

COM.R.MUTHUSUNDARAM :

AN INDOMITABLE LEADER

PAR EXCELLENCE



Com.R.Muthusundaram, Chairman, AISGEF is no more. It is still hard to accept the fact that the leader who guided lakhs of Government employees, teachers and workers has expired on 29th of July, 2017. Com. R.Muthusundaram, fondly known as RMS by his comrades, has waged several battles against the Governments, oppressors and exploiters and taught his comrades to wage such struggles. Yet, to my little knowledge, the last battle he has waged with his illness – lung cancer – is the lone battle that he has lost. Though he was diagnosed with lung cancer only during the last week of February 2017, he was suffering from illness for the past two years. He took little interest in his health issues as he put the organisation above all and travelled length and breadth of the Country to educate, organize, emancipate the working class in general, Government Employees in particular.

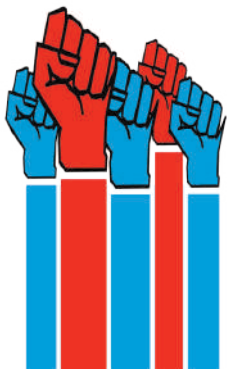
He was born in a poor, yet an orthodox family in Samayanallur in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu on 10.08.1952. He had 2 younger brothers and one younger sister. He lost his father at his young age. Com. RMS was brought up by his aunt (younger sister of his mother whom his father got married later). At his young age itself he was attracted towards progressive movements. While he

was studying 7th Standard he took his friend to his home who was a non-brahmin boy for which he was strongly reprimanded by his family and beaten up by his grandmot

her. He questioned their wisdom and rejected the casteist approach of the family. Then his family decided to conduct the Upanayana sanskara ceremony to him, a ritual in Brahmin family in which the boy receives during this ceremony a sacred thread called Yajñopaveetam that he wears. As Com.RMS, at his tender age felt that this symbolizes the casteist hegemony, he deserted his house and spoiled the designs of his family. After that his family never tried to conduct the ceremony which every male member of the Brahmin Family undergoes in his life.

Due to his poor family circumstances, he discontinued his graduation and took Government job in his late teens. During the year 1969, he started his career as Junior Assistant in Education Department in Thalavadi Panchayat Union and retired on 31.08.2010 as Personal Assistant to the District Educational Officer. As an enlightened boy even before joining the Government services and fought against the social oppressions in his early teens itself, he identified himself with the union activities ever since he joined Government services and resolved to work for the cause of Government employees and teachers. Since then, his work continued in the Association activities till his last breath which lasted 47 years.

When he started his career as Taluk Secretary of unified Tamil Nadu NGGO Union, the State leadership had identified themselves with the ruling party and the Government at the cost of interests of the employees. Hence, a section of leaders who were worried and resolved to



A TRIBUTE FROM TNGEA



fight for the cause of the employees formed an "Action Committee" within the Union. Com.RMS was one among the member of the apex committee of the Action Committee. When the Action Committee could not function anymore within the Union, progressive forces under the leadership of Com.M.R.Appan (who later rose to the position of Honorary President of AISGEF) formed a separate Association on 06.05.1984, called Tamil Nadu Government Employees Association [TNGEA] to espouse the cause of the Tamil Nadu Government Employees. Com.RMS was elected as one of the State Secretaries. Then he was elected as the General Secretary of the TNGEA during the year 2001 and held the position till the year 2009, in which year he was also elected as the General Secretary of AISGEF in the 9th Congress held at Trivandrum. Before assuming the post of General Secretary of AISGEF, he has held the post of Secretary and Assistant General Secretary of AISGEF since the year 2002.

During his tenure as General Secretary of TNGEA, then AISGEF he has led relentless struggle against the issues concerning the State Government Employees. He was an orator par excellence. His oratory skills enthused lakhs of employees. His ability to revisit and reinterpret the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharatha and quotations from Tamil Literatures to the contemporary situation and his ability to relate them to the present day struggles of he employees and masses was unique which translated the Trade Union Platform into a literary platform. His inimitable thundering voice sounds like a roaring lion.

His contribution against the privatization of Health care of Government employees in Tamil Nadu and against the PFRDA at the National level is worth to mention here. The Government of Tamil Nadu was forced to hand over the Health Insurance scheme for Government Employees to Government agencies. On PFRDA, when the NDA Government under Vajpayee regime attempted to bring the new pension scheme, he, with his shrewd knowledge, grasped the evil designs of the Government and the forces behind it and exposed the Government before the employees and stood in forefront of the agitations. When the Parliamentary select Committee headed by Shri Jairam Ramesh held dialogue with the stake holders in its inception

stage, he represented the AISGEF along with other leaders. When Mr.Jairam Ramesh told the AISGEF delegation that the Government employees constitutes only 1-2% of the population, which is a "thin minority" he retorted back without any fear that in that case, the MPs and MLAs constitutes only around 8000 in the whole Nation, which is a razor thin minority and why the NPS was not extended to them. The Committee has no answer to his shrewd and prompt intervention.

Though he was ill for the past 2-3 years, ignoring his failing health he never took rest and discharged the responsibilities entrusted with him. During the last National Conference of AISGEF, he could not attend the Conference due to his ill health and appealed to the leaders to relieve him from AISGEF responsibilities. Yet, the Conference unanimously elected him as Chairman of the AISGEF. Com.RMS despite his failing health accepted the responsibility with due respect to the decision of the Conference. When AISGEF decided to join the September 2, 2016 National Strike call given by the National Platform of All Trade Unions, he travelled more than 9 States and met the employees of different states to make the Strike a grand success. The rest is history as the Strike was near total in the states where he addressed the employees.

Though he has not even completed his graduation, he is fluent in many languages. His oratory skills in Tamil and English are well known. But, wherever he address, he has the ability to talk in the local language in appropriate place and appropriate manner. During his last days, he even addressed the northern part of India in fluent Hindi. He is fast learner.

He not only travelled the length and breadth of the Country. His voice has echoed in all continents of the Globe. He represented the Indian Working Class in International forum and place valuable arguments to enrich the reports placed before the conference and voiced the miseries faced by the Indian working class. Srilanka, Nepal, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Greek are some of the Countries he visited.

Though his official career and Trade Union career spanned more than 40 years, he was a man of simplicity and he doesn't own or inherit a single

property. He doesn't have enough savings too and throughout his life he depended on Government Hospital only for his treatment. As a disciplined working class warrior, he never spent even for a cup of tea from the coffers of the Association and never allowed his colleagues too to do the same. He prefers to travel only by train in ordinary class and his accountability and dedication to the working class is incomparable.

Such a great leader, Com.RMS who relentlessly thought and worked for the welfare of the employees has breathed his last on 29.07.2017 at the age of 65 at Government Hospital, Erode. His last wish was to donate his body to the research of the Madras Medical College students. As per his last wishes, his mortal remains were brought straight from Government Hospital, Erode (It is pertinent to mention here that the family has cooperated in whole hearted manner and handed over the body without conducting any rituals) to the TNGEA Headquarters on 30.07.2017 and kept for homage of the employees and leaders till 3.00 PM. Leaders of Government Employees from different States and Office Bears of AISGEF paid their homage, apart

from left party leaders. A condolence meeting was conducted in front of the TNGEA Hq in which several leaders, including Com.A.K.Padmanabhan of CITU, T.K.Rengarajan, M.P., Com.A.Sreekumar, General Secretary, AISGEF addressed and paid tributes.

After that, the body was taken in a decorated vehicle and thousands of employees came in procession amid thundering slogans of Red Salute to Com.RMS. Finally the body was handed over to the Madras Medical College for research purpose.

Though Com.RMS has demised, he has left a legacy and thousands and thousands of comrades have grown in his shadow who will continue to hold the torch of ideals he espoused and thus he continues to live in our actions and deeds. True homage to the departed leader is to wage a struggle against the inequality in the society and his comrades are and will march in the path shown by him

Long Live RMS

Long Live Working class ■



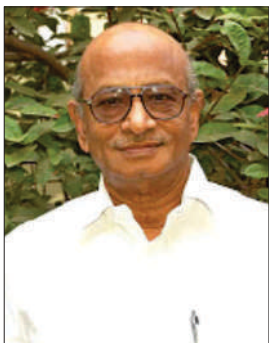
THE PATH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HAVE TRAVELLED

I am very happy to note that the State Govt Employees from the entire India could assemble at Chennai for the 16th Conference of their All India Federation. While the convergence of employees gives confidence to move forwards, the immense sacrifices our erstwhile leaders and cadres and the militant struggles conducted by our organization should not be forgotten. For in a capitalist society, the labour laws and Judiciary will always favour the Capitalist and the ruling class, and in such a situation, the struggles of the working class need to be more virulent and prolonged. In the course of such struggles, the workers have faced lathi charge, bullets, dismissal, and victimization of all sorts. It is such sacrifices of you people have won some victories for you.

SERVICE CONDITION UNDER BRITISH RULE

During the British Rule, the Civil Service Servants were divided into three groups viz., Imperial, Provincial and subordinates. The Imperial group were mostly British people. The three groups had different pay structure, different service rules and different types of punishment.

If you look at history of the Govt employees' movement, it has many ups and downs and twist and turn. The Govt employees service rules were framed by the Colonial Rule to serve their interest. It was framed to discipline the employees and any violation of the rules were viewed seriously and dealt with severe punishments. There were no democratic rights, no collective bargaining rights. The pay of the employees were arbitrarily



decided with no scale of pay or annual increments. Further, with no fixed hours of work the employees were asked to work more than 14 hours a day and they were put to work on holidays and Sundays.

It was in such stringent situation the workers boldly started to organize to resist the horrible working conditions. In 1903, there was a strike in Madras Govt press protesting against working of overtime without additional payment. Again in 1905, the workers of the Govt of India press at Kolkata struck work for nonpayment on Sundays and other public Holidays. Thus in the earlier days, we could see the development of workers organizations coming up and protesting better working condition and salary.

There were numerous strikes by the working class both Govt and Industrial workers during the period of freedom struggle. There were historical political strikes by the working class against the British rule also.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONS

The origin of the Public Service Commission in India was due to Constitutional Reforms in 1919 where the need for some permanent Office for regulating the service matters of civil servants was mentioned. IN the same year under the Govt of India Act 1919, a Public Service Commission was proposed to regulate Recruitment and control of public services. However, only after the recommendation of Lee Commission in 1924, in October 1 1926 the First Public Service Commission was set up. In 1935 under the Govt of India act, Public Service for the Federation and a Provincial Public Service Commission for each Province was envisaged. And it came into effect in 1st April 1937.

With the inauguration of the Constitution of India in 26th January



T.K.RANGARAJAN, M.P.

1950, the Federal Public Service Commission came to be known as Union Public Service Commission.

PAY COMMISSIONS AND THE STRUGGLES

The first Pay Commission was established in 1946. It did not have any representative character. It did not propose any change in service rules favoring the employees. There were 4 pay Commissions before the period of liberalization. The Central Govt employees conducted numerous struggles in the period of each pay Commission for bettering their economic and service conditions. In view of the struggles there were some improvement in the Pay structure and service conditions of both the state and central Govt employees.

WORLD BANK'S INTERFERENCE

The Fifth Pay Commission under the Chairmanship of Justice Ratnavel Pandian brought certain fundamental changes in Pay fixation, Groupings etc.

However, the Pay Commission also recommended for reducing the workforce by 30%. It also recommended for not filling up the 3, 50, 000 vacancies. However, the struggles of the Central Govt employees could prevent the implementation of many adverse features.

It must be noted that after liberalization, the Govt towed the line of World Bank prescription and which expressed critical comments on the pay structure of Govt employees. It said "the fifth pay commission is the single largest adverse shock to the public finance of the nation". It also said that the number of employees of the government was "not unduly large but there was a pronounced imbalance in the skills. It noted that about 93% employees were of 3rd or 4th grade. Thus the presence of 3rd and 4th grade employees in Government was an irritant to World Bank.

The struggles of the state Govt employees for parity with Central Govt employees could succeed in some states depending upon the unity of the employees and the intensity of their struggles. The historic struggle in Tamil Nadu state Govt employees is a pointer in History. The then Chief Minister of the State Jayalalitha dismissed 1,70,000 employees, which has never happened in the history of any trade union struggle. However on my petition to the Supreme court, I could secure an order by which the Govt have to reinstate them .

THE RECENT ADVERSE SITUATION

The recent trend shows that both the Central and state Governments have started to adopt antiemployee stances and have become totally undemocratic. They have started to adopt new methods to weaken the bargaining power of the employees' organizations.

With that in view and to curtail permanent employees, they started adopting out sourcing of work. The workers under contractual terms are slowly increasing, and in some departments exceeding the permanent employees. This is the story in several Public Sector Undertakings.

Another blow to the working class is the New pension Scheme. While under the old pension scheme, the Government will take care of the retirees, under the New Pension, the market will take care of the pension of the retirees.

Thus one after the other, anti-working class measures are coming up. As said earlier, under the Capitalist system, the laws of the land and judiciary will favour the Ruling class and the Capitalist Class. The recent Judgement of the Madras High Court declaring the Transport strike illegal even without hearing the struggling employee's views stands testimony to the character of the Govt.

The latest in the attack on the working class is the notification issued by the BJP Government issuing a notification with draft rules introducing "Fixed Term Employment" (Read employment non-guarantee) across sectors. Now the Government has also issued final rules to encourage contract jobs so that they can hire and fire.

UNITED STRUGGLE ALONE IS THE REMEDY

The economic situation is very grim. The suicides of the farmers are increasing on the one side. On the other side we find large industrial houses who have taken massive loans from public sector banks could not repay them. Many public sector are privatized. Unemployment is also increasing.

I am sure these situation will not deter us from our path. The old ways of conducting struggles have to change to suit the new changed situation. The need of the hour is the unity of the Government employees with the masses of India and conducting valiant struggles to change the policies of the Govt. Only such a unity will alone bring change and relief to the entire working people of India. ■

SUKOMALDA A STALWART OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



Comrade Sukomal Sen beathed last at Kolkata on 22 November 2017, at the age of 83. He was a stalwart of the trade union movement in the country. Comrade Sen was the founder-leader of All India State Government Employees Federation (AISG-EF) its General Secretary during 1982 – 2008, Senior Vice Chairman till his demise and was the founder editor of its organ – Employees Forum for over three decades. he was the organiser and builder of the State Government Employees movement in the country. He was a member CITU Working Committee, Vice President and later as permanent invitee in the Secretariat till his death.

After graduation, Comrade Sen joined a job and got involved in trade union activities. He was a tall leader of government employee's movement. Along with employee's movement, Comrade Sen was deeply involved in other areas of working class movement.

Comrade Sen made significant contribution to international T.U. movement and was the General Secretary of Trade Union International Public & Allied Services (TUI-P&AS) of WFTU during 1996-2009. As General Secretary of All India State Government Employees Federation and General Secretary of TUI & PS & A of WFTU, for many years, he had contributed consistently to organizing the struggle of the workers not only in India but internationally.

He was a Scholarly writer and was the author of several books including The Working Class in India-History Emergence of Movement (1830-2000)



(which has been translated



in several languages) which has become an authoritative account of the history of the working class movement. He also wrote The History of All India State Government Employees Federation, International Working Class Movement – Dynamics of Class struggle vs. Class Collaboration outlining the history of WFTU since its foundation in 1945 to 2011, History of May Day. He was also a regular contributor to various journals in India and abroad.

Comrade Sukomal Sen lead an active Communist life while still remaining steadfast in his ideological commitment. he played a leading role in championing the cause of the working people in the parliament during 1982 – 1994 as a Member of Rajya Sabha.

He was Central Committee member of CPI (M) for decades and as its ex-officio member till his demise. He joined the Party in 1952. Sukomal Sen was a committed Marxist – Leninist and an outstanding trade union leader.

In the Working class movement, Comrade Sen always steadfastly professed that correct political understanding of the working class and ideological battles against various trends of capitulation. He took firm stand against class collaboration and exposed ruling class policies through his writings and speeches.

Due to Sukomal Sen's demise, the country lost a stalwart of working class movement, scholar, visionary and a great teacher and is an irreparable loss in present physical and ideo-logical offensives against the working class.

SUKOMAL SEN LEGENDARY CHAMPION OF EMPLOYEES' MOVEMENT

Com, sukomal sen, our beloved Senior Vice chairman and Editor

TAPAN SEN, M.P.



of Employees Forum is no more. It is still hard to accept the fact that the leader who guided lakhs and lakhs of State Government employees, teachers and workers in the country for the last five decades became part of the history of the Trade union movement. He passed away on 22nd November, 2017, at Kolkata. His mortal remains were handed over to the NRS Medical College, Kolkata.

