

WORKERS SHALL PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS AGAINST EXPLIOTATION THROUGH A STRONG, UNITED STRUGGLE!

The B.J.P. coming in to power with thumping majority in the recent general elections has immediately announced its priorities in the first one hundred days of its rule. They are a) to hasten the process of labour laws codification b) to hasten land acquisition reform c) dismantling and privatising public sector units & industry.

These priorities announced by the BJP led NDA government are in accordance with the wish-lists presented by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) the representative of big capital and industries and most of the foreign and Indian stock-market brokerages like Goldman Sachs of USA, Morgan Stanley of U.S.A, U.B.S, Credit Suisse, Elara capital, Edelweiss etc.

The government claims that it has taken up these priorities in order to attract \$ 100 billion worth of foreign direct investment (FDI) annually and technology transfer. It also claims that it intends to finish its, unfinished agenda to bring India in to the top 50 in the world banks' ease of doing business rankings. The government emphasises that it could bring out economic growth by immediately reforming the labour-laws and land acquisition laws being demanded by the big capital.

Today the back-bone economic sector for India, the agricultural sector is thrown in to deep crisis. Rural distress and poverty have reached to the severest limits. During the period of implementation of neo-liberal economic policies dictated by the imperialist globalisation more than 2,00,000 farmers have committed suicides due to unviable farming under the conditions created by market-forces. Crores of small and petty farmers have been reduced in to marginal unskilled dialy manual labourers and are forced to migrate to cities afar seeking livelihoods. On the other hand unemployment has reached a 45 year high, leaving more of the educated you in unemployment. Job creation in the recent years has been in dire situation even according to the labour force survey of the government mode public in May 2019. The worker participation rate has also declines considerably in this decade.

Instead of addressing this dire situation being suffered by majority of people of our country the B.J.P. rulers chose to fulfil the wishes of the big-capital and speculative stock-market brokerages. Thus they come out in their true colours of anti-worker, anti-people class nature of exploiting classes.

The government has already made preparations to 'reform' the existing 44 labour laws that provide protection to the rights of workers. With the B.J.P. government is either doing away with the rights of workers or is reframing them to the total advantage of the big-capital industry.

Presently the government is readied to introduced a national minimum wage code bill and code on occupational safety health and working conditions bill in the coming parliamentary sessions and made them in to laws.

On the pretext of a national minimum wage code bill, the B.J.P. government is introducing a so-called universal minimum wage system recommended by the imperialist financial organisation World Bank. This universal minimum wage is not based on the scientific basis of present day requirements of a worker of our country, but on improper and incorrect proposals of those 'experts' of W.B. with the support of the so-called experts of I.L.O., in accordance and need of the principles dictated by neo-liberal economics of imperialist globalisation. This fixation of this nation-wide minimum wages will be far less than the present day existing minimum wages fixed by the governments. In the name of backward regions the minimum wage will be fixed at a lowest rate of many other regions. On the other hand the rights of workers to get bonus payments, O.T. entitlement of double pay and other entitlements of various allowances will be done away or considerably

reduced. Thus this wage code is mooted to the benefit of industrialists to reduce their costs on the expenditure of wages and other allowances payable to workers.

The new code bill on occupational safety, health and working conditions too is not intended to improve the working conditions, safety and safe health conditions to workers. But it is intended to benefit the industrial managements towards reducing their expenditure on these concerns. It is imposing limitations on payments of compensation due to deaths and disablement in industrial work place accidents at a more lower level than from the present entitlements of compensation under workman's compensation act. It also limits the payment of wages during sick periods of occupational ill-health and sickness. We have been witnessing numerous work-place accidents where a considerable number of workers are being killed without any safety protection or being disabled in work-place accidents and the managements are blatantly evading of paying compensations to the deceased or disabled workers in the work-place accidents unwilling to pay compensation according to workman's compensation act. They want to totally avoid from their legal liability and responsibility for work-place accidents and sickness. So now with the present law the compensations and entitlements of workers are being reduced to a lowest level, changing the working conditions rules making the workman responsible for his own safety.

The trade and industry had been demanding for flexibility in the hire and fire policy. This has been their key demand. Added to this they are claiming that to provide social security to workers in the form of E.S.I, provident fund, gratuity etc and that it was a burden to them. They argue that with such responsibility of social security to workers they are unable to compete efficiently in world markets.

Already in May 2019, the government to lessen the cost burden of employers, had decided to reduce the total rate of contribution towards E.S.I. scheme from 6.5% to 4% and thus provided a relief to the employers to the tune of Rs 8,000 crore to Rs 9,000 crore, who have to make a contribution for employees earning below Rs 21,000 a month towards E.S.I.

Very recently the finance ministry has demanded the social security and pension fund cuts the 8.65% annual return on E.P.F. to 8.55% which was announced just before recent April-May general elections by the E.P.F.O which is administrated by the labour ministry.

In this back ground the code on social security will erase the rightful entitlements of workers of their E.S.I., P.F., gratuity and pensions to be borne by the industrial managements and employers lessening their onus of paying contributions to those social security schemes to the workers. The workers themselves will be made to provide their own social security in way of paying contributions from their own paltry wages. The governments and employers cease from such social security responsibilities.

The code of industrial relations in accordance with the draft-moots to do away the legal right of strike of workers and legal protection of job security from indiscriminate terminations, illegal dismissals, lay-offs and industry closures allows the employers to terminate workers according to their whims. The right of 8 hours work a day is being abolished. Restriction on work hours is being removed. Workers are made to work for unlimited hours in a week, for over time without any additional pay for the overtime work for which they are presently entitled. Women workers are permitted to work in night times from 7 P.M to 7 A.M in nights without any restrictions.

In essence all these labour reforms and codes do not come to the rescue of the work men, but come handy to benefit to the employers to exploit workers unrestricted or controlled by the law. The statutory guarantee of workers right against exploitation is being removed lawfully with these 4 labour codes.

Already a burgeoning section of workers have emerged in the sectors like of e'commerce as delivery boys, drivers working for cab aggregators and delivery boys with food apps.etc. All these are employed on contract, are denied fixed working hours, are not eligible for fixed pay or social security. The plight of these labourers is in no way going to be mended and their conditions be

improved by those labour codes, but these codes will encourage the employers to continue and worsen the working and living conditions of workers.

Now it is the time for the workers movement in India to rise to the occasion and act decisively to protect the interests of the workers and their rights duly by building up a resistance movement against the governments attack of abolishing the legal rights of workers of this country.

All the trade unions keeping away from their differences of political, regional, religious and other affiliations and sentiments must unite to fight relentlessly against the anti-worker policies of the government.

With the exclusive principle of strong unity and struggle against anti-working class policies and to protect the legal rights of working-class each and every worker shall prepare to fight and join in the struggle against the attacks on their legal rights!

A strong worker's movement against this on slaught of workers' rights in the need of the hour. Workers themselves have to fight for their rights!
