place to stay and we feed you. And then they come down here with the expectation that they're going to have somewhere to sleep and then they get here and they essentially don't.

[00:00:38] Joshua Farinella: So what do, what are they told before they come here? Do you know that? I don't understand.

[00:00:47] Dar****: No sir. About that, I don't know. Like, many of these people come from very remote area, probably like [inaudible]. Some of them doesn't even have a proper bed to sleep on or a proper house. So these people then are promised to have a better place to work and a better salary and free food and free accommodations

[00:01:14] Dar****: So basically, if all these basic necessities are provided, so everyone.... So what I have, because I have met and have talked with many associates [inaudible] in the past four, five months, so whoever else is [inaudible] speaking to them, they said that this is far better, you know, a company better than any other. And they give us good food, good bed to sleep, and then they even give a good salary.

[00:01:44] Dar****: So for food [inaudible], because everyone have a different taste. I might like spicy food. Others might like medium or no spice at all [inaudible]. And so for food we found it hard because probably we are around 800 people. So for 800 people, there will be different [inaudible].

[00:02:05] Joshua Farinella: And that makes sense, that's fine. That's fine.

[00:02:07] Dar****: But then what we know is that the food is good. Before we came here, the food was not that good. But since, like, many complaint has come from the associates that there are so much workers and no food, so we came and then talk with the chef, so now the food is better than before. But as for the accommodations, as for whether they sleep or not, so, beds are there. But for now, like the new stuff has arrived, we're updating the old stuff [inaudible].

[00:02:43] Dar****: The other beds were available, like old bed. The thing is with this newcomers when they join, so they only want a new bed. They're like, okay I joined and I have to get a new bed. But that we can't provide because if another person is only staying for four weeks and then we provide a bed.

[00:03:05] Joshua Farinella: Right, we can't throw away mattresses every two weeks.

[00:03:07] Dar****: Yes. So what is like, only if it's really bad. Like the spoil damage to it [inaudible], then we will throw it. And then if a new one came then we'll give. Because last [inaudible], 150 people were provided beds. 150 people. [Inaudible] New beds are coming. [Inaudible] So for that 150 beds, total 200, total 200 beds.

[00:03:32] Dar****: So for 50 beds, we did extra, but 150 for the new beds. [Inaudible] But for now [inaudible] buying new beds. So there are extra beds which are lying around someplace instead. So we give a spray, double spray, two times, and these people who are using that one [inaudible]. So from Bal****, contractor, he has taken 25 beds which we have already sprayed with pest control. [Inaudible] only taken 25 beds. And then from Sha****, she will take 10 beds.

[00:04:03] Dar****: So for now, what I have now. Because even if we [inaudible] we'll say yes we are fine, but later they'll say okay we need a new bed. But that we can't [inaudible]. Like for now it's okay I'm fine, maybe for next two weeks, okay I'll say I need this. That we'll have to arrange.

[00:04:20] Dar****: But for now they say okay everything is fine. Because what we have, we have to contact and then connect with the supervisors and [inaudible] the warden. And though we check everyday, we will go there and check, sometimes people will [inaudible] there will be a lot of [inaudible] and whatever need and whatever problems they are facing, they will tell the wardens and the supervisors.

[00:04:43] Joshua Farinella: Okay, I just want to make sure that they're not, you know, leaving home expecting one thing and then getting here. And it's something completely different.

[00:04:52] Dar****: Basically, these people come from a really poor background. Maybe we can say that they are lower caste, lower caste. So their expectations might say okay, maybe we will just get a bed, a small bed or maybe a room where everyone will sleep together in a place kind of like a dormitory. [Inaudible]

[00:05:15] Dar****: So for them their expectations might be that I'll maybe eat food which only, rice, consists of dal. That's it. But then when they came in, it's like, okay, we've got a proper food. So they're happy with that. Because many let's say many other company who provides food and accommodations, will just provide as a basic necessities, not looking into the [inaudible].

[00:05:40] Joshua Farinella: Not looking into the comfort or any...

[00:05:44] Dar****: But as for us, Choice, we give them proper food. We even provide them mattresses, bed cots, pillows and as for us, we even provide bed sheets.

[00:05:54] Dar****: But the thing is for bed sheets, after they left, they would take along with them. So it's very hard in those cases. Before, because when JT sir he said, they were saying that "We need sanitary napkins," so we provide, they provide sanitary napkins. But these people taking advantage of that.