He was born in 1934 as the elder son of Sukumar Sen and Roma Sen in the village of Swarnagram, near Dhaka in East Bengal. His father was working as an Estate Supervisor of a Zamindar. Com, Sukomal Sen completed his graduation in Science from Kolkata University. Though he got appointment in West Bengal Government Service during his college days, he declined to join duty to continue his study. Later he completed his post graduation in English Literature. Though he got an appointment as teacher in a college in Assarn, he rejected the offer. In 1955, he joined as Assistant in the Directorate of State Irrigation Department of West Bengal. Later he completed his studies in Russian Language. Well connected with Students' movement from the very beginning of his college days, he was part of all movements in those days. His father died while he was a student in college and as such the responsibility of the entire family fell on his shoulders at a younger age.

Right from the time of entry in to Government Service, he started his organisational works. He participated in the historic Convention of State Employees' Leaders in 1960 at Hyderabad on January 23,24 for the inception of the All India State Government Employees' Federation (AISGEF).

He was one among the founder leaders of State Coordination Committee of West Bengal Government Employees Association and Unions and elected as its State Secretariat Member in the 1960s. He became the Secretary of the AISGEF in its Mumbai Conference. He was elected as the General Secretary of AISGEF in 1982 in the 5th Conference held in Patna and continued up to 2008. In the 13th Conference Com. R.Muthusundaram was elected as the General Secretary and Com Sukomal Sen continued in the Federation as the senior vice Chairman until his last breath. Employees' Forum, the mouth organ of AISGEF started printing from April 1979 with Com. Sukomal Sen as Editor, as per the decision of the 4th Conference of the AISGEF in Kolkata. 'Born with a pledge' the first editorial of

Employees' Forum, written by Com, Sukomal Sen, remains undisputed.

Com, Sukomal Sen, along with 12 other employees of West Bengal, was removed from service as the employees have participated in innumerable demonstration programmes and struggles. Governor AL Dias signed the victimisation order under Article 311 (2) (c) of the Indian Constitution on 13th September, 1971, as per the advice of the Congress led Siddhartha Sankar Ray Government. The Left and Democratic Front Government reinstated all the above leaders who were ousted under Article 311(2) (c), in June, 1977. Com, Sukomal Sen took voluntary retirement from service in 1982 and was elected to Rajya Sabha. He continued to serve as Member of parliament up to 1994. He was inducted in to the Directive Council of the TUI (PS) in 1982 and became General Secretary of the Trade Union International (Public Services) in 1996. He was relieved the responsibility in 2009. The AISGEF is connected to World Federation of Trade Unions through the TUI (PS) under his leadership.

He has been inducted as a Member of the National Working Committee of the CITU during the 1990s and elected as the vice President in 2010.

'The Working Class Movement in India, 'History of AISGEF,' 'History of WFTU,' 'Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 and Counter Revolution in 1991,' 'May Day and Eight Hours Struggle in India,' 'Communist Mani-festo and Theory of Revolution' are among the valuable books written by Com, Sukomal Sen.

Being the undisputed leader of the State Employees Movement, he had given leadership for a number of struggles and strikes in various States for their immediate demands. Com, Sukomalda started his campaign against pension privatisation and contract employment, being implemented as part of neo liberal policies from 1998 onwards. We must pay our respectful obeisance to him by taking solemn oath in upholding the principles of left ideology that believe in waging war against the evil forces that keeps the society thoroughly a discriminatory one.

The AISGEF National Executive Committee deeply mourns the demise of Com. Sukomal Sen, the legend of State Employees Movement in the country and keeps our Flag beneath before his memories.

A. Sree kumar

General Secretary, AISGEF

From Worker to leader

Sukomal Sen (1934-2017), a stalwart leader of the working class movement, a scholar and a visionary, spent his whole life in the social and political struggle against capitalist exploitation and for social justice, By T.K. RAJALAKSHMI.

ON November 22, the trade union movement lost one of its leaders of international repute, Sukomal Sen, a two-term member of the Rajya Sabha and a vice president of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), breathed his last at 83 in Kolkata. Sukomal "da". as his comrades fondly called him, was specially known for organising State government employees in the country. He was one of the founder-leaders of the All India State Government Employees' Federation (AISGEF). At the time of his death, he held office as an ex officio member of the central committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and was the chairperson of the control commission that dealt with organisational issues.

Describing Sen's demise as an "irreparable loss" in the context of the "ideological and physical offensive" on the working class, Tapan Sen, general secretary of the CITU. said that the "country had lost a stalwart leader of the working class movement as well as a scholar, a visionary and a great teacher". Paying homage to Sen, the Polit Bureau of the CPI (M) stated that he was "the organiser and builder of the State government employees' movement in the country" and was a "committed Marxist - Leninist and an outstanding trade union leader".

Sen cut his teeth in trade unionism as a government employee in West Bengal where he began his career in 1955. In 1960, the AISGEF was formed, with him as one of its founder-leaders. Himanshu Sarkar, former office secretary of the AISGEF, told Frontline from Kolkata that Sen attended night classes to do his master's in English literature from Kolkata University. With a government job and trade union work, that was the only time he could spare for his academic pursuit. In 1971, the Congress government in the State dismissed him from service. He was reinstated six years later when the Left Front came to power in the State with Jyoti Basu as Chief Minister.

Sarkar remembers Sen as "fear-less like a true communist" and being close to Jyoti Basu. The former West Bengal Chief Minister, who organised

railway workers before plunging into parliamentary politics, was an ally of the State government employees. Sen reciprocated his loyalty and friendship with a two-page note on Jyoti Basu in the book documenting the history of the AISGEF. In 1979, Sen took charge of Employees Forum, the monthly organ of AISGEF and was its editor until his death.

In 1982, on being elected general secretary of the AISGEF, he took voluntary retirement from government service and became a "whole -timer" devoting all his energies to strengthening the Left and democratic trade union movement among State government employees. His tenure as general secretary continued until 2009. Sen was also a member of the Rajya Sabha for two terms (1982-1994).

In 1996, he was elected the secretary general of the Trade Union International of Public and Allied Employees and continued in office until 2009. In 2011, he documented 65 years of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in the article "International Working Class Movement: Dynamics of Class Struggle vs Class-Collaboration and Birth of World Federation of Trade Unions".

BEYOND SECTIONAL INTERESTS

Apart from his organisational skills, it was his ideological clarity on working class issues that made him stand apart. Trade unions, be believed, had a larger role - that is, going beyond the struggle for the economic interests of the workers and changing the social framework and establishing socialism, which would result in their complete emancipation. The working class becomes that first victim of an all-capitalist offensive," wrote Sen some what perspicaciously in the work outlining WFTU history and called upon the organised sections of the working class to mobilise other sections of the working class too.

Sen recognised the fact that organising workers in the unorganised sector was "difficult" and to "conduct any ideological work among them" was "tortuous". Organising them, he believed, was a "critical ideological task facing the revolutionary trade unions" which "the working class has to accept with utmost tenacity'. Writing the prologue of the volume of WFTU, George Mavrikos, general secretary of the WFTU and a deputy in the Greek Parliament of the Communist Party of Greece,

described Sen as one of the “great trade unionists”. He said when he was asked to write a prologue, he felt he had “no right to refuse”.

Explaining why such a book on the class-oriented trade union movement needed to be documented, Mavrikos wrote: “The imperialists target the minds of the workers in order to shape their consciousness according to their needs.... This is why it is necessary for this kind of book to be written, simple men, honest men who sacrificed their whole lives in the social and political struggle against capitalist exploitation and social justice.” The reference was to leaders such as Sukomal Sen.

Sen's painstaking documenting of the history of the working class of India set him apart. Translated in many languages, including Bengali and Hindi. Working Class of India: History of Emergence and Movement, 1830-1970 remains one of the seminal works on trade union history in India and one of the most authoritative accounts of the history of the working class in India. He dedicated the book, aptly, to the “suffering but fighting millions of India”. His other works include May Day and Eight Hours' Struggle in India. A Political History, dedicated to the “immortal martyrs of Haymarket episode” and coinciding with the centenary year of May Day; History of the All India State Government Employees 'Federation; Communist Manifesto and Theory of Revolution, Its Relevance to Contemporary Communist Movement, which was written and published in 1998 in honour of the 150th anniversary of the communist Manifesto.

In the book documenting the history of May Day observations in India, he speaks about The Hindu's coverage of the May Day celebration in Madras in 1923, reporting that “there was an enthusiastic gathering of labourers”. The newspaper gave in great detail the speech made by M.Singaravelu, who is credited with organising the first-ever May Day celebration in India. Those were certainly the halcyon days when trade union struggles occupied prime new space.

PROLIFIC WRITER

He wrote on subjects like culture too. The Question of Culture and Social Revolution in Indian Society; Caste, Religion and India Society; and Fascism are among several of his books.

A voracious reader and an excellent orator, he had a deep interest in cultural issues. Vijoo Krishnan, joint

secretary of the All India Risan Sabha, said Sen had an inordinate capacity to communicate with younger comrades and would initiate discussions on topics ranging from politics to brewing the best cup of tea. “He was regretful of how age had caught up with him but was ever ready to emphasise the importance of reading,” recalled Vijoo Krishnan. Sen used to say the “mediocrity is incompatible with a revolutionary,” reminisced Vijoo Krishnan.

One of the areas that Sen wanted to work on was the “exaggerated notion” of the clampdown on artistic freedom during the years when Stalin Led the Soviet Union. He was apparently engaged in a debate with a prominent comrade -in-arms from West Bengal over the issue of artistic freedom and had persuaded Vijoo Krishnan to get a copy of Sergei Eisenstein's memoirs Beyond the Stars to bolster his view that artistic freedom existed in the Soviet Union. Sen wanted to “settle” the issue with facts and was hugely pleased after reading Eisenstein's memoirs. Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 to Capitalist Counter Revolution in 1991 was his last major work.

VERSATILE PERSON

Former CITU president A.K.Padmanabhan said: “He was a unifier. He unified State government employees which was a huge challenge given the diversity of their backgrounds in every sense. He was dismissed from service without an inquiry. He knew the problems State government employees faced. He was a versatile character; a very good teacher, a historian. He always took a class-based approach to issues confronting the working class movement.”

Padmanabhan recalled two occasions when Sen stood by State government employees when they went on strike in Tamil Nadu, once during M.G. Ramachandran's tenure and the other during Jayalalithaa's chief minister ship in 2003. On both occasions, there were severe reprisals on employees; Sen made it a point to address them and build their confidence. He believed that the Indian State, despite being a sovereign entity, treated its employees with the same kind of disdain that the colonial government reserved for its employees. Employees were seen as “an adjunct of the colonial machinery to exploit and rule over the Indian people”.



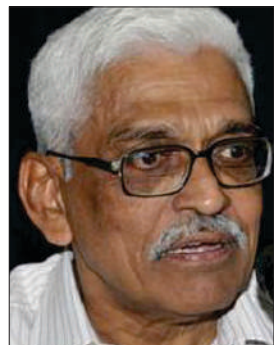
PRESENT DAY CHALLENGES TO THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

Working People all over the world are facing serious challenges in the present situation. It is not that these challenges are new to the working class movement as a whole. But, to-day, by the end of the second decade of the 21st century, we face a situation that all the gains of the last century are under serious attack from the ruling classes.

Neo-liberal economic policies have further aggravated the crisis in the capitalist system. And the efforts to strengthen the unsustainable capitalist order, by transferring all the burdens of the serious crisis to the shoulders of the working people are continuing. We also find that the rabid anti worker leaders and their Political parties are also trying to cover-up all these efforts and win over the workers. What started with prescribing globalization as panacea for all the problems faced by the people, has now turned into a counter move of protectionism by major players.

And for the working people, situation continues to be critical, with all the problems faced by them getting intensified. There are no exceptions to this deepening crisis as far as the developed, developing, emerging and to the least developed countries.

And the problems are also identical - unemployment, under employment, reduction in real wages, attacks on social security and massive withdrawal of the Government



A.K.PADMANABHAN, VICE-PRESIDENT, CITU

from education, health and other welfare related sectors. This has turned into all out attacks on the working people. All the claims of recovery from the crisis, which erupted in 2007-08 have only been in words.

It is in such a situation working people are in the streets demanding justice. It is also a fact that these struggles have not yet reached the level at which the offensives against the working people can be pushed back. The situation in the developed countries, especially in the USA is such that the average real wage, which was being brought down during the last two decades is still below the 1970 level. Situation is not different in other countries in Europe.

INDIAN SITUATION

Neoliberal offensive which began under the Narasimha Rao-Manomohan regime in 1991, has intensified under the Narendra Modi regime. Last four years of Modi regime, have witnessed intensified attack on the working people. The dubious slogans, like ' Shrameva Jayate ' raised by the Prime Minister in the only Indian Labour Conference, held during the last four years have turned into facades to cover-up the anti-worker policies of the Government.

The offensives against the Trade Union rights, wages, social security and the limited job security are continuing. Almost all the Labour laws are amended or are in the process of being amended. It need not be stressed that all these are against the interests of the workers and employees. All, in the name of 'ease of doing business.'

The latest attack on job security is that of fixed term



employment. Government has come back again with the proposal of the Vajpayee Government that was shelved by the UPA II Government after united opposition by Trade Unions and Left Parties.

All the pre-election assurances of the Prime Minister on Job creation, support to the peasantry, Industrial development, bringing back black money stacked in the Tax havens abroad have been proved as 'Jumla'. The crisis in the financial sector, created by the policies of neo liberalisation and the political-corporate nexus has now created an unprecedented situation. Recent happenings have brought out the loot of public money that was permitted by those in power.

While almost all these policies have been the follow up of the policies initiated by the earlier regimes, the one and only policy of Modi's 'Demonitisation' has created everlasting destruction of the small and medium enterprises in the country. We should remember that these are the sections, which provide the largest employment opportunities.

ATTACKS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

The withdrawal of pension benefits to the Government Employees from the Year 2004, marked the beginning of a serious attack on Social security. Now serious efforts are being made to dismantle the Employees Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance Scheme (EPF and ESI). These two schemes used to be show cased by our rulers as the biggest achievements of Independent India in social security.

Recent initiatives to reduce employers' contribution to EPF, option for EPS pensioners to switch over to NPS, reduction of women workers' contribution to EPF, converting ESI scheme to insurance policies etc., make the Government's intentions clear. All of these have been opposed by the Trade Unions and struggles are continuing.

Unique Resistance

It is important to note that the ruling class in India has faced very strong, united resistance from the Trade Union movements in the country. From November 1991, there have been united movements, struggles and strikes sectorally and nationally against the neoliberal offensives. The present Government has seen two countrywide General Strikes and innumerable sectoral strikes. Not a single section of workers and employees is an exception to this united movement in which the

Government employees, both under the States and the Central Government have played a major role.

With the Government going ahead with its privatisation drive and blind permission to Foreign Direct Investment, struggles of Public Sector employees and others are also getting intensified.

November 2017 witnessed largest mobilization of men and women workers from all sections in the Capital City of Delhi. The call now is to prepare for an indefinite countrywide strike by all sections of workers. While preparations for this historic indefinite General Strike are made, many more actions including multi days strikes and various other actions are also possible.

On the whole, to meet the offensives of the ruling classes from various directions, the working class has to be united and prepared for sustained struggles.

It is heartening to note that in the recent period, the Peasantry in the country is on struggle in different States and also at the National level. Students and youths are also coming out all over the country. Various social organizations have also come out and are now joining the class and mass organizations. It is this unity of toiling masses that has to be strengthened and prepared for sustained struggles. These struggles need to be developed as struggles for an alternate pro-people policy framework. This needs systematic efforts to expose the policies of the ruling classes and their politics behind the policies. Unless the working class is able to do this, the momentum that has been created cannot be sustained and carried forward.

Another very crucial area of challenge is that of communalism which has increased its divisive and disruptive efforts under the present regime. While our efforts are to unify the working class and other sections of toiling masses, the communal forces are trying to disrupt the unity. These challenges have to be met by the working people by exposing and isolating these forces. This needs an ideological campaign along with various other efforts.

