



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
21st Congress
Samar Mukherjee Nagar
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Draft Resolution

**For Employment or an Unemployment Allowance --
Make the Right to Work a Fundamental Right**

The 21st Congress of the CPI (M) expresses deep concern at the alarming unemployment situation in the country. High unemployment, the outcome of more than 30 years of economic reform, seriously threatens the future of millions of Indian youth.

The policy being pushed by the Modi Government will not solve the problem. Instead of increasing public investment to ensure the creation of jobs, the Government is relying entirely on the organised private sector, and corporations, domestic and foreign, to invest in India and create jobs. Similar policies followed by the UPA Government, that is, of giving multiple concessions to attract investors, did not create commensurate employment opportunities. On the contrary, the situation worsened.

Data from the 66th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) show a dramatic deceleration in total employment growth in India. The rate of growth of employment declined from 2.7 per cent in 2000-5 to an alarming low of 0.8 per cent in 2009-10. The rate of growth of employment thus fell below the rate of growth of population. The 2015 Economic Survey points out that, while the annual rate of growth of the labour force between 2001 and 2011 was 2.23 per cent, the annual rate of growth of employment over the same period was only 1.4 per cent.

A very disturbing feature of unemployment is that it was much higher among youth in the age-group 15-29 years than in the working population as a whole. The finding of the NSS that youth unemployment among educated persons was higher than among others, and that it was highest in the category of graduates and above, is a matter of grave concern.

There has been a reduction in employment in the organised sector. Total employment in the organised sector was 28.2 million in 1998; that figure came down to 27.5 million in 2008. Another trend is the increasing share of contract workers in the labour force, from 20 per cent in 1999-2000 to 32 per cent in 2008-9 (the share has now crossed 50 per cent). The failure to generate adequate employment is thus accompanied by the creation of jobs that are very exploitative.

The Government, which is the main employer in the organised sector, has been implementing a recruitment ban, abolishing posts and outsourcing Government work. Perennial data compiled from answers given in Parliament show that more than a million vacancies are lying unfilled in various Central Government Departments, with the number of unfilled vacancies in the police and defense forces alone amounting to over 700,000.

The total number of employees in the railways has come down from 16 lakhs to 13 lakhs over a period of ten years. The number of vacancies in Group C and erstwhile Group D posts in the railways (as on April 1,

2011) was over 2.2 lakh. The case is similar in other public sector enterprises. Since the dissolution of Banking Service Recruitment Board (BSRB), there has been a drastic reduction in recruitment in public sector banks. In various Central Government departments, thousands of vacancies exist even for skilled professionals such as teachers, doctors, scientists, statisticians, economists, and others. The drastic reduction in recruitments to Government and public-sector jobs has led to a loss of opportunities for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. This has undermined the principle of social justice and the policy of reservation.

The aggravated unemployment situation shows the lopsided and imbalanced trajectory of growth in the period of neo-liberal reform. Even when overall output growth has increased, agricultural growth has decelerated. In 2009-10, the share of agriculture in GDP had fallen to 13 per cent, while the share of the work force in agriculture was still 52 per cent. There is an alarming decline in the rate of industrial growth as well. Though 60 per cent of the country's GDP comes from services, the faster growth rate in this sector has not been accompanied by the generation of adequate employment opportunities.

Although the industrial and service sectors have failed to absorb the surplus work force from agriculture, the Government continues to depend on the private sector to provide jobs, while cutting down on its own responsibilities under the pretext of "minimum government." New economic measures proposed by the Government, such as permitting Foreign Direct Investment in retail trade, will worsen unemployment in the country.

This deepening crisis of unemployment will have other adverse socio-economic consequences. The growing disillusionment and anger of unemployed youth can be utilised by communal forces and other disruptive elements. We have to maintain a constant vigil against this danger and must continue to mobilise youth against the policies that cause such high levels of unemployment.

The 21st Congress of the CPI(M) reiterates the demand of the Party that the right to work be made a fundamental right, and further raises the following demands for building a broad movement against unemployment.

1. Remove the ban on recruitment in various Central and State government departments and public sector enterprises.
2. Stop the abolition of vacant posts and fill all vacancies within a prescribed time frame.
3. Stop outsourcing of jobs in government departments and public sector enterprises.
4. Reinstate the Banking