

Neo-Liberalism Thrives by Sacrificing the Lives of Workers at the Altar of Super-Profit Making

-Komarayya

The capitalist neo-liberalism in its pursuit of gaining super profits has been inhumanly sacrificing the lives of workers, in working conditions that lack safety and healthy working environment.

The International Labor Organisation prepared a report called "A call for safer and healthier working environments", which was discussed in the 23rd World Congress on safety and health at work in Sydney. The director general of the E.S.I. Corporation of India had represented at the conference.

The report pointed out that nearly 30 lakh workers die every year to work-related accidents and diseases and that more than 63% of these deaths are reported from Asia-Pacific region. The report specified that mining and quarrying, construction and utilities were the three most hazardous sectors globally.

In India we find most of the work-place accidents in construction, mining and quarrying; in pharma, chemical factories and cracker manufacturing and in the job of cleaning of drainages, sewage pipes and the sewerage and wastage tanks of factories.

The capitalist managements, in the name of reducing the production cost to meet international competition in the global markets have deliberately chosen to sacrifice the lives of workers without making any safety arrangements for the workers, while discharging their duties in hazardous and dangerous working conditions. They have been willfully violating the laws of safety and healthy conditions that are in force in many countries. Thus, they have been cutting their production and manufacturing costs. The liberal capitalist economic reforms have been supporting the capitalists in violating the concerned safety laws of working and health conditions of workers that mandate safe and healthy working environment. Even the governments and ruling-classes concerned countries are tacitly allowing the industrial managements to violate safety laws with impunity, in the name of clearing an easy business environment for the capitalists.

Though India is a member of 187 members of ILO Conventions, it has not ratified the ILO 'Occupational Safety and Health Convention' (No.155) and the 'Promotional Frame work for Occupational Safety and Health Contention-2006' (NO. 187).

The ILO report specifies that exposure to long working hours (55 hours or more in a week) was the biggest 'killer' of workers.

In India where almost more than 90% workers are informal workers, who are made to work more than 10 hrs a day and 60 hrs in a week; are being killed in work-place accidents and due to work-related diseases. It is particularly noteworthy that most of the workers killed in accidents are contract workers, who have no legal entitlement for compensation in case of their deaths or disablement or sickness.

The diseases that cause most work-related deaths are circulatory diseases, malignant neoplasm and respiratory diseases. In India we often witness deaths due to inhaling poisonous

gases, mostly leaked from chemical factories, or industries that use poisonous chemicals in their manufacturing processes.

The ILO report after overall review of the deaths owing to work-related accidents and diseases has recommended five categories of "Fundamental principles, and rights of work" for ensuring safety and health at work. They are: freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, elimination in respect of employment and occupation and a safe healthy working environment.

The rulers and ruling classes of our country who are implementing the so-called reforms of labour, reforms prescribed by neo-liberal capitalist economy, who have deliberately negated all the statutory rights of workers enacted by laws in the name of codifying labour laws at the behest of neo-liberal economic reforms, will never be willing to follow and implement those recommendations since they have already undone them through labour codes.

Infact every day in our country we witness the deaths of workers in work-place accidents due to the culpable negligence of business managements including the big capital in making safety arrangements and providing safety work environment without any remorse of compunction on the part of our rulers and ruling-classes.

The working-class movement shall organise all its strength and unity to fight to secure a safety working environment to workers, disallowing them to be sacrificed at the altar of super-profit-making big capitalist business.