Indian people are on cross roads. Working people, under the class oriented organizations have to take the lead in unleashing massive struggles for an alternative, pro-people policies and such sustained struggles only can save the country from the present day challenges. ■

PEOPLE TO RISE OUT OF POVERTY



Moving jobs center stage

Jobs are the cornerstone of economic and social development. Indeed, development happens through jobs. People work their way out of poverty and hardship through better livelihoods. Economies grow as people get better at what they do. as they move from farms to firms. and as more productive jobs are created and less productive ones disappear. Societies flourish as jobs bring together people from different ethnic and social backgrounds and nurture 2 sense of opportunity. Jobs are thus transformational - they- can transform what we earn, what we do. and even who we are.)

No surprise, then, that jobs are atop the development agenda every where-for e\er.one from policy makers to the populace, from business leaders to union representatives, from activists to academics. Looking to seize opportunities for job creation presented by massive demographic shifts, technological innovations, global migrations of people and tasks, and deep changes in the nature of work, policy makers ask difficult questions:

- Should countries build their development strategies around growth or should they rather focus on jobs?
- Can entrepreneurship be fostered, especially among the many micro enterprises in developing countries, or are entrepreneurs born?



- While jobs can contribute to social cohesion, is there anything governm



ents can do about it. apart from trying to support job creation?

- Are greater investments in education and training a prerequisite for employability. or can skills be built through jobs?
- Should efforts to improve the investment climate target die areas, activities, or firms with greater potential for job creation?
- What is the risk that policies to foster job creation in one country will come at the expense of jobs in other countries?
- When confronted with large shocks and major restructuring, is it advisable to protect jobs and not just people?
- How can the reallocation of workers be accelerated from areas and activities with low productivity to those with greater potential?

Individuals value jobs for the earnings and benefits they provide, as well as for their contributions to self-esteem and happiness. But some jobs have broader impacts on society. Jobs for women can change the way households spend money and invest in the education and health of children. Jobs in cities support greater specialization and the exchange of ideas, making other jobs more productive. Jobs connected to global markets bring home new technological and managerial knowledge. And in turbulent environments, jobs for young men can provide alternatives to violence and help restore peace.

Through their broader influence on living standards, productivity, and social cohesion, these jobs have an even greater

value to society than they do for the individual. But some jobs can have negative spillovers. Jobs supported through transfers or privileges represent a burden to others or undermine their opportunities to find remunerative employment. Jobs damaging the environment take a toll on everybody. Thus it is that some jobs do more for development, while others may do little, even if they are appealing to individuals.

Which jobs have the greatest development payoffs depends on the circumstances. Countries differ in their level of development, demography, endowments, and institutions. Agrarian societies face the challenge of making agricultural jobs more productive and creating job opportunities outside farms. Resource-rich countries need to diversify their exports, so that jobs are connected to global markets rather than supported through government transfers. Formalizing countries need to design their social protection systems in ways that extend their coverage without penalizing employment.

A vast majority of jobs are created by the private sector. Governments, though, can support or hinder the private sector in creating jobs. The idea that development happens through jobs sheds new light on the strategies, policies, and programs governments can pursue. Strategies should identify which types of jobs would have the highest development payoffs, given a country's circumstances. Policies should remove the obstacles that prevent the private sector from creating jobs. Programs for generating employment may also be warranted, for instance, in conflict-affected countries. But the costs and benefits of these policies and programs have to be assessed, taking into account the potential spillovers from jobs, both positive and negative.

At a more practical level, this jobs lens on development leads to a three-layered policy approach:

- **Fundamentals.** Because jobs provide higher earnings and broader social benefits as countries grow richer, the policy environment must be conducive to growth. That requires attending to macroeconomic stability, an enabling business environment, human capital accumulation, and the rule of law.
- **Labor policies.** Because growth alone may not be enough, labor policies need to facilitate job creation and enhance the development payoffs

from jobs. Policies can address labor market distortions while not being a drag on efficiency. But they should avoid distortionary interventions that constrain employment in cities and global value chains and provide voice and protection for the most vulnerable.

- **Priorities.** Because some jobs do more for development than others, it is necessary to identify the types of jobs with the greatest development payoffs given a country's context, and to remove or at least offset the market imperfections and institutional failures that result in too few of those jobs being created.

The centrality of jobs for development should not be interpreted as the centrality of labor policies and institutions. Nearly half the people at work in developing countries are farmers or self-employed and so are outside the labor market. And even in the case of wage employment, labor policies and institutions may not be the main obstacle to job creation. Often, the most relevant obstacles lie outside of the labor market. The catalysts for job creation may be policies that make cities work better, help farmers access and apply appropriate agricultural techniques, or allow firms to develop new exports. Jobs are the cornerstone of development, and development policies are needed for jobs.

Jobs wanted

To many, a "job" brings to mind a worker with an employer and a regular paycheck. Yet, the majority of workers in the poorest countries are outside the scope of an employer-employee relationship. Worldwide, more than 3 billion people are working, but their jobs vary greatly. Some 1.65 billion are employed and receive regular wages or salaries. Another 1.5 billion work in farming and small household enterprises, or in casual or seasonal day labor.

1.6 billion people working for	1.5 billion people working in
77% labor force participation	28% labor force participation
39% of the manufacturing	97% of the manufacturing
2x employment growth in a	10x employment growth in
115 million children working	21 million victims of forced
600 million jobs needed over 15 years to current	
90 million people working	621 million youth neither
22x the productivity gap between manufacturing	9x the productivity gap between manufacturing firms in the 90s
10 million entrants to the labour	30 million entrants to the labour
3% international migrants as	60% foreign born population in

Meanwhile, 200 million people, a disproportionate share of them youth, are unemployed and actively looking for work. Almost 2 billion working-age adults, the majority of them women, are neither working nor looking for work, but an unknown number of them are eager to have a job. Clarifying what is meant by a job is thus a useful starting point.

The meaning of the words used to describe what people do to earn a living varies across countries and cultures. Some words refer to workers in offices or factories. Others are broader, encompassing farmers, self-employed vendors in cities, and caregivers of children and the elderly. The distinction is not merely semantic. The varied meanings hint at the different aspects of jobs that people value. And views on what a job is almost inevitably influence views on what policies for jobs should look like.

For statisticians, a job is "a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment.¹ Jobs are performed by the employed. These are defined as people who produce goods and services for the market or for their own use. But the statistical definition is muddled about what should not be considered a job. International norms view basic human rights as the boundaries of what is unacceptable. Among them are the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the international Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), which further specifies core labor standards. Combining these different perspectives, jobs are activities that generate income, monetary or in kind, without violating human rights as the boundaries of what are unacceptable. Among them are the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), which further specifies core labour standards. Combining these different perspectives, jobs are activities that generate income, monetary or in kind, without violating human rights.

Different places, different jobs

The world of work is particularly diverse in developing countries. This variety refers not only to the number of hours worked and the number of jobs available, the usual yardsticks in industrial countries, but also to the characteristics of jobs. Two main aspects stand out. One is the prevalence of self-employment and farming.² The other is the coexistence of traditional

and modern modes of production, from subsistence agriculture and low-skilled work to technology-driven manufacturing and services and highly skilled knowledge work.

While nearly half of the jobs in the developing world are outside the labor market, the shares of wage work, farming, and self-employment differ greatly across countries. Non-wage work represents more than 80 percent of women's employment in Sub-Saharan Africa-but less than 20 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Work across the developing world is also characterized by a high prevalence of informality, whether defined on the basis of lack of firm registration, lack of social security coverage, or lack of an employment contract, informal employment is not under the purview of labor regulations, either because of their limited scope or because of deliberate avoidance or evasion. Regardless of the specific definition used, informality is generally associated with lower productivity. However, this does not necessarily mean that formalization would result in greater efficiency. Informality can be a symptom of lower productivity as much as it can be a cause of it.⁴

Gender and age differences are striking. Worldwide, fewer than half of women have jobs, compared with almost four-fifths of men. In Pakistan, 28 percent of women but more than 82 percent of men participate in the labor force, whereas participation rates are above 75 percent for both men and women in Tanzania and Vietnam. Beyond these stark contrasts in participation, women continue to earn significantly less than men, and the differences are not fully explained by education, experience, or sector of work. While a growing share of youth between ages 15 and 24 allocate most of their time to schooling and training, youth unemployment is still alarming in some countries (above 40 percent in South Africa since early 2008 and above 50 percent in Spain in early 2012).⁵ Even in countries where it is low, youth unemployment is twice the national average or more. In addition, 621 million young people are "idle"-not in school or training, not employed, and not looking for work. Rates of idleness vary across countries, ranging between 10 and 50 percent among 15- to 24-year-olds (figure 2). Many youth work in unpaid jobs; if paid, they are less likely to have social insurance.

ILO enumerates many other issues on the job profile but in main direction of the ILO document is to find out way how people can rise out of poverty. ■

ECONOMIC REFORMS IN INDIA: JOBLESS GROWTH, AGRARIAN CRISIS AND MASSIVE INEQUALITY

Introduction

It is now nearly twenty-seven years since these LPG reforms – also called 'Neoliberal Reforms' - have been in place, pursued vigorously by both the Congress Party-led governments and the BJP-led coalitions, at the Centre and in most of the States. The Left-ruled states and Left Parties have been more or less alone in opposing these LPG policies both in theoretical and in practical ways. It is time to take stock of the impact of LPG policies on the people of India.

LPG policies involve deregulation of the economy, opening up the economy as widely as possible to private capital and opening up the nation as widely as possible to foreign capital. Specifically, deregulation (also called liberalization) means the removal of regulations governing the operations of private companies, especially the large ones. In other words, it removes these companies from all social responsibility and social obligations. They are to be left free to make profits in any manner they wish and to any extent possible. This naturally implies that the State will no longer defend even the minimal rights of working people. It also implies that large companies are free to gobble up smaller companies and become powerful monopolies, ironically in the name of promoting competition! Privatization



AISSEF

relates
not only
to
government

ent selling some of its shares in State-owned companies to private capital and gradually dismantling the public sector, but also opening up all economic and social activity, including those related to education, health, infrastructure and so on, to private players and allowing them to convert all these activities into profit-making opportunities rather than activities governed by the need to promote social well-being. This has obvious implications in terms of denying the poor access to education and health beyond minimal levels, and to raising the costs to the people of infrastructure services, including those relating to energy and power, water and transport. Globalization, the third element of LPG, means allowing indiscriminate imports at low tariffs and removal of all quantitative restrictions on imports, a WTO requirement as well. Even more importantly, it means removing all restrictions on the free movement of capital as finance into and out of India, as a strategy to attract foreign capital flows into the country. This is the single most important aspect of LPG reforms, and the one with the most disastrous consequences. The moment restrictions on bringing money into India and taking it out of India in foreign currency is removed, the government can no longer be independent in making policy. It will have to worry about whether foreign finance capital brought into India may be taken out if any government measure is not to the liking of foreign finance capitalists. Finance capital always demands minimal government regulation and minimal government expenditure. It does not like to

PROF. VENKATESH ATHREYA



be taxed, and it wants complete freedom to speculate, in the name of 'financial innovation'. This has serious consequences for the government's welfare and investment policies. Since 1991, successive governments in India have cut back welfare programmes and public investments to keep foreign finance capital happy, in gross violation of democratic verdicts against these policies in every election to the Parliament.

How have India and Indians fared during the two decades of neoliberal reforms? Let us begin our assessment with economic growth.

Economic Growth

The annual rate of growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the economy was already close to 6 per cent per year from the mid-1980s. Between 1991 when the reforms were accelerated, widened and deepened, and 2003, the average annual growth rate of GDP was no higher than in the period from 1985 to 1990. However, from 2003-04 to 2007-08, the GDP grew more rapidly at between 7 and 9 per cent. Following huge tax concessions given to the corporate sector as a 'stimulus' to growth in the wake of the global economic crisis that erupted in 2008, annual GDP growth rate which fell to 6.7% in 2008-09, rose to 8.4% between 2009 and 2011. But with the stimulus wearing off, the GDP growth rate in 2011-12 was 6.2 %, that in 2012-13 just 5 % and that for 2013-14 did not even reach 5 %, according to official data from those years. More recently, the BJP government has released figures of GDP and its growth based on 2011-12 prices and in terms of market prices as opposed to the earlier practice of estimating GDP at factor cost. This has resulted in a sharp upward revision of growth rates for the years since 2011-12, but these increases are substantially the result of the methodological changes in calculation, the shift to GDP at market prices accompanied by a continuing increase in indirect taxes and the shift to a new base year. In fact, growth rates calculated on the old basis would show more modest performance in the period 2014-2017, not very different from that of the years from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

One can argue, however, that even an average of 6 to 7 per cent growth rate of GDP is impressive when

many countries, including the developed capitalist countries, are growing at much lower rates and only China is growing at between 9 and 10 per cent per year for over three decades now. This is a valid point., and it is not the argument of this paper that there has been no economic progress over the period of reforms. The issue, however, is not just the rate of growth, but the nature and composition of growth and its implications for different socio-economic classes. There are major concerns in this regard.

Nature of Growth

First, it is the service sector that is growing most rapidly. The share of the service sector in India's GDP is now close to 60 per cent. The secondary sector - which includes manufacturing, gas, electricity and water supply - has grown at much lower rates than the service sector and has also shown instability. Its share in GDP is only around 25 per cent, much lower than in China. The share of the manufacturing sector in GDP has been stagnating at about 16 %. The share of the primary sector –agriculture and allied activities, forestry and fishing, and mining and quarrying – has declined to somewhere around 17 per cent.

Second, while the decline in the share of the primary sector in GDP is to be expected as an economy modernizes and industrializes, the point to be noted with concern is that the share of the labour force in the primary sector, at nearly 50 %, is much higher than its share in GDP. By contrast, services sector contributes 58 per cent of GDP, but its share of employment is less than 30 per cent.

Third, the last two decades have seen huge and continuing agrarian distress, with more than 300,000 farmers committing suicide in just the period from 1997 to 2017. Agriculture and the rural economy have been devastated by neoliberal policies that have:

Slashed subsidies to agricultural inputs including fertilizers, pesticides, credit, energy and transport, leading to sharp increases in input costs

Removed restrictions on imports of agricultural produce, causing both a collapse of

prices for farm produce at certain times and greatly increased price fluctuations throughout

Reduced the supply and increased the costs of bank and cooperative credit to agriculture and allied activities

Cut back on development expenditure to meet the demands of foreign finance capital for low budget deficits, in the process weakening rural infrastructure, farm extension, farm research and halting the expansion of irrigation critical to agricultural growth

Weakened food security by imposing a targeted public distribution system, excluding millions of the poor from access to food at affordable costs.

Fourth, the growth in employment during the reform period has been much smaller than in the decade preceding the reforms. Moreover, practically all the increase in employment over the last two decades has been in informal jobs that are not only often at very low wages, but carry no welfare benefits, are completely insecure with no protection for workers, involve long working hours and deny workers the right to form unions and fight for better wages and working conditions. Between the mid-1980s and mid-2000s, the share of profit in net value added in manufacturing, for instance, has gone up from around 40 % to around 80 %. The trend of increasing share of profits and declining share of wages in industry is continuing. BJP government is pushing for fixed term employment, destroying all job security. Joblessness is at an all-time high, with job creation close to zero over the last two years devastated by demonetization and GST. Government jobs have practically disappeared.

Fifth, the reforms have led to a much greater integration of the Indian economy with the world capitalist economy. For instance, the combined share of exports and imports in the Indian economy in India's GDP was only 14 % in 1991. It is now close to 50 per cent of GDP. In addition, because the reforms allowed free entry and exit of foreign finance capital, there is a much greater degree of instability in the economy, with foreign institutional investors bringing money into the country to make

quick and huge profits in Indian stock markets and taking them out quickly. While foreign capital makes huge profits in this manner, there is no benefit to the Indian economy as no wealth is created by trading mostly in already existing shares. But the unregulated entry and exit of foreign finance capital only causes great instability in the financial and currency markets and the integration of India's economy through trade and capital flows makes us far more vulnerable to external shocks emanating from any part of the world capitalist economy.

All evidence, from the national sample surveys, the national family health surveys and various other surveys done across the country, shows that the reforms have not made a significant impact on the depth and severity as well as the wide spread of poverty, even though the government often claims the contrary. There has been no significant reduction in malnutrition, and the indicators even show a worsening in some parts of the country and among socially and economically vulnerable sections. Food insecurity is a widely prevalent condition in India, with more than one-sixth suffering chronic hunger and a larger proportion food-insecure even according to official data.

The Economy under the BJP/NDA Regime

The BJP government has gone in for privatization of the economy and sale of public sector assets to non-state entities on a far more rapid scale than even the two UPA regimes. It has spared no sector, not even defence and the financial sector. In 2017-18, it has disinvested to the tune of one lakh crores. Every PSU is being sold, and often to foreign capital.