[00:06:18] Dar****: So they are taking, coming, coming to the general store and asking, but that, we can't provide. We have to provide the basic necessities from our [inaudible] who can't, and then from their [inaudible]. If the associates or any contractor needs it, OK, for this month they need one packet. That is enough. But then these people will take and then keep it with them and even take it home, so for that we cannot provide that, so for that we stopped. But the mattresses and the pillows and all that, we provide.

[00:06:50] Joshua Farinella: Okay, okay how long do most people stay here?

[00:06:54] Dar****: It depends. Some we can say from Sha****, Sha**** contractor, by example, Sha**** contractor they have worked with [inaudible]. So some of them have said [inaudible] experience [inaudible] probably they will stay for two years. Others have more experience than us.

[00:07:18] Dar****: Some have started from Choice [inaudible] and some who have personal problems, family problems that they will go. For that, we can't hold them. Others they will go after one month, or 10 days, 20 days, and they will come back. But those who are really in need of, [inaudible], have to be with family or really have problems at home, then they will go.

[00:07:50] Dar****: And for that we can't hold them. As long as there are problems which we can solve, in that case maybe we [inaudible], we can talk with them like we give them some counseling. That we can [inaudible]. But if they're saying that at home in our family there is no one to take care of because I am here and then my mother is very old and there's no one to take care, that one we can't [inaudible].

[00:08:15] Dar****: So we have to send, we have to let them go. Or whoever has the sickness, or maybe [inaudible] the sickness where we can [inaudible] or communicable disease. Yeah, something like that. That we can't hold. Only [inaudible].

[00:08:38] Joshua Farinella: But I mean, if something like if, if one of these girls that just came in now, you know, they stay here for a week and basically say, I don't like it, I don't want to be here, do they just walk out the front gate and that's it?

[00:08:52] Dar****: No, first we would talk with them. There are cases like [inaudible] that have happened. There are cases. One case which happened, okay for one week they say okay, I've been working one week and I don't feel like it. So the supervisor will insist them of staying, okay you stay here for a month, maybe you can [inaudible] or maybe you miss your family. So maybe those who have children or those who have [inaudible] maybe they will miss their family.

[00:09:18] Dar****: So we will say you stay here for a month. If even after a month you do not feel comfortable or you still feel [inaudible] comfortable working here, then we'll send them home. There is a last case on 28 November when from [inaudible] chapter there was a girl, two of them, which they said that we don't feel good working here. So they just came two days.

[00:09:42] Dar****: Then after that they said we don't like it here. We want to go back. So from our part, from my part, from Kir**** part of our HR department. He will try to comfort them. By giving them time if they work here for one or two weeks, if it not feel good, then let them go back. But even after that, they insist on going home. For that, forcing people to work here, we cannot do that.

[00:10:04] Dar****: It's their right if they want to go or if they were, maybe yeah we can tell them, okay, you can stay for one or two weeks. But after two, three [inaudible] if they are not wanting, we have to send them. So they left. But after a week they come back again. They come back again. Then I said, okay, if this time you are coming back, you have to stay here.

[00:10:25] Dar****: You can't just say after one week of working here you will go back. That we won't do, we won't allow that. Because that is not procedures [inaudible] that anyone can come and then [inaudible] go and come back. So if that's the case, this is the last warning. If you want to work here then work, if not, then you can go back.

[00:10:45] Dar****: And they said, okay, so until now, she's working here. After the scene that she created that she [inaudible] and she cried and [inaudible] requested us to send her home, then we did sent her back, and she said that my brother didn't allow me to work here because it's very cold. And then [inaudible] if her brother doesn't allow her to work here then let her go.

[00:11:10] Dar****: So we let her go and now she came back and then I even asked her like your brother doesn't ask? Your brother allowed you to work here? And she said yes, he allowed. Then I said, okay, fine, no more complaints. [Inaudible] It's up to them to work. If they don't have any will to work, they don't have any purpose to work. There may be some person who is very attentive to work, maybe there are some who are not attentive to work. We can see from the face whether they are really genuine to work. [Inaudible].

[00:11:51] Dar****: It's not like if you provide food and accommodations that does not mean they will take whatever they can right? So if they are not into work, we have to send them back to only do some [inaudible]. Because there would be so many people who want to work. That we have to see.

