Coronavirus, Uttar Pradesh: Abused, Stopped From Selling Vegetables, Allege Muslim Vendors In UP

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UP, COVID-19: The sellers were abused, and asked to leave the village, they said.

All India | Written by Alok Pandey | Updated: April 13, 2020 06:39 pm IST

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Coronavirus: A senior UP government officer has promised action in the matter



Lucknow: Five vegetable sellers in Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba district have submitted a written complaint to the authorities that they were abused and stopped from selling their goods by a group because they are Muslims. One of the vendors told NDTV that the group accused them of spreading coronavirus and said they were members of Tablighi Jamaat -- an Islamic sect linked to hundreds of COVID-19 cases across the country.

The vendors in their complaint said they had gone to some villages to sell vegetables on April 11. Scores of people were buying from them, they allege, when a group of men asked the buyers not to purchase vegetables as they were Muslims. The sellers were abused, and asked to leave the village, they said.

"We had gone to a village to sell vegetables. Over 100 people came to buy in the 15 minutes we were there. About 10-15 people had already bought from us. Then some other people came and said 'these people are Muslims don't buy from them'," Mohammad Shamim, one of the vendors, said.

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"The vegetables we had sold were returned to us. For two days we have not stepped out. Those men were saying we were Muslims and had images of the crescent moon (Islamic symbol) on our vehicles. They also claimed we were members of the Jamaat and were spreading coronavirus," he added.

Last week the Union health ministry said nearly a third of coronavirus cases in the country were linked to a congregation organised by the sect in the national capital in March. Such cases have emerged in at least 17 states, it had said. Several states have taken legal action against members of the Jamaat.

A senior official of the UP government posted in the district met with the vendors and promised swift action.

"There people have shared their concerns. I have asked the sub-divisional magistrate to conduct a probe. No one will face any issues; whatever needs to be done, we will ensure it is done. Ensuring that there is no problem is the district administration's responsibility," Ram Suresh Verma, the official, told NDTV.

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