The budgetary policies of BJP government, now in office for nearly four years, are marked by a single minded focus on reducing fiscal deficits entirely through expenditure reduction and disinvestment, even while concessions on direct taxes continue along with measures to provide amnesty to tax evaders in successive budgets. Wealth tax has been abolished. There has been a significant rise in indirect taxes. During a period of declining crude oil prices in the international arena, the government has sharply raised excise duties from time to time, and enhanced the burden on people considerably, with the farm sector being especially hit hard.

Growth remains modest, notwithstanding government's doctored numbers to the contrary. The mindless demonetisation measure has caused significant damage to the economy as a whole and to the informal sector in particular. The agrarian crisis shows no sign of abating.

Meanwhile, the political system under the neoliberal dispensation is steeped in corruption scandals involving both the major national political parties as well as some regional parties, as more and more instances of massive corruption facilitated by the corporate sector-bureaucracy-political leadership nexus fostered by neoliberal policies come crawling out of the wood work.

The Class Nature of Economic Policies

What emerges from our stock-taking of the impact of policies of successive governments in the period of neoliberal reforms is that these have largely served the interests of the rich, particularly big business and capitalist landlords/big capitalist farmers.

While the role of international capital and its penetration of Indian agrarian and rural economy have increased rapidly during the period of neoliberal reforms, the basic contradiction in the Indian countryside between landlordism and the mass of the peasantry and agricultural labourers is intact and is very far from being resolved. Land monopoly and concentration of productive assets in the hands of landlords and big capitalist farmers as well sections of the rich peasantry continue to define the countryside in large measure. Land ceilings laws have been diluted and even reversed in many states. Oppression against dalits, adivasis and women remains an important and persistent feature of the rural economy and society.

The role of big business

The class which has had the greatest power over the state and is the leader of the ruling class alliance of capitalists and landlords is clearly big monopoly capital. This has been the case throughout, both before and after neoliberal reforms. Liberalization policies led to an even more rapid growth of the big business houses. Through the many twists and

turns of policy, big business has prospered all the time, and under all governments. While some old traditional business houses have declined, new ones have emerged, several of them in the period of neoliberal reforms.

The period of neoliberal reforms has seen increasing collaboration of India's big business houses with foreign finance capital. Moreover, Indian big business has also expanded overseas, and contributed significantly to the outflow of FDI in recent years. However, Indian big business still enjoys some measure of autonomy vis-à-vis imperialism and has potential contradictions with it.

Overall, in class terms, India's biggest capitalists have benefited the most under neoliberalism. Landlords, big capitalist farmers and a section of the rich peasantry have also substantially benefited from neoliberal policies, though they are also facing increased volatility on account of opening up and exposure to international economic shocks. A section of the middle class –professionals, for instance – has also benefited to some extent and this section is generally in favour of neoliberal policies. However, the rural poor consisting of agricultural workers, poor and middle peasants, artisans and even a section of rich peasants have been hit hard by the agrarian crisis. The working class is predominantly employed in the unorganized sector, with poor wages and earnings, long working hours and no job security. Dalits, tribals, women and minorities have been especially badly hit by privatization which severely limits the scope for reservations in employment and education, given the absence of reservation in the private sector.

Inequality

The period of BJP rule has been one of sharply rising inequality. Recent evidence from Credit Suisse suggest that the top 1% of India's population owns 58 % of all household wealth owned by Indians in 2017. Between 2014 and 2017, the number of dollar billionaires in India rose from 109 to 136. In the last one year alone, the net worth of India's 100 richest persons rose by more than 25%. The top one percent grabbed 73% of the addition to wealth last year.

An important aspect of rural inequality is the unequal distribution of land. Data from the National Sample Survey shows that the top 5.42 % of households owning land accounted for 39.9 % of all land owned in 1992. In 2003, the top 5.24% owned 42.79 % of land owned. The Gini coefficient for ownership inequality in respect of land was 0.74 in 2003, rising from an already high 0.71 in 1992. Evidence from the All India Debt and Investment Survey of 2012 as well as other data from official sources show that inequality of land ownership has risen further since 2003, as has landlessness in rural India.

Besides class inequality, there are also the other axes of inequality: gender, caste and rural/urban residence. In all these dimensions, the degree of inequality in terms of wealth, incomes and access to health and education are all likely to have increased substantially in the era of neoliberal reforms.

What is to be done?

The only development pathway that can achieve both economic growth and reduction of the massive levels of social and economic deprivation that a

majority of our people faces is one that directly addresses inequality, especially rural inequality, since nearly 70 % of our people live in rural areas even now. Without comprehensive land reform, the mass deprivation in India cannot be eliminated nor can the economy progress in a sustainable manner. In addition, there has to be consistent state support to agriculture based primarily, in the period of transition to full scale and all-round development of the economy, on the poor and middle peasantry and rural manual workers. Neoliberal policies need to be reversed, and the State has to play the role of a major investor in health, education and infrastructure. Public investment has to be stepped up substantially in agriculture, rural development, education, health and infrastructure. The resources for such investment have to be mobilized by taxing big capital and wealthy sections of the population. Capital flows into and out of the country need to be strictly regulated and the levers of the financial sector have to be with the state. Public sector has to be the major player in banking, insurance and the financial sector as a whole. All this will require nothing short of a revolutionary change in the balance of class forces. ■

EMPLOYEES' STRUGGLES AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA



Indian media is a child of the Indian freedom struggle. Good journalism is a society in conversation and argument with herself. Journalism needs to be an archive of the living past, a journal of the contemporary present and textbook of the future.

- P. Sainath, Senior Journalist

The fourth pillar of Indian democracy, media, has witnessed tremendous growth and reaches over the past couple of decades. News has become an integral part of every citizen of India, where despite our interests in a particular field through social media, information about people and events are increasingly becoming more accessible to all.

Here media denotes print, visual, online all of which have evolved over the years with the technological advances. Of the above, when comparing to the sweep of visual media, the print and online media has a very small percentage of readership and as such most of the points I am raising here are related to the visual media only. However, I do not doubt the power of print and online media in developing opinions within the society. It is only because of the wider difference in their readership/viewership, the

visual media is very much successful in creating favourable opinion among its viewers, and more particular

ly the majority



of public are handicapped with reading and writing abilities.

Since the nineties, with the advent of finance capital, the country has introduced LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation) policies which opened a floodgate of TV channels with an ultimate motive of making of profit at any cost. Gone are the days of monopoly of All India Radio and Doordarshan, which though functioned as a mouthpiece of the ruling party, they never attempted to corrupt the minds of the people.

In its place, the television channels branding themselves as entertainment and news channels started to develop positive opinion on consumerism. As they are institutionalized, they represent the interests of the ruling class and as a corollary they are inimical to the aspirations of working people. As such, it is in their own class interest, they tend to hide and contain the information about the ills of liberalisation, capitalism and its crisis from the purview of the viewers. With their wider viewership across the country, they tend push their agenda of justifying the economic policies put forward by the ruling class in every possible way and the viewers are never allowed to know the alternative path to such disastrous policies.

In this context, when only four per cent of the work force in India is organized, their demands for their livelihood drive them to launch many movements and struggles. However, the media of

V.B. GANESAN, JOURNALIST



all hues used to adopt a method of coverage either keeping silent over such demands, or will make a comparison of the much worst life of unorganized work force to create a negative image among the general public. This can be seen that every time either the Central or State government announces the release of 2 or 4 or 5 per cent of DA to their employees, the newspapers, more notably the language newspapers put up a banner screaming "Wage increase to Govt. employees" as if the governments increase the salaries once in every six months.

In this respect, we cannot forget the statement of late Jayalalithaa that more than 90 per cent of government's expenditure goes to pay the salaries and pension of the state government employees because of which many development schemes could not be taken up for the general public. She has done that again when she dismissed 1.76 lakh employees from service in July 2003 using ESMA following a struggle for revision of salaries and other demands.

We will be able to find that during such a havoc heaped upon the employees, the mainstream media never put forward the rationale behind the struggle and the efforts made by various associations to make the government understand their demands. Instead, they were playing second fiddle to the state government pitting the general public against the employees citing various bitter experiences in obtaining services from the employees. Even the highest judiciary of the country also enamoured over such theories and came up with a judgment that Government employees have no right to strike work.

Despite such a concerted effort by the mainstream media, both print and visual, to obfuscate the needs and demands of the organized employees and pit them against the unorganized sections, the AISGEF and other All India federations staunchly led them forward to achieve their goals. This trend can be seen until the recent recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission.

Another important development during this period is the development and enormous growth of social media like Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp through which the employees and their associations can take the rationale behind their actions to the general public. The instant reaction from the public to such information also helps the associations to take remedial measures, if there are any discrepancies on their part.

Hence, the employees and their associations can now rely on the social media to take forward their message across the public and also get instant feedback on their actions from them. In that sense, nowadays a section of mainstream media, though serving their masters, are compelled to change their attitude towards employees and their association during struggles and cover them widely. This trend was seen during the recent struggles of Government nurses as well TNGEA's picketing programme against New Pension Scheme.

As such, there is an urgent need of developing a media cell within every employee association to take their message to their members as well as to the general public to garner their support. Developing expertise in social media is also become imperative to reach the public instantly. ■



PENSION – AN OLD AGE SOCIAL SECURITY



Retirement benefits are the accumulated savings of a life time of service. Denial, non-payment or delayed payment of the same is not only tantamount to denial of an individual's rightful property, but is also a violation of the human rights of the victim and their next of kin wherein their livelihood is affected, often times resulting in untold misery, starvation and poverty. Pension is the deferred portion of compensation for long and devoted services rendered by an employee with the employer. It is a social welfare measure as well. Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees everyone a fundamental right to livelihood, which includes entitlement to receive his deferred wages in accordance with rules, after retirement. Non-payment of retrial benefits therefore, is a violation of one's fundamental right under Article 21. The right to receive the same is not only a fundamental right but is also a right to property under Article 300-A of Constitution of India which cannot be taken away except by Authority of Law. There are number of International Declarations, Conventions or International Instruments and International Laws covering, propagating or making aspects of social security (in general), pension and retrial benefits in particular, a core human rights issue.

g to a 2009 history by Frank Eich, an economist. In the 16th century, Britain and several European countries offered pensions to their troops, starting with officers and gradually expanding to enlisted men. The first civilian public servant known to have received a pension was an official with the London port authority. In 1684, he was paid half his working income — deducted from the pay of his replacement. Thomas Paine, the Revolutionary War firebrand famous for his essay Common Sense, called for a 10 percent inheritance tax. Part of the tax was to be used to pay benefits to everyone age 50 and older to "guard against poverty in old age," according to a history by the Social Security Administration. The idea went nowhere. After the Civil War, the U.S. government paid pensions to disabled or impoverished Union veterans or to the widows of the dead. Southern states paid pensions to disabled Confederate veterans. The Civil War pensions became a basis for Social Security decades later. Though technically pensions are thought to date back to Roman times; centurions received an "annuity" when their days of active service were over. But anything we would recognise as a modern pension is barely 100 years old. The first "old age" pension was introduced by the Government in 1908, paying five shillings a week (worth around £14 today). At a time when the average life expectancy was 47, it was only available to men aged over 70. The Pension was linked with life expectancy and later on till the

To look into the introduction of concept of Pension, it is way back in 13 B.C., the Roman Emperor Augustus began paying pensions to

Roman Legionnaires who had served 20 years. The troops' pensions were financed at first by regular taxes, then by a 5 percent inheritance tax, according



K. RAVINDAR REDDY, PRESIDENT TNGOs CENTRAL UNION



recent regime in western soil magnanimous changes in implementation process prevailed.

The Pension system in India was introduced by the British Government after the India Independence struggle in 1857. This is a reflection of the Pension system the prevailing in Britain. The pay scales in the government service in India were planned to enable the "native employees" of the British Government to meet their normal substance, leaving very negligible margin for them to make provision for their post – retirement life. The service conditions did not allow the Govt. employees to earn any extra income by doing business or by carrying any other profession. So the provision pension of Pension system providing some sure income for the employees after their retirement was aimed at, to discourage them from resorting to malpractices for creating money cover for their post – retirement life. The Pension System thus started in India was finalized by the Indian Pension Act of 1871. It appears that the British Government had the conception of providing its pensioners increase in their pensions to neutralize the effect of inflation. Accordingly the British govt. granted temporary increases in pension in 1921 to compensate the rise in prices after the First World War. Similarly increases were also given in 1943, 1944 & 1945 after Second World War. Thereafter for a long time no rise in pensions was sanctioned even though the prices were rising. But serving employees were given some dearness allowance from time to time and part of that was treated as pay for calculation of pension. No real benefit could be got by pensioners up to 1945. The first pay commission was appointed in 1946. The then Pensioners Association tried its best to bring the problems of pensioners into the orbit of the pay commission but in vain. The commission clarified that the pensioner's problems could not be examined as the same were not 'referred to'. Even though the retirement benefits were being given by the Govt. from time to time, they were not incorporated in Fundamental Rules made effective from 1-1-1922. It was later decided by the govt. to make revised pension rules governing the cases of post-1938 entrants. These rules were actually out only in 1945 giving rise to many problems. Later, Liberalized pension rules were formed in 1950 and made effective from 17-04-1950, providing for DCRG and commutation of pension. Family pension scheme came into

existence with effect from 1- 1-1964. In 1968 on a writ filed, Supreme Court rules that Pension is binding obligation of government (and not a gift / reward or bounty). (Writ No. 217 / 1968) It was only in 1972 that the Govt. brought out a consolidated publication of all scattered pension rules under the title "New Pension Rules 1972", after the issue of fundamental rules in 1922, which is after half a century. In 1985 CGH Scheme was made applicable to pensioners including their dependant. A non statutory committee called standing committee of voluntary Association (SCOVA) was constituted in 1986 in the Ministry of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare to discuss problems of pensioners and make recommendations to the Government. Many pensioners' organization is nominated to the committee by the Ministry and Quarterly meeting are held under the chairmanship of the Minister. The period of 7 years for grant of Family Pension in the case of absconded pensioners was brought down to one year in 1977. Widows of retirees covered by CPF scheme were granted ex-gratia with effect from 1986.

The Government of India had, in the year 1999, commissioned a national project titled "OASIS"(an acronym for old age social and income security) to examine policy related to old age income security in India. Based on the recommendations of the OASIS report, Government of India introduced a new Defined Contribution Pension System for the new entrants to Central/State Government service, except to Armed Forces, replacing the existing system of Defined Benefit Pensions System. On 23rd August'2003, Interim Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA) was established through a resolution by the Government of India to promote , develop and regulate pension sector in India. The Government of India has introduced the Contributory Pension Scheme now named as National Pension system replacing the Old Pension Scheme taking unilateral decision from 1-1-2004 and Gazetted No.296 has been published on 22'December'2003. Subsequently, the Government of Andhra Pradesh in integrated Andhra Pradesh has issued Order G.O.Ms.No.653, Finance(Pen-I) Dept. Dated:22-09-2004 introducing Contributory Pension Scheme to all the State Government Employees recruited on or after 01-09-2004 . Under the new scheme, the employer (the State government in this case) and the employee

contribute for building a pension corpus payable at the time of retirement by way of annuity/lumpsum withdrawal as per norms. The employee makes a contribution of 10 per cent of his or her basic pay + grade pay + dearness allowance as mandatory contribution to the scheme. The Government makes a matching contribution. In the old scheme, the contribution was based on the last pay drawn of the employee (usually 50 per cent).

Another contentious feature of the NPS is that the employee can exit the scheme at or after the age of 60, and at the time of exit, it would be mandatory for him/her to invest 40 per cent of pension wealth to purchase an annuity scheme from an authorised insurance company which would provide pension during the lifetime of the employee.

The amount would depend on the market returns of the securities (government securities) which the insurance company invests in. There was no such restriction in the OPS.

After formation of State of Telengana, Deputy Director, PFRDA, Ministry of Finance, Delhi, have advised to issue a fresh gazette notification with retrospective effect (based on earlier notification as issued by Andhra Pradesh) and approach NPS Trust

and CRA for agreements of Contributory Pension Scheme. The Government of Telengana has replied on 19-06-2014 agreeing to opt for Contributory Pension Scheme, saying that, the State Government of Telengana have not made any changes relating to the Contributory Pension Scheme. Further, under RTI Act information was sought from the Government of India wherein it has been informed that all the State Government except West Bengal and Tirupura have voluntarily adopted PPS for their employees. The introduction of NPS for the employees of State is a decision taken by State Government.