[00:12:09] Joshua Farinella: Do we ever have any people who don't say they're leaving and just, you know, pack up their suitcase and walk out the front gate?

[00:12:17] Dar****: No sir. They, before they leave, they have to ask us from the supervisor, warden. Then the warden might tell them okay, stay for this month, then you can go back next month.

[00:12:29] Dar****: Some people will be like that. They'll say I really want to go, I don't want to be working here, I don't feel good. And then their warden or supervisor, contractor will insist that

you stay here for one month. Next month we will send you back. But after one month, they will stay. They will forget that they want to go home.

[00:12:48] Dar****: But some people will even create a scene that they want to go home, if they want to go home right now and we have not allowed them they will sometimes flee the scene. For that we have to send them on.

[00:12:57] Dar****: But still there would be a procedure. A supervisor, might be the warden, will have to sign a gate pass. The supervisor would have to ask the permissions from the HR department. Only if the answer says yes, then they can go. If not, then they cannot go.

[00:13:14] Joshua Farinella: What's a gate pass?

[00:13:16] Dar****: Because they are staying in house. So even if they're going out to the market or to medical, they have to bring the gate pass with them. That they get from their warden, from their contractor. This contractor will write today's date, time and signature. So before leaving, they will give it to security in that gate and then they will send them. Only if they are going home, then even the same and for going out to the market to the hospital, everyone has to get a gate pass.

[00:13:51] Joshua Farinella: Okay. Okay. And there, like, there's no issue with getting a gate pass?

[00:13:58] Dar****: No. There is a time for boys. Obviously boys will be difficult to handle. So if you see those signs on the wall, before, it's, like, open, so most probably the boy could climb up and go outside.

[00:14:17] Dar****: So, Bal****, contractor, told me that so many boys were going outside we need wider fencing. So after we needed it completed, so I asked engineering team to help with fixing the wall. And now we have fencing or something so that no one can go out.

[00:14:33] Dar****: After that no one is going up. Now everyone is asking for a gate pass. So for going out [inaudible] they require everyone to acquire a gate pass. Especially going home, if they're taking a bag with them, they will get gate passes.

[00:14:49] Dar****: And even when coming back from market. So basically we can check for all the things that [inaudible]. Maybe they are taking in secret. [Inaudible]

[00:15:06] Dar****: If they carry that, then we have to talk to them, maybe give them a warning. It's not like we will send them off.

[00:15:13] Joshua Farinella: Right, Right.

[00:15:14] Dar****: We can't do that, right sir? So we'll just talk to them, we give them a warning, one or two warning, and then we'll take the bag. But [inaudible] we will keep it with us.

[00:15:24] Dar****: And in the lady's security - in the lady dorm, there will be one security who will stay outside. If any girl comes from outside, then she will check all the bags.

[00:15:36] Joshua Farinella: Ok, ok. And there's like, there's no issues. It's just for my own peace of mind that, you know, if somebody wanted a gate pass, nobody's like none of the supervisors or security up there is going to stop them from getting a gate pass.

[00:16:01] Dar****: No sir, not like that. They can go, but then they have to be back on site. But as for Bal**** contractor, he gives them twice a week, not like every day. As for going, if he did not control from our site, they will come drunk [inaudible]. Okay, so he has his own set of rules that he will give the gate pass only three or four times in a week.

[00:16:28] Dar****: If he give on Monday, Tuesday morning, then on Wednesday, Friday, on Sunday. He will give like that. But he won't give every day. Every day he will give only in emergency cases, if there is a boy who got sick in that time even if he did not provide gate pass for him, he will give gate pass. But then for if they want to go to the market, you know, that he will only follow with his own set of rules. Every contractor, even [inaudible] and every contractor that supervises have their own regulations, whatever they have to do with them.

[00:17:05] Joshua Farinella: Okay, cool, cool. I think I understand. I'll probably have more questions because I'm a little slow.

[00:17:12] Dar****: It's fine, you can ask me.

[00:17:14] Joshua Farinella: Thank you. Thank you very much.

[00:17:17] Dar****: No problem. You have any other questions?

[00:17:19] Joshua Farinella: Not right now, but if I do have questions, I will come find you. Thanks.

[00:17:25] Dar****: Can I take my [inaudible]?

[00:17:26] Joshua Farinella: Yeah, yeah definitely. Thanks.