Employees are uncertain about the amount they would get after retirement which is the major cause of concern. The amount is linked to the financial risk in the sense it is linked to market returns. That is why associations are demanding restoration of the OPS. The employees are very much confident that when Government of Telengana is declaring that TRS led Government led Government is employees friendly Government definitely Government will take necessary steps to bring Telangana State Government employees out of contributory scheme and will implement Old Pension Scheme. ■

ROLE OF AISGEF IN TAMILNADU MOVEMENT

The Tamil Nadu Government Employees have an active role in the formation of AISGEF. First step was initiated by Com. A. Sreeramulu, a legendary leader of Andhra Pradesh Government Employees to organise a convention to form South Indian Govt. Employees Federation in which TNGO union president Com. T. Varadha Rao and Com. M.R. Appan had also participated.

After a protracted discussion, a convention was organised hosted by A.P.NGGO Union under the leadership of Com. A.Sreeramulu at Hyderabad on 23, 24 January 1960. After this convention, followed by another convention held at Hyderabad, Com. A. Sreeramulu was elected as General Secretary of AISGEF.

AISGEF was popularised at the root level in Tamilnadu by the leaders of Action Committee. At the time after the semi-fascist Govt. led by Siddhartha Shankar Ray in West Bengal and which was followed by emergency throughout India. AISGEF 4th Conference was held at Kolkata from 7-10 January 1978. More than seventy delegates participated from Tamilnadu. Our delegate comrades gained a lot of experience and enthusiasm from that conference. After returning from Kolkata, all the delegates worked as full time trade union cadres. The 4th All India conference was a turning point to our movement in Tamilnadu.



After the Action Committee merged with NGGO union, attended 5th National conference held at Patna from 13th June 1982.



N.L.SRIDHARAN, STATE PRESIDENT, TNGPA

Delegates from Tamilnadu under my leadership participated in this conference also learnt much more which reflected in the functioning of our organisation. A call for one day token strike was given by AISGEF on 10-02-1988 to press the salaries of state govt employees and teachers on par with Central Government employees. The four years old Tamil Nadu Government Employees Association (TNGEA) also gave a call to the employees to participate in the strike which was a successful one and gave a hope for joint movement JACTEA (A Govt. employees confederation) was formed in which our Comrades M.R. Appan and M. Sivaraj (Revenue Officials association) included in the state level committee. An indefinite strike started from 22-06-1988. More than thousands of leaders and employees were arrested and jailed. Government took action against the employees with suspension, memo and ousting temporary employees. Police was given full power to use threaten the striking employees and unleash atrocities.

During this historical strike, our General Secretary Sukomal Sen and a team of Kerala NGO union leaders led by Com T.K. Balan toured entire Tamilnadu and organised the employees in favour of strike Com. Sukomal Sen also met the Tamil Nadu Governor on 6-03-1988 to press our demands and release the cadres from jail. He also asked the Governor to withdraw actions taken against the striking employees. This immensely helped the struggling employees morally.

During our 10 day indefinite strike in the year 2002, AISGEF has given a call to help the Tamilnadu employees financially and send a resolution to condemn the Tamilnadu government for the victimisation. As per the call given,



many state affiliates helped Tamilnadu the West Bengal State Co-ordination Committee elaborately arranged to help the striking Tamilnadu employees. In each and every Government office, they have conducted a meeting. After its completion a resolution was passed in the gathering and sent to the Tamilnadu government condemning the atrocities. They have also sent money orders to the TNGEA to help financially more than two hundred money orders received during the striking period.

In the year 2003, Tamilnadu Govt has withdrawn pension benefits by issuing 6 G.O.s. TNGEA initiated a joint movement against this orders and formed JACTTO-GEO and given a call for an indefinite strike from 02-07-2003.

By the 30th June, 2003 most of the leaders were arrested. TESMA has been proclaimed retrospectively. In an unprecedented move more than 1,75,000 employees were dismissed without any prior notice. AISGEF has given a call to save the movement and also to help the victimised employees. More than Rs. seventy lakhs was received from the state affiliates of AISGEF in which West Bengal employees help us with Rs. sixty lakhs. West Bengal State Co-ordination Committee invited me and Com R. Muthusundaram to receive this solidarity fund. We went to Kolkata where a mammoth meeting was organised in which I have received the cheque. Com. R. Muthusundaram gave a powerful speech detailing how Tamilnadu Govt. victimised and tortured our striking employees and also thanked the West Bengal employees who have contributed a lot to us. During this gathering a warm welcome was given to us with thundering applause.

The mass dismissal of the employees and teachers jolted the entire world trade union movement. The General Secretary of CITU M.K. Pandhe made a complaint to ILO for the ruthless and brutal attack on the employees. General Secretary Sukomal Sen filed a petition on behalf of AISGEF to the ILO levelling the same charges. It gave much courage and moral support to us. ILO also gave a notice to Govt. of India for a report. After this, Govt. of Tamilnadu also reduced its attacks on the employees.

In such manner, many a time AISGEF helped us to build our movements.

16th conference AISGEF is going to be held at Chennai and fantastic arrangements are being made by the TNGEA which had a rich experience of conducting the National Conferences of AISGEF on earlier occasions.

We have already conducted 7th National Conference at Coimbatore on 12-15-may-1990 along with Kerala comrades. At that time, the Kerala affiliate contributed Rs. 5 lakhs but we did not utilise that funds as TNGEA collected sufficient funds and conducted conference successfully. The fund given by Kerala comrades were used to purchase an old building at Triplicane which was renovated and named after Com. M.R. Appan and now the TNGEA Head Quarters is functioning from this building.

The 11th National Conference of AISGEF was also has conducted by TNGEA in 2002 at Chennai. Now the 16th National Conference is going to held at Chennai again to safeguard the interests of 60 lakhs state government employees. In our nation, almost all the states except West Bengal and Tripura the employees are facing very difficult situation in respect of new pension scheme. All the govt jobs are going to be filled by way of outsourcing lakhs and lakhs of employees are now getting only consolidated pay and daily wages. These are the main demands facing in the ensuing National Conference. I sincerely hope that a concrete programme will be devised to resolve these problems facing the state government employees across the country.

This conference is going to discuss and take decisions to ensure the state government employees' pending demands such as providing new jobs to the unemployed, to stop the new economic policies, which helps the corporates to exploit the people, to save our nation from fundamentalist tendencies, to stop privatisation of public sectors.

From our state, Comrades M.R. Appan and R. Muthusundaram contributed a lot to the activities of AISGEF. On Behalf of Tamilnadu Govt. Pensioners Association, I congratulate the AISGEF and we once again convey our warm greetings for the success of the 16th National Conference.

EDUCATION FOR ALL - THE TIME IS RIPE TO BLOW THE WHISTLE



Nineteenth century in India saw a great uprising in the educational sphere. During this period, education was seen as a means for political empowerment that will lead to the struggle for social equity.

Mahatma Jothirao Phule & Savithribai Phule are the father and mother of Common School System in India. They established schools for 'Shudra' and 'Adhi Shudra'. They were the first to establish schools for the girls.

In South, Ayothidasa Pandithar in Tamil Nadu and Ayankali in Kerala played an important role in establishing schools for the children born in depressed communities.

The Buddhists, Madarasas, the Christian Missionaries tried their best to break the shackles of caste & gender prejudices and to universalise education.

In 1882, Mahatma Jothirao Phule made his submission before the Hunter Commission. He demanded that the Government should come forward to educate all. He firmly believed that only Government can provide equitable access to education for all especially the depressed section.



In free India, the 1968 Education Policy based on the



Kothari Commission recommendation spoke about Common School System but the 1986 Education Policy, formulated after India getting loans from World Bank & IMF, starting speaking about vocationalisation and open school system. Now, the Education Policy is being drafted in tune with the WTO - GATS.

1968 Education Policy was based on Kothari Commission which had reflected the aspirations of the freedom fighters to some extent. 1986 Education policy was guided by the World Bank and IMF. Currently the Education Policy is as per the requirements of the Global Financial Capital that is dictated through the WTO-GATS. NITI AYOJ, a bureaucratic body, is formulating policies without considering the socio - economic condition of the people.

The evolving education policy of our country is clearly against the interest of the Dalits, Adivasis, Differently Aabled, Transgender, the rural and urban poor. The creamy section of the top layer of the society will be the sole beneficiary of the new education policy that is being shaped, ignoring all the warnings and struggles by the people.

Majority of the people are left with no access to higher education. Even at Primary School Level the access is not equal to all. In such condition the Government wants to have uniform learning assessment for all.

The new policy initiatives such as

P.B. PRINCE GAJENDRA BABU, AIFRTE



the advice to States to convert the State Council for Education, Research and Training as a Society so that they will not be part of the education department of the Government. Thus there will not be any necessary for budgetary allocation.

The Union Government wants the States to identify the Schools with poor infrastructure. Instead of improving the infrastructure, the proposal is to have all schools (Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary & Higher Secondary) in one place. The poor will be forced to travel even 5 kms for a Primary School. States are also advised to handover the Management of the Government Schools with Poor Student Strength or poor infrastructure to private agencies. Rajasthan is turning into experimental ground for many such schemes.

In Higher Education, many State and Central Universities are slowly made to start self -finance courses and in a phased manner to become financially self sufficient. The recent announcement, in declaring about 32 Universities, some as Grade 1 and some as Grade 2 Universities, for granting more autonomy, is a step towards withdrawing State's responsibility. More Autonomy is to make an institution fully self reliant in finance and administration over a period of time. Thus the hard won Social Justice measures such as Reservation and Scholarship based on Social and Educational backwardness will be silently wiped out. If Market decides whom to educate and how to educate then the real meaning of education will be lost.

Communalisation through Commercialisation is the order of the day.

The education institutes, which are supposed to be Secular places, are being poisoned with communal disturbances. If Dalits do not remain submissive and raise to assert themselves politically they will be shown the gate. The research scholar in a Central University who wanted to be a "Star" could not survive. Another Scholar in another Central University who declared "If equality is denied

everything is denied" was found dead the next day. The Minorities and Dalits are targeted in many ways.

Day by day the democratic spaces in the educational institutions are shrinking. The Teachers and Students are losing the academic freedom. Only when one questions, the process of education starts. Questioning leads to reasoning and reasoning leads to construction of knowledge. If the students and teachers are not allowed to voice their dissent or challenge the existing system, which is discriminatory, then how can one learn new lessons and change this society. Fascism never allows anybody to question or challenge the State.

On 17th December, 1946 in the Constituent Assembly Dr. B. R. Ambedkar raised a very valuable question : " ... I should have from that point of view expected the Resolution to state in most explicit terms that in order that there may be social and economic justice in the country, that there would be nationalisation of industry and nationalisation of land, I do not understand how it could be possible for any future Government which believes in doing justice socially, economically and politically, unless its economy is a socialist economy."

Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was very clear that Justice - Social, Economic and Political can be achieved only by a Government whose economic policy is based on socialist economic principle. The economic policy pursued by the present dispensation is opposite to what Dr. Ambedkar wished. We should realise this and prepare ourselves for a greater struggle. The struggle to save Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic of India.

If we close our eyes and remain silent, where will our silence lead to?

The time is ripe to blow the whistle. We have to raise to the occasion. The working class unity and a sustained struggle alone will ensure education for all. ■

WHAT IS TO BE DONE....



In the present stage of neo liberal capitalism, the conditions of the working class all over the world are getting worse. All the rights and welfare measures the working class acquired through hard won struggles are being rolled back. Workers of all walks of life are facing this neo liberal challenge. To confront this neo liberal challenge, the working class has to be adequately unionised. But this process is not happening among the majority of workers. So their bargaining capacity is being diminished. In this scenario, unionising the working class has become more important than ever before.

Privatisation is the major component of neo liberal policies. It is a method of handing over the public property to private Corporates. Actually, privatisation of public goods in our country was initiated in 1991 by the ruling class political parties. Attempts to privatise the public sector undertakings and hand them over to private players have continued since then. Now, this process of privatisation has gained momentum with the advent of BJP in power at the Centre with its own majority in 2014.



On the one side, all the public goods are converted in to private ones.



On the other side, all

the statutory benefits that the working class have today are being withdrawn. Eight hour working day, minimum wages, equal remuneration for equal work, maternity benefits, bonus, social security benefits including PF and ESI, pension and the right to form trade unions and organisations are under threat from the ruling class. These benefits that the working class enjoy have not been achieved through the benevolence or charity of the employers or any government, but through hard won class struggles.

The government is not only selling the public sector; it has also decided to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in all the key sectors of our economy. Defence, Railways, Insurance, Banking, Pension Funds, Coal, Petroleum, Mining, Telecom, Power, Civil Aviation, Satellites, Construction, Multi-brand Retail, Pharmaceuticals etc, are the key sectors. This will lead the big foreign Corporates to dominate in our key public areas. The public sector has been instrumental for our country attaining self reliant economy; in creating the industrial base of the country after independence. It was the public sector enterprises which built the major infrastructure of the country like power, transport including railways, roads etc. All these are being dismantled one after one in the present era of neo liberalism.

The public sector and their

A SREEKUMAR, G.S., AISGEF



huge assets are the wealth of the nation. Strategic sale and privatisation means handing over this wealth of the people and the nation to private Corporates, both domestic and foreign. Really, it is an attack on the basic fabric of our national economy. It is also an attack on self-reliance and the country's manufacturing capabilities. So, it is an attack on the entire people of the country and also an onslaught on deprived sections of the people's right to reservation in jobs. So it is an attack on the entire fabric that constitutes the society.

And so, the struggle against this privatisation of public goods is not the responsibility only of the workers of these sectors. Entire workers of the country have to be fully participated in this struggle against privatisation. In this respect, the responsibility of the trade unions working in these sectors is huge. Aside from that, in a deep analysis, now, the importance now of the trade unions of working class is higher than ever before. Because, in the absence of these class conscious working class organisations, there will be no resistance

against the exploitation by the big Corporates with the help of the anti-people governments.

So, in the neo liberal era, the organisation is more important than anything. The organisation is the fighting agency of working class against the attacks of the ruling class. To protect the Defined Benefit Pension System and for regularising all contract and casual employees, we need strong and militant struggles. But the exploitative class the world over has been trying to discourage and dismantle the organisations and their capacity to bargain for the workers. In order to attain this strategy of dismantling organisations, they and their governments use religion, caste and identity to disperse the working class. In the present Indian condition, they are using this agenda very tactfully to divide the working class in order to protect their anti people and anti worker policies.

To strengthen our struggles and enlighten the consciousness of our working class are the priorities of the present time. ■

DIGITALISATION THAT NEEDS SURGICAL STRIKE!

We live in a concrete jungle. We are being surrounded by Digital Ocean. Digital Ocean should be used appropriately. There is no denying fact that the digitalisation has brought great changes in the world in various aspects. If we use it properly and precisely then it can be good for the society as a whole. But if people try to tamper or mess with it then it will be a Tsunami against the common good of the society.

It was in 1966 the automation started in the Banking Industry. Simultaneously the opposition started against the Job Killer mechanism rather in a snail's pace. It was the Bank Employees Federation of India that went on a day's strike by the Bank Employees on 6th September 1983 against introduction of computerisation. It was not understood in full by major stakeholders as to what is in store against the interest of the labour force in future and the unemployed mass of the society.

In 1993 computerisation came in place. As the time passed, all the oppositions against unlimited computerisation died down. Recruitment of workmen cadre got stopped completely by 1997. Computer science and computer Industry started enlarging rapidly. Engineering Colleges started growing in numbers. Youth were marching into the Engineering Colleges for education



Campus recruitments were becoming the center of attraction. Computer Engineers were invading the job markets. Overseas opportunities were luring the Youth. Developments of personnel were on the increase. That was the time Banking Industry was wedded to Core Banking Solutions for operations. In early 2000s Branch Expansions picked up again, but not the recruitments. We call it as Jobless growth.

It was in 1969 the Nationalisation of Banks took place, with 14 Banks in 1969 and another 6 in 1980. That was the period the expansions were going on and the recruitment of work force was on the increase correspondingly through BSRB. It was the natural corollary that the personnel got recruited in the Banking Industry in 70's and early 80's immediately after Nationalisation of Banks, started retiring from 2007. The massive retirement started from 2009. Thus again recruitment started in the Banking Industry through Institute of Banking Personnel Selection from 2010, since BSRB a government body was scrapped by the then BJP government. Because of the Core Banking Solution (CBS) in place and further up-gradation of technology, the recruitment was at its barest minimum. That barest minimum also has come to almost a halt at present, in 2017-18. Adding retirement, it is a jobless growth.

Computer Masters and Computer Engineers, the products of Engineering colleges are no more wanted for the Computer IT Industries. Computer

K. KRISHNAN, SECRETARY, BEFI



Engineers are looked as commodities. They are all being diverted towards the service sectors and engineers started occupying the space of the work force of the Banking Industry and same is the situation in other sectors also. The Engineers produced by the Engineering Colleges are available for throw away prices in the job markets. Engineers are made to compete even for menial jobs. Unemployment is the biggest challenge faced by the youth of this country, probably the universal phenomena. Engineering colleges that sprung like flies in the country have started shutting down their doors. Hundreds of colleges functioning are also running with 1000s of vacancies for intake. This is the worldwide phenomena. The days are coming that it will be Robots and Artificial Intelligence to manage the banks and other Industries.

Demonetisation, which was announced by the GREAT Mr. Modi, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, threw many challenges upon the common mass of India in 2016. There is no lighter side or bright side to the demonetisation. But the darker side is still looming large on the life of the people, on account of the economic impact, unemployment impact, job losses and closing down of Industries. Since demonetisation was announced, the entire Government machinery joined with media, started propagating that digital Banking will be the panacea for the entire economy. But that is not a fact, of course.

An article was published in "THE HINDU" newspaper on the topic "present tense, future perfect" dated February 14, 2018. In that article the author quotes from a recent Price Waterhouse Cooper's report that predicts 38% of all United States jobs run the risk of being wiped out by automation by 2030 and in India, the figure stands at 69% according to theWorld Bank Research. To counter the above, the author in his own perception writes as "Even by conservative estimate, the fourth industrial revolution will help create 250 million net new jobs by 2030. The third industrial revolution is testimony to the fact that new jobs are created despite the growth in population; that era saw a doubling of women in the workforce, in the west. Artificial Intelligence is expected to be a positive job motivator in the near future. Whereas the author could highlight from a Gartner Study, technology will create around 2.3 million (only) net new jobs by 2020 and help generate \$2.9 trillion in business value. Our concern is all these Artificial Intelligence will help only one percent individuals to garner 73% of the aforementioned \$2.9 trillion.

The author also adds that some of the new jobs

are yet to be named and ascent of AI (Artificial Intelligence) will make traditional IT jobs "extinction". He concludes that every person has to self-equip themselves with higher level of education and it all comes down to personal accountability. Now the question is, when there are 61 million children around the world who couldn't get primary education (as on 2015) as per the survey report of UNICEF. The author wants the future youth to compete with higher education including matching the Artificial Intelligence. It is nothing but large scale hoax that to divert from digitalisation will not only create jobless society, even worst inequality of job starting from education level. Digitalisation is nothing but extended arm of capitalist "OCTOPUS". It is clear when one percent of population holds 73% of wealth; we have been misled with growth trajectory of GDP. Same way digitalisation is projected as a contributor of job opportunity, but in reality it is a slow poison to loot the wealth of poor.

Digitalisation has many by-products. It has hazardous definite impact on environment and natural resources. Global Data Centers are estimated to equate 2% of global emission which is equivalent to emission from global Aviation. Also survey extends that for every 1% increase in global GDP, CO2 Emission had increased approximately 0.5% and resource intensity by 0.4%. This will soon reduce the 8 billion tons of gap between supply and demand of natural resources by 2030. Naturally the safety of earth will be in jeopardy.

In 1996, the scientific community achieved a giant leap on invention relating to artificial reproduction of Human and Animal species. They were able to create a new breed of sheep through cloning and named it as "Dolly". They were proceeding further to make a human kind through cloning. There came the blockade from many countries taking the invention as one against the ethical law of nature. As of now, more than 70 countries all over the world including India have imposed ban on the same. India has permitted research only on stem cell. When all the governments can take a position against the law of nature on cloning, there should be consideration from all the Governments that the employment, the basis of livelihood should not be put to threat through Digital Cloning.

When digitalisation/modern technology is used as a tool to assist or improve the human, it is not an issue. But, when it acts as a serial killer of jobs or livelihood of humanity then we altogether should prepare for surgical strike against Digitalisation! ■

SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS AISGEF



All India State Government Employees Federation, having followers of more than 8 million is a biggest organization of middle class employees & teachers in the country. Our beloved Chairman R. Muthusundaram always preaching and promoting the idea of a "socially conscious Trade Union" which itself is a legacy of top leadership of AISGEF like Com. Arabinda Ghosh, Com. A. Sreeramulu, Com. Sukomal Sen, Com. M.R. Appan. Formation of AISGEF was not an easy task considering the realities of the then situation and the credit goes to Andhra Pradesh NGO's Association, to be more precise, to the supreme leader of that organization and first General Secretary Com. Sreeramulu.

"AISGEF is a really great movement. That AISGEF is a mass organization thus it is pertinent to note that it has an ideological frame work which is of working class movement, which can be observed from its proceeding of National conferences. Let'sanalyse, the first full-fledged National conference of AISGEF held at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala which noted following observations.



One can easily recall that right from the formation



Leadership, had a concern to politicize the rank and file of organization. This politicization was not confined to any party politics but in a wider terms of working class politics. Resulted in, AISGEF remained aloof from the trap of economism. Leadership always took rank file in the socio--economic, cultural arena, to built up wider unity of state employees and develop militancy among them. In a crucial movement, the Trade Union had to face an extremely dangerous communal and castiest situation in the country, and communal psyche was overtaking a big section of the people including a section of workers and employees. AISGEF analyses the situation objectively and saved organization from any split or division. According to AISGEF, a historical development which cannot be denied by anybody. India is a multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi racial country. "Unity in Diversity" is the strength of our Indian culture, which has kept this country united so far.

Most unfortunately, this historical truth was sought to be ignored and a communal atmosphere is being systematically built up in the country, which started a process of communal divide among various religious communities. Different illusory issues were taken up from religious point of view, which had no

ASHOK THOOL, VICE CHAIRMAN, AISGEF



lives of the toiling masses. In our country, people need bread, shelter, education, medical assistance and their cultural uplift. Most tragically, these aspects of the human needs of the country sidetracked and extraneous issues are being brought in and people's religious passion were sought to be roused. These had very serious effect on the unity of the working masses. As per AISGEF, the trade Union seek to unite workers and employees irrespective of their religion, caste and creed. AISGEF is fighting against economic exploitation and for dignity of labor. But this noble ideal is being hard hit and a communal conflagration overtaking the country during recent period of four years of N.D.A. govt. headed by BJP in center and in various states.

No doubt Lord Rama is the religious hero of the majority of Hindus, and they have right to worship him. Worship doesn't mean, to openly carry swords and hate crime accused depicted in tableau, who is currently in jail was hailed as crusader against 'love Jihad', procession was took out in the name of Lord Rama. Such acts lead to a sense of insecurity in the minds of non-hindus and minorities. It creates tension among the religious communities. And this year violence broke in Bihar, and UP and again next day after Ramanavmi, violence rocked Bengal on Hanuman Jayanti. In the past in an identical situation, sequel to Babri Mosque Demolition on 6th December 1992 AISGEF gave action programme of communal harmony. In order to normalize the tension and keep workers unity strong, communal harmony programme was given by AISGEF and asked state affiliates to open dialogue among the masses by way of meetings, seminars, rallies, conventions. It helped to bring normalcy simultaneously. With the task of defeating the communal forces, it is also necessary to pay

serious attention to the forces of casteism which again seeks to divide the working masses on feudal and medieval caste lines. Caste issues divide the society politically, culturally and even in the Trade Union front. According to AISGEF ideology, caste has nothing to do with Trade Union, where a worker is a worker irrespective of the caste in which he was born. Workers belong to the exploited class and caste barriers should not be allowed to divide them and prevent them from forging solid unity against the exploitation.

The communal genocide in Gujarat was a unique incident in the post independence era. AISGEF in its executive meeting which held in Calcutta on 31st March 2002 decided to stand by the victims of carnage and appealed the employees to contribute for the Gujarat relief fund. Little more than Rs.22 lakhs have been collected by AISGEF. The AISGEF head-quarters contacted different trade Union leaders in Gujarat and requested them to help the AISGEF to undertake relief work among the carnage affected areas and to prepare a list of persons/families who were worst hit and most needy and who have no other source of relief in cash or kind, in one place relief was distributed to the affected people of a Dalit locality.

With enlightened leadership of AISGEF took initiative on a number of other significant and serious issues like scrapping the Article 310 and 311 (2) A,B & C of Indian Constitution, Right to strike with reference to Tamilnadu employees strike, contributory pension scheme, against contractual employment etc. facing them. To fight against these issues, as part of academic aspect national seminars were organized and on the other side, struggles on the streets were organized to build up strong organic unity of employees country wide. ■

COMBATING EXPANDING INEQUALITY UNDER NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALIZATION A TRADE UNION VIEWPOINT

A Multiple Global Crisis

The increase in economic inequality contributes to the economic, social, political and ecological crises of today. The global political and economic order is characterized by a "multiple crisis" and part and parcel of this global predicament is an inequality crisis: the burden of this crisis is shared as unevenly as the fruits of the boom that led up to it - as a rule of thumb, profits were privatized, and losses socialized. The working and poor section of the society is the main victim of this crisis.

Correspondingly, this article emphasize that the high level of income inequality reinforces the crisis tendencies presently at work at all levels of society. Along these lines, economic inequality is not an unavoidable by-product of successful economic policy but an obstacle to growth and employment. The reason is that people tend to consume more of their income if they are poor than if they are rich. This implies that a concentration of wealth at the top depresses demand and, subsequently, productive investment. One way of addressing this problem for governments is to create conditions that favour the extension of loans and mortgages to low-income groups, but this creates credit risks and asset bubbles. Thus, inequality is linked to economic instability and contributes to economic crises.



Moving beyond the economic

sphere, inequality tends to be systematically linked to a whole host of social and health problems, which are graver across income groups in more unequal societies. In other words, a more unequal society is worse for that society as such, though poor is the main victim. This suggests that increasing economic inequality will undermine social cohesion and eat into the social fabric. A sign of this happening may be the riots that erupted across the United Kingdom in 2011 and in Stockholm in 2013.

Furthermore, there is a connection between inequality and the ecological crisis humanity is facing. In particular, they highlight the proliferation of consumerism, that is, a resource-depleting lifestyle focused on the competitive acquisition of consumer goods. It is argued that status increases in importance in more unequal societies, which is reflected in status competition.

At first sight, there appears to be a tension among some, in terms of how they view inequality: whereas the one group argue that there is a demand gap due to inequality, the latter suggest that from an environmental standpoint, inequality provides the stimulus for too much demand. But it is possible to reconcile their perspectives concerned with demand as an aggregate and thus abstract from the specific content of the choices made by market participants: It follows that there may be ways of creating additional demand without necessarily reinforcing the consumerist pattern of consumption, for example if governments stalled to extend universal public services or lo

SUKOMAL SEN



subsidize energy-saving consumer durables and localized forms of food production and distribution.

Finally, the increases in economic inequality translate into political inequality. It is argued that extreme forms of wealth distribution make it easier for affluent groups and harder for poor groups to put pressure on political decision-makers. This results in the implementation of policies that cement and reinforce the existing power imbalances at the economic and the political level, both nationally and internationally.

All of this shows that economic inequality is a fundamental problem affecting capitalist societies, it has further widened in the neo-liberal regime. Furthermore, it is linked to the economic, social, ecological and political crisis dynamics that characterize the capitalist sponsored global political and economic order. In light of this, there are strong reasons to assume that more equal societies are also more economically stable, cohesive, sustainable and democratic societies.

All the same, it is clear that it is relevant that the global institutions such as the OECD and even some conservative politicians feel forced to acknowledge the problem. This raises a series of political questions for trade unions, how can they use the discursive openings to mobilize people against inequality? What kind of campaigns should they use? And what are useful demands, both in terms of gaining support for an egalitarian agenda and actually changing the distribution of wealth?

Combating inequality by Trade Unions

Historically, labour movements have been at the forefront of the struggle against inequality. Trade unions still see economic inequality as a key issue to be addressed by their work. In light of this, it is unsurprising that unions around the world continue to play an important part in struggles against inequality, increasingly also in the context of wider social movements and coalitions campaigning around specific demands. The main campaigns are the Hartz Campaign in Germany, the Basic Income Grant (BIG) Campaign in Namibia, the initiative of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) for socially owned renewable energy, and the South African Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) for access to HIV/AIDS drugs. They note that these campaigns in some ways diverge

from traditional shop-floor struggle: that labour is not always leading them: and that they are based on novel, creative initiatives, for example pilot projects, a global approach to issues that connects different sites of production and reaches across borders, an emphasis on symbolic politics in order to win the support of the public and, importantly, the forging of alliances with other actors, for example NGOs.

Some of the countermeasures that unions could promote in the struggle for inequality are discussed in many articles by the Trade Unionists and pro-labour intellectuals that recommend a minimum wage and coordinated wage bargaining based on macroeconomic productivity development. Moreover, many propose measures aimed at limiting and regulating outsourcing by preserving the existing conditions of work. They suggest a "stakeholder value approach" to corporate governance, which involves giving unions influence over investment decisions, introducing strict protection against unfair dismissal, and preventing regulatory arbitrage through labour legislation - for example by forcing subcontractors to pay the same wages as parent companies and by making parent companies responsible for the labour rights of subcontracted workers.

Similarly, the Brazilian experience also shows that how governments can counter the effects of financial liberalization on inequality. The pro-left Brazilian government contained the trend towards rising inequality through increasing minimum wages and pensions, introducing cash grants for poor families, providing funding for investment through state-controlled development banks and promoting financial inclusion - that is, payroll-deducted credit schemes allowing lower-income households to buy consumer durables and homes. This type of policy system is followed in some other Left oriented Latin American countries also.

The public sector is another important instrument in the struggle against inequality. It is rightly argued that public services are more beneficial for low-income groups than for high-income groups because their value represents a larger share of income for those earning less. With reference to the health-care systems in Eastern Europe and India, that it is important to bear in mind that if access to services is limited to the poorest parts of the

population, they may turn out to be of low quality.

But the welfare state which so claims, has an important role to play in the struggle against inequality. In their view, solely insurance based programmes in many cases fail to achieve universal outreach and tend not to cover all people including those most in need of support. While targeted programmes lack a strong social base that can defend existing measures against attacks from the people who do not benefit from them. They argue that a combination of both is needed, that is, a "targeted universalism", which caters to the needs of all parts of the population but focuses its attention on lower level toiling groups. In so doing, it also contributes to lowering inequality.

All of this raises the question how an extension of the public sector and the welfare state can be funded. But there is considerable room for manoeuvre for broadening the tax revenue of the State. They argue that in principle there is a political consensus regarding the necessity to fight tax evasion and avoidance and to introduce a financial transaction tax. In the view of this group, this consensus can be used to promote a new

international tax regime which could be based on recent plans by the European Union and the OECD). In addition, they demand a "unitary taxation approach" which would prevent tax evasion through international transfers by forcing multinational corporations to submit their global accounts to local tax authorities, and through minimum tax rates preventing tax competition. But their most important point concerns the national level. According to them, there is considerable room for manoeuvre for national governments to raise the income tax rate for top earners, as well as extending the taxation of capital and increasing capital income tax.

In conclusion, there are positive examples of how to campaign against inequality or issues linked to it, and unions are prepared to get involved. Moreover, there is a whole set of concrete demands that can underpin such campaigns. Combating inequality may not be an easy thing to do, but it is by no means a lost cause. In the context of the havoc wrecked by the global crisis, campaigns against inequality may contribute to the revitalization of labour movements across the globe. ■

RESIST GUSHING RAILWAY PRIVATISATION & SURPLUS OFFENSIVES

First passenger train was run between Mumbai and Thane on 16th April 1853. It has been established that the first goods train was run between Chindadripet and Redhills in 1836 in Chennai named Redhills Railway.

The early construction and operation of Railways were by private. But they did not come without guarantee. Govt guaranteed 5% return on the investment. It was proved that the private inflated their investment and availed the guaranteed amount. Since private did not show interest to expand rail network govt started laying rail network. It was found that loss was nationalised and profit was privatised. Finally therefore British Indian govt nationalised Railways between 1924 and 1944.

After Independence, Indian National govt evolved a policy that "Railway Transport" will be with the govt. During 1990s when globalisation started it was gradually liquidated, Construction, Maintenance, Catering, Cleaning works were outsourced. In 2009 UPA II govt gave an interpretation to "Railway transport" which should be with govt. According to it "only railway operation" will remain with the govt. Other activities like design, finance, construction, maintenance, cleaning, catering can go to private. It was therefore, even perennial activities were opened for outsourcing. Even activities inside the workshops and production Units, where Factories Act is in operation, and in sheds, were open for outsourcing. Contract workers have started to work

by the side of permanent workers. Now entire construction activities, signal and telecommunication erection and maintenance, major portion of



R. ELANGOVAN, VICE PRESIDENT, DREU



the track maintenance, some parts of coach, wagon and engine maintenance, catering, cleaning and house keeping on board the trains and cleaning at stations, yards, workshops, sheds and production units have been outsourced. Entire renewal work with new technology in Coaches, wagons, engines and trains have been outsourced. Twenty activities in track maintenance have been opened for outsourcing resulting reduction of sanctioned strength of track maintenance staff to 2.75 lakh from 4 lakhs. Even in this there are 40000 vacancies as per task force.

Power to the coaches are provided by the power car in the trains. These power cars have been outsourced. Modernisation of coaches with Bio Toilets, central Buffer Coupling etc. have been outsourced. Watering of Coaches is outsourced. Teachers, para medical staff, Doctors are on contract. Entire wagon production has been privatised. In all E class stations ticket booking clerk is contract worker. In all Flag stations ticket sales is by contract worker.

Both reserved and unreserved tickets are now sold by private in jansadharan counters and yatri ticket sevak kendras.

Those workers engaged in outsourcing areas are without minimum wage, out of the purview of labour laws including WCA. Mostly they remain unprotected by a trade union. Employees on rolls has come down from 16.54 lakhs in 1990 to 13.36 lakhs in 2017. About 7 lakh contract workers have replaced regular workers.



In continuation of this relaxed Policy, 8 Railway Lines have been reconstructed under PPP. private including Adhani are participating in these lines. But operation lies with the Indian Railways.

Container Corporation is a public sector mini rathna Corporation of Indian Railways. It maintains container Depots and runs container trains. During Lalu period 15 private operators were allowed to have container trains which run along with those of CONCOR. Now private goods trains have been allowed by Modi Govt. But the operation of these trains remain with Indian Railways. IRCTC is running some tourist trains. The operation of all these is by Indian Railway. This means they are driven by Railway Drivers.

Modi govt announced a policy on 22.08.2014 that operation also will be allowed for private. On 27.08.2014 it decided to allow 100% FDI in almost all areas of Railway activities. Consequently an FDI Alstom Company has been given the electric engine factory in Madhepura and General Electric Company has been given Diesel Engine Factory at Marhora, both in Bihar. Entire wagon production has already been privatised. The other production units and railway hospitals are in the pipeline for privatisation.

BJP invited private to lay rails and run trains. Though they were assured 80% returns no private, either domestic or foreign, come forward.

It is why BJP govt has decided to allow private to operate in the existing track. Indian Railways was nationalised by pardeshi; now privatised by swadeshi.

It has started implementing Bibek Debroy report. As a first step Modi govt has merged the railway budget with the General Budget. As a second step its cabinet has approved appointment of Rail Development Authority by an executive order. The Debroy had recommended to appoint RDA by amending the Railways Act. Applications have been called for from public to fill up the vacancies of posts of chairman and two other members of the Authority, Last date was 10-11-2017. Any time the Authority would be constituted.

The RDA will allow private operators either domestic or foreign to operate private goods and passenger trains in the existing track. They will also

be allowed to operate goods trains in the new dedicated freight corridors. Adhanis and Alstoms will operate trains. Private Drivers and ticket examiners and ticket booking clerks will be there. The private operators will be given level playing field. That means they will be given half of the present trains immediately. Large scale employees will face surplus. Time Table, fare and freight will be decided by the Authority. The Fare and freight will be cost based. At present Railway charges tickets only to the tune of 53% of the cost. 47% is subsidised by the railways from goods traffic. The freight is charged 163% of the cost. From this excess income passenger loss is subsidised. If the fare of the trains is to be decided based on the cost, immediately the fare will be doubled. Modi govt will not subsidise the loss if fare is fixed with subsidy. We all know Modi govt is already eliminating all the subsidies.

To cope up with this policy Modi Govt has decided to corporatize 407 A 1 and A class Stations in the name of converting them into world class stations on par with airports. To start with tender has been floated for 23 stations in Indian Railways. Chennai Central and Calicut Stations are in the first list. Already MOU has been signed with nbcc, a public sector company, for Ernakulam and Puduchery in SR. However they will entrust entire activities to private.

In all these stations Electrical maintenance, parking, commercial establishments will come under the corporate management. They demand to allow them to sell platform ticket. They also demand that Railway should not impose any price control on the commodities to be sold in the commercial establishments in such stations. Already railways are ready to allow lease for 45 years. But they demand it for 99 years. It is understood railways may agree for 60 years. They will construct malls using land and air space. They will pay annual lease rent to railways and one time lease premium both of which will only be railway's earning. We are aware what has happened to the kannur station land lease. The contractor has failed to pay lease rent and has gone to court leaving the railway's earning in lurch. In the meanwhile their business has not stopped. Same thing will happen to all the stations leased out. Habibgunj station has already handed over to private. As bidders do not

show interest for other stations the tender opening date is repeatedly postponed.

As a result fares will become astronomical in the trains and charges of services in stations will become unaffordable . They will become on par with Airports. People will boycott the trains. The private will close the lines and stop running trains as making loss.

.Already catering employees and claims employees have been rendered surplus facing redeployment.Now railway ministry has decided to introduce Adhar linked biometric system in all places linking them to divisions to zones and finally to delhi before 31-1-2018.The entire personnel branch and accounts branch works will be centralised at delhi resulting in surplus of these staff in large clusters.Integral coach factory is shifting to LHB technology from 2018 which work has already been outsourced .Large number of ICF employees are facing surplus.They have been given offer to opt for transfers elsewhere. Railway schools are about to be closed and railway hospitals will be privatised.As engines are going to be produced by MNCs the employees in engine production units CLW and DLW will face surplus.

Railwaymen will be rendered surplus in large clusters in all departments.There will be no place for redeployment.It is why 2.75 lakh vacancies including 1.41 lakh safety category vacancies are not filled.If filled there will be problem of retrenchment in view of privatisation.The railways therefore are recruiting retired employees to fill the gap.They can be in employment until 65 years of age so that they can easily be fired anytime before. Indian Railways finance will become unmanageable as its earnings will be shared by private.. It will lead to problems in paying salary and pension.In southern railway there are 95000 employees and 1.53 lakh pensioners. In Indian railways there are 14 lakh pensioners.The operating ratio of SR is 134%. If SR is delinked from Indian railway finances think of the plight of salary and pension. Air India is the example.

In Argentina Railway was handed over to Alstom, an MNC. In course of time they closed many lines as not making profit . In the end there

was only 8000 KM line left out of 47000 KM. Out of 95000 employees only 15000 remained. Vital transport was destructed. People's employment destroyed.

The Vikas purush Modi wants only such vinas of Railways.

Railway pension has already been privatised by introducing new pension system.Both congress and BJP brought the system.There are at present 6.53 lakh employees covered by new pension system.This is almost 50% of staff on rolls.Modi government has rejected the demand for scrapping the new pension system and has rejected even the demand for guaranteed minimum pension on par with Atal Pension Yojana.It has not honoured its commitment to central government employees for increased minimum wage and fitment formula. They deferred their indefinite strike on the commitment given by the government. The news paper reports that anomaly committee will grant Rs21000 is baseless as the anomaly committee has not yet met though the 6 months time for disposal of anomaly ends on 15-11-2017.More over the related pay anomaly raised by staff side has already been rejected by the government as not an anomaly...There is no improvement in the house rent allowance rates recommended by the 7th cpc.Rates prevailing during 6th cpc have been reduced.Arrears of allowances have been denied.Modi government has disinvested central public sector to the tune of Rs 1 lakh crore last year and proposes to disinvest Rs 80,000 crore in 18-19.Even100% defence production has been opened for entry of domestic and foreign private.

In this context it is worth mentioning that the central trade unions including all state and central government employees conducted all india strike on September,2,2016 when 18 crore workers participated in it followed by mahapadav on three days from November 9-11,2017 in newdelhi.Some of the demands include scrapping of national pension system, stopping privatisation of public sector,railways and defence.Railway federations and unions and the people at large should also join the mainstream opposition to increase the bargaining power of the workers. ■

"THE LDF GOVERNMENT IN KERALA - ROLE MODEL TO THE NATION"



In the realm of social development and social justice, Kerala is model to the whole nation. Kerala has been transformed to such a position, not naturally, but through a series of struggles and agitations of peasantry and workers under the leadership of left political movements. In 1957, after the formation of linguistic states, the communist government came into power. It was the first communist government elected through ballot. Considering the interest of public, especially the peasants and workers, the first ministry of Kerala led by Com: E.M.S. Namboodiripad, had accepted an alternative, pro-people policy unlike the state Government in the rest of the nation and the central government led by the Congress party.

The first Communist government in Kerala decided to put an end to the feudal system in the state. As the part of it, the government introduced Land reforms ordinance. The ordinance set an absolute ceiling on the amount of Land a family could own. The tenants received a claim in the land on which they dwell for decades and eviction has been banned. The govt also introduced an Education bill ensuring the development and better organisation of educational institutions in the state. Through this the elementary education became mandatory and free of cost. The teachers in the aided schools had been emancipated from the exploitation of managers since the government had taken the responsibility of the salary disbursement direct. In the same manner, the government had decided to intervene in every sphere of civil society like health, public distribution, labour, industry etc... All such social interventions had been made by the



government using the state civil service. And hence, the state civil service had also been developed, vastened and strengthened. The service and wage benefit were also improved. It was, the first Kerala Govt led by the Communist party, who paved the foundation of the social development of Kerala which is popularly called "the Kerala model development".

But whenever UDF, which is the coalition of the right wing political parties, under the leadership of Congress party came into power, they tried to upset the pro-people policies implemented by the LDF governments. As the part of it, they also tried to minimize the civil service by curtailing posts and denying the wage benefits of employees and teachers. In Kerala, the revision of pay and allowances is being implemented once in every five years since 1968. By implementing pay revision in 1968, it was the second E.M.S. government accepted the policy of pay revision once in every five years. But the UDF govts in 1973, 1978, 1983, 1992, 2002 and in 2014 tried to upset the pay revision. The employees and teachers of Kerala under the leadership of FSETO, Kerala, conducted several long and severe struggles including indefinites strikes to protect the periodic Pay revisions. Among these, the strike for pay revision in 1973 lasted for 54 days and the strike to reinstate the service benefits and wages benefits curtailed by the then UDF govtin 2002 lasted for 32 days. Actually, it was the first strike against the implementation of neo-liberal policies in the state civil service.

In 2013, the UDF Govt led by Sri. OommenChandy imposed the contributory pension scheme for the employees and teachers in Kerala

T.C. MATHEWKUTTY, G.S., FSETO - KERALA



state civil service who come into service on or after 01.04.13. Against the introduction of National Pension system by UDF govt which had been rejected by the LDF govt earlier, the FSETO Kerala conducted strike for 6 days from 08.01.2013 and it was first indefinite strike in India against contributory pension.

Now, in Kerala the Left democratic front government is in power since May 2016. This govt, like the former LDF governments came into power since 1957, is also implementing pro-people policies which is an alternative for neo-liberal policies carrying out by Central Govts led by Congress and BJP.

The present Left Democratic Front Govt in the state launched four special projects as soon as the govt was sworn in. The first project is 'LIFE' which ensures house for every homeless family. The second one is 'Haritha Kerala' which means Green Kerala. The scheme is meant for making Kerala waste free and ensures agriculture development. The third one is 'Aardram' which is for the empowerment of Govt Hospital services through an e-health initiative and the fourth project is the

strengthening and protection of 'General Education'. The govt of Kerala has formulated Kerala Administrative service for strengthening the middle level management in the state civil service.

In order to strengthen and vasten the state civil service for the effective implementation of the pro-people policies, the Left democratic Front Government in the state has created more than 17000 new posts in the state civil service within a period of just about two years of its tenure. Besides, the govt also filled all the vacancies in the civil service within a period of two years. More than 60,000 new appointments has been made by state public service commission to the state civil service while thousands of posts in the Central govt service are lying vacant. The LDF Govt in Kerala has decided to appoint a special committee to re-examine the contributory pension scheme imposed in the state civil service by the Congress led UDF Govt.

Introducing and implementing pro-people policies and strengthening and widening the state civil service and General education, the Left democratic Front Government of Kerala is again becoming a role model to the whole nation. ■

Moving into new battle fields... shaping up the warriors... Onward march to the 16th National Conference of AISGEF

A responsibility taken voluntarily...

Our second teacher, affectionately called by every section of the working people of India as RMS, who himself shone as GS and Chairman of AISGEF, had a wish to hold the next National Conference of AISGEF at Chennai even two years before his death, a wish he couldn't fulfill due to his deteriorating health conditions. However, after his demise, TNGEA took upon itself that onerous task of holding the 16th National Conference at Chennai as a true homage to the departed leader.

The emergence of AISGEF

It is necessary for the present day Government employees to know the history of the emergence of AISGEF, behind which there are tears and sweat of the then employees serving across the country. There were plenty of indignities, obstacles and slavery which they underwent. At the advent of India's Independence, they fondly hoped that the new rulers will treat them as human being unlike under the yoke of the British. But that was not to be. The 'enlightened' rulers too followed the footsteps of the British and treated the employees as dust and slime. The conditions and restrictions imposed upon them during the 'Raj' continued unabated. Unlike

their brethren of the newly liberated country, with the 'Government Servants Conduct Rules' they were denied

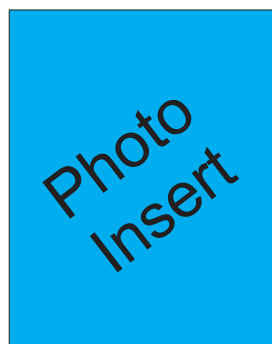
even basic democratic rights

and kept away from politics.

Only in such a situation, the employees, in their thirst of removing their chains of slavery, oppose the oppression of the new rulers, demand a new set of rights of their own, In this, they were united in thought to form a federation to voice their grievances. And then came AISGEF in 1960 and in its 58 years existence, it was in the forefront to safeguard the rights of the State Government employees, to solve the issues they are facing, to strive for their upliftment and above all to fight for a society with social justice and ridden of exploitation. Such is the journey of AISGEF.

In its 58 years, the AISGEF also taught the centre and the state governments that the employees too are part of the country's population and they have every right like others to say what is right and what is not and also to fight for the right. It has also proved beyond doubt that conduct rules cannot be made a shackle on the employees. As a socially aware contingent of the society, in each and every conference, the AISGEF analysed the current political situation and forewarned the employees of the lurking dangers before them. It has also taught them about the nation's security, world economy and the changes the world has undergone over the years. Similarly it has compiled the aspirations and necessities of the employees and argued their case before the government as well as in every fora to safeguard them.

With such a vast experience it has gained it is no mystery that AISGEF has evolved as an



M. ANBARASU, G.S., TNGEA



important arm of Trade Union International (TUI), which itself is an essential arm of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). It is gratified to note that trade union leaders from various countries and observers from South Africa, Australia, Sri Lanka, Greece and Nepal will visit Chennai to greet AISGEF on its 16th National Conference to express their solidarity.

This conference is going to deliberate on the pros' and cons faced by the employees, workers, peasants, daily wage labourers as well as workers of non-formal sector during the last nearly four years under the BJP rule which came to power in 2014. In that election, to garner the votes of the people, they raised three slogans namely (1) Ache Din (2) Powerful policy to safeguard the country's security (3) Stringent action against corruption. Thus hoodwinked, the people lapped up this virtual magic called assurance that it will wipe out corruption within 100 days and with the black money seized from swiss banks, Rs. 15 lacs will be deposited into the bank account of every citizen.

But in these four years the people were made to realize their folly. The BJP allowed the defaulters like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi et al escape to safe havens and made the honest people to pay for their lapses more by way of additional tax, surcharge, GST etc. The neo-liberal policies and strategic alliance with US and Israel pursued by this NDA government brought down India to fetch 100th place out of 119 countries listed in the Poverty Index by IFPRI. Even IMF explained the current fiasco of Indian economy because of demonetization and the confusion it has created in introducing GST upon the country. The irony is this government is that it is executing each and everything it opposed when in opposition, whether it is LPG and petroleum prices or the introduction of GST.

It is disheartening to see that only the employees, workers, peasants and have-nots are bearing the brunt of the onslaught of this government. On the other hand, it has undermined the sovereignty of

state governments with every measure it took in the last nearly four years. In the case of Tamil Nadu it can be seen from Jallikattu struggle to the present struggle demanding appointment of an ombudsman to distribute Cauvery water among the southern states, the Centre is outright partial in its dealings with the state.

On the other hand, the condition of the government in Tamil Nadu is precarious to say the least. Its silence in every issue in the case of rights of the people (NEET) to the state (Finance Commission) shows that how much the power that be can slide to save their skin and ill-gotten treasure. Only with such a government our employees has to wage a bitter struggle to restore their rights and entitlements.

Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that this 16th National Conference will be a starting point to unite the government employees, teachers and the employees of PSUs to prevent privatization, to safeguard the interest of the people and to take measures to light up the lives of the poor and downtrodden of the society as amply proved in the historic victory recently achieved by the state government employees and teachers of Tamil Nadu by joining under a broad banner of JACTO-GEO.

Finally, the aim of this Conference is not to disperse after much talking. It is being conducted for some more impact to be made upon the sections of the society. If this conference can made the people aware of the following lines of the great writer of the people Maxim Gorky, which itself will transform into a starting point of changing this mother earth into a place of living with public interest in mind.

“We shall teach our people to fight against the ills of the society

instead of suffering them silently; They should also be taught

to respect their labour, to stand up and to act decisively” - Maxim Gorky

MARCH FORWARD

MEETING THE CHALLENGES



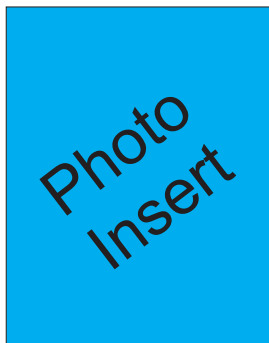
During the period of Independence struggle in India, there were huge expectations amongst the people that all the problems like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment etc. would be solved and our people would enjoy a decent living in our country after attaining independence. With this expectation, our people, irrespective of their castes and religions, unitedly involved in the freedom struggle and sacrificed everything for the noble cause of throwing away the imperialist colonial rule from our beloved motherland.

After protracted and relentless struggles involving innumerable sacrifices by the people of our country, India became independent in 1947. Then, India became a republic in 1950. Attaining freedom and becoming republic might have fulfilled the just aspirations of our people. However, the consecutive Five Year Plans, the establishment of gigantic Public Sector Undertakings and the programmes of Green Revolution, White Revolution and Blue Revolution etc. have not resulted in the poverty alleviation or unemployment eradication. On the other hand, in our country the few rich have become richer and the majority poor have become poorer. As per the report of the Maclenobis Committee, the huge sums of Government money invested in the Five Year Plans have further enriched the erstwhile rich, depriving the legitimate expectations of the common people.

Of course, the multi purpose projects like Pakra -

Nangal, Hirakut and Damodhar valley dams were implemented to improve the irrigation facilities and hydro-electric power generation. The gigantic Biloy, Rookhela and Durgapur iron and steel factories were established with the selfless help rendered by the then Socialist countries which paved the way for the rapid industrialisation in our country. The exploration and extraction of mineral wealth was undertaken under the control of the Government and through public sector companies. Likewise, the establishment of Bharat Heavy Electrical, Bharat Electronics, Bharat Earth Movers, Hindustan Aeronautics, Hindustan Machine and Tools and such other Public Sector Companies contributed to a remarkable extent for our industrial growth. Besides, the nationalisation of insurance and banking industry also was an important factor for mobilisations of financial resources for implementation of various developmental activities. The Indian Railways is the biggest one in the world and was totally under the control of the Government. The building of roads-National Highways, State Highways and Rural Roads-undertaken by the respective Governments and Local Bodies was instrumental to the infrastructure development. The Postal and Telecommunications were under the full control of the Government.

For the development of Human Resources, Government undertook the responsibility of providing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 and established primary and upper primary schools. High Schools, Colleges and Universities were established by the Government to provide higher education and to provide



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professional courses Medical and Engineering Colleges were also opened. And to produce technically qualified persons, Government Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes were established by the Governments. For ensuring the general health of the people, integrated public health system was in operation with the establishment of Primary Health Centres and Taluk and District Headquarters Hospitals which provided free health care and medical treatment to the common people. These projects and schemes, though not sufficient when compared with the population of our country, have however generated more employment opportunities. We were able to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and record a considerable growth in industrial production. All this have expanded our domestic market.

The Planned economy was in vogue which helped the growth of the national economy. Yet, there were serious deficiencies on the part of the Government in certain important aspects. There were lip services that the aim of the rulers was to establish a socialist pattern of society in our country, and the economic path for the development would be 'Mixed Economy' having both private and public sectors. However, in essence the Government have resorted to Capitalist path of development. This is the inherent weakness in the Government policies that paved the way for the exploitation and garnering huge wealth by a handful of corporate houses and leaving the vast majority of our people being immersed into abysmal living conditions.

Because of the class characteristic of the State Power headed by big bourgeois having collaboration with the feudal land lords, a fool-proof land reforms by fixing a reasonable ceiling for the entitlement of lands and taking over the surplus lands to provide the lands to the landless tillers were not undertaken by the Governments. The Land Ceiling Acts enacted in various states, except in the Left-ruled Kerala and West Bengal, were with too many loopholes of exemptions and exceptions which eventually diluted and nullified the spirit of the Acts and in result the landless agricultural labourers were not released from the yoke of the feudal landlordism. Only in the Left-ruled states of Kerala and West Bengal the land reforms have been implemented with a political will to give relief to the

poor peasantry.

A National Wage Policy or Income Distribution Policy was not evolved and enacted which is the root cause for the abnormal inequalities in our Society. No concrete steps have been taken to ensure right to work; on the other hand, the unemployment was wilfully developed with a view to provide adequate manpower to the entrepreneurs at cheap labour costs.

Nevertheless, due to the implementation of various welfare measures and developmental activities by the Governments, the Government services have become more vital and there were regular recruitment of Government employees. The expansion of Government departments was inevitable in the interests of delivering the goods to the public. Though the service conditions of the Government employees were not democratised through enactment in the legislatures and the salaries were not fixed on the basis of any scientific norms, the Government employees were somewhat better placed among the workers in this country. The little job security they enjoyed and the pension entitled to them after their retirement gave a sense of security to the employees. Even then, to preserve and protect what they have got out of struggles in the past, they have to be more vigilant and united and launch many more struggles.

But since 1991 the Government, at the dictates of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) started implementing the neo liberal policies chanting Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation as mantras. Adhering to the preaching of implementing a 'Free Market Economy' the role of the Government in the developmental activities became redundant. Many Government departments were either abolished or amalgamated. The works undertaken by the Governments were privatised or outsourced. The vacant posts in Government departments were not filled up through regular statutory channels of recruitment. In the name of 'Right Sizing' and 'Down Sizing', the ban on creation of new posts and ban on recruitment were imposed. In the places where the appointments are inevitable, recruitment were made on temporary basis or on contractual appointments and thereby deprived the legitimate rights of the employees to regular scales of pay and

job security.

Under the neo liberal policy regime, the Government is retreating from their responsibility of controlling the economy and leaving it abruptly into the hands of the market forces. Even the services like Education, Health and Communications have been commercialised. Private schools, colleges including medical and engineering colleges and universities have emerged rampantly making education as a costlier commodity.

The investment from the Government for Agriculture is reduced in every consecutive budget. The reduction in the subsidy for fertilisers and the micro credit facilities for agriculture has made peasantry to meet undue hardships. The produces of the farmers are not procured by the Government at remunerative prices and thereby they are left to lurch into the grip of the rural usurious money lenders who usurps their produces at throw away prices. This vulnerable condition has led lakhs of peasants to commit suicides.

The prices of all commodities including essential commodities and food grains are skyrocketing that the common man could not afford to buy even the barest minimum necessities. It is heart breaking to note that near about 30 crore Indians are unable to have at least one full meal for a day and suffering from hunger. The Government has permitted forward trading even without any exemption of essential commodities that leads to hoarding and black-marketing. The main reason for the rise in prices of essential commodities is the sharp rise in the volumes of trading in the speculative commodity markets in the country. This spiralling price rise is back breaking the common people including the workers.

The deregulation of fixing the prices of petroleum products by the Government and leaving it to the Oil companies is adding fuel to the fire as the frequent rise in the prices of petrol, diesel, kerosene and cooking gas is having cascading effects on the prices of all commodities. The recommendations of the Girit Parikh Committee to decontrol petrol and diesel prices and link to international prices, as also the anti-people recommendation to increase price of cooking gas by Rs. 100/- per cylinder have rubbed salt to the injury of masses groaning under misery. The various taxes

levied by the Governments as Duty, Excise and Sale Taxes are borne by the consumers as these taxes are indirectly included in the prices of the petroleum products. For example, the Aam Admi pays Rs. 100/- as duties and taxes and gets Rs. 25/- as the so called subsidy on petroleum products.

The formidable growth of unemployment is a serious challenge to the society in general and the working class in particular. Following the global economic melt down and financial crisis and their impact in Indian economy, more than 5 million workers have lost their jobs and enlisted in the unemployed army. Unemployment is a social phenomenon inherent in capitalism. Unemployment is a serious obstacle to the action of the trade unions; the unemployed are not only used in many cases as strike-breaking mechanism, but also to keep the salaries of the workers low and restrict further advancements. Besides, in India, the unemployed youths are used as the tools by the divisive, casteist, communal and disruptive forces to disturb the amity of the society.

The Government, dancing according to the tunes of the foreign and domestic corporates, is resorting to the sale of public sector undertakings not even sparing the profit making units at throw away prices. The national assets are placed in to the wide opened jaws of the profit mongering capitalists. Besides, the natural resources like minerals, colliery and oil and natural gas are being placed at the disposal of private corporates including foreign MNCs. The national wealth is being looted by the unethical collusion of the corporate houses, rulers and bureaucracy.

The unprecedented scale of corruption and scams being unmasked in the recent period has spoiled the image of our country in the international arena. The scams in the Commonwealth Games, Aadharsh Housing Allotment, 2G Spectrum Allocations and the Krishna Godhavari Basin Oil and Gas exploration and extraction have proven that the neo liberal policies followed by the Government have helped only the big business houses to loot the national wealth without any hindrance.

The hard earned rights of the workers are being taken away at the behest of the capitalists. To ensure a flexible labour market, the corporates are demanding a 'trade union free world' and the 'right

to hire and fire'. The Government is shamelessly yielding to the pressures and dared to amend the labour laws and attempt to curb the rights of the workers. The observation of the Apex Court regarding the right to strike of the Government employees as recorded in the Tamilnadu Government employees' case that they are not having fundamental, moral or constitutional right to strike is also a matter of serious concern.

Recently, the Government have decided to allow 100% Foreign Direct Investment in Retail Trade is going to affect the common people to a great extent. More than 4 crore people who are at present directly involved in the retail trade are going to be thrown out of their jobs and more than 20 crore people depending on the retail trade for their livelihood are going to be left in the streets for alms.

The decision of enacting the obnoxious PFRDA Bill in the winter session of the parliament is a mightier blow on the Government employees and teachers who are governed by the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. The Defined Contributory Pension Scheme, which is going to be installed under the National Pension Scheme, is with the ulterior aim of diverting the astronomical amount of pension funds of not only the Government employees and teachers but also the workers in private and unorganised sectors, to the speculative share markets for the profit of the private pension fund managers.

The emancipation and empowerment of women in India is still a long lasting dream. The Bill for providing 33% in the Parliament and State Legislatures is pending enactment for more than a decade. The atrocities unleashed against women continue unchecked. Though the Indian Constitution speaks louder on the issue of gender equality, in practice the women in our country are subjected to untold sufferings both in their homes and work places.

The Economic survey of India (for 2008-2009) had in particular given emphasis to the acceleration of economic reforms on the lines of neo liberal imperialist globalization. The subsequent Budgets placed and passed by the Government are strictly in accordance with the guidelines of the dictates of World Bank and IMF. Without learning any lessons from the international experience, the Government of India is feverishly pursuing the

retrograde and reactionary policies of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. We have to understand that the implementation of the Neo-liberal Imperialist Globalisation has only globalised poverty and unemployment and privatised the wealth of nations into the hands of some corporate houses.

. The little protection that the workers had during the UPA I regime, because of its dependency of the Left Parties in the Parliament for its continuance in power is now gone due to the reduction of strength of the Left Parties in the last Parliamentary elections. The UPA II Government is now emboldened to implement its deteriorative neo liberal agenda with least resistance in the Parliament. The most unfortunate condition in our country is that both the ruling party and the main opposition party are of the same views and in many issues these birds of the same feathers flock together to unleash attacks on the common people in general and the workers in particular. The only sigh of relief that the working class could have is the support of the Left parties, who are uncompromisingly voicing the demands of the working class both within and outside the Parliament.

However, during this period, owing to the inextricable attacks by the rulers and the exacerbated living conditions, the Indian Working Class has come together to launch united struggles against the obnoxious attempts of the Government. It is a welcome feature that in the last nationwide general strike held on 7-9-2010, more than 100 million workers have participated and voiced in full-throated ease against the policies of the Government.

We have to organise the entire Government employees and teachers in our country to come forward to enlist themselves in the united nationwide struggles to have the following main demands conceded by the Government.

- Bring down price line, Strengthen Public Distribution System and exempt Essential Commodities including Food Grains from Online and Forward Trading; Scrap the increase in the prices of petrol and diesel.
- Stop Disinvestment in Public Sector

Undertakings, retreat from the attempts of raising the ceiling cap on Foreign Direct Investment in Banking and Insurance Industries and reject any Foreign Direct Investment in Retail Trade.

- Fill up all vacant posts in Central and State Government Offices and Undertakings and all teaching and non-teaching posts on regular basis.
- Stop all Outsourcing, Contractual and Temporary Appointments and bring all such appointments into Regular Appointments.
- Withdraw the notorious anti-employee PFRDA Bill. Rescind steps to further privatize Pension Funds and bring all the New Recruits, under the existing Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.
- Guarantee the Right to Strike as Constitutional and Fundamental Right.
- Scrap the out-dated Government Servants' Conduct Rules and replace it by democratically enacted Service Rules.
- Grant one month's pay as Bonus to all without any ceiling.
- Devolve more central funds as share of taxes to State Governments and ensure parity of wages at least in Government Service
- Enact 33% Reservation for Women in Parliament and State Legislatures, Ensure immediate intervention of the Administration to redress the Grievances of discriminatory attitude and sexual harassment against the Women employees and constitute Committees at State level, District level and Office level on the Guidelines of the judgement of the Apex Court as outlined in Visakha case

The Government employees and teachers in this country should understand that the problems and challenges faced by them are not different from those faced by the common people and workers in this country. So let us firmly commit ourselves for strengthening the unity of the workers and resolutely launch relentless struggles of the workers by our propagation and participation. Let us voice

for conceding the common demands with the same importance of our sectional demands.

Let us renew the following pledge that have been recorded in the Golden Jubilee National Council Meeting held at Vijayawada

The trade unions should fight to liberate the whole mankind from the exploitation and fight for the total eradication of exploitation. This struggle will ultimately lead to a class struggle for virtually changing the present social system and installing a socialist system in its place.

The working class has fought many battles in the past and present and won some battles with some advancement in the living conditions and working conditions. But the achievements do not last longer. Again and again it has to struggle to sustain the living conditions. This is only because the struggles fought hitherto were defensive in nature against the effects of the policies of the Government. Therefore taking lessons out of this, the working class should be educated, united and prepared to launch offensive struggles against the causes of the Government policies and against the very existing exploitative system itself.

The global struggle against not only neo-liberal imperialist globalization but also against the foundation of the present rotten exploitative capitalist system, with the indomitable confidence that another world free from all sorts of exploitation is possible, is the need of the hour. Let us commit and pledge for the preparations of such struggles by unifying the entire working class, crossing the fragile barriers of caste, creed, religion and ethnicity. If we whole heartedly work to launch such struggles, definitely we will be able to bring a new social order that would ensure a better livelihood to everybody.

Let us vow and pledge for enlisting ourselves for strengthening the unity of the workers and resolutely launch relentless struggles of the workers by our propagation and participation and in our onward march let us sacrifice anything for the emancipation of the entire mankind.

Let us march forward, meeting the challenges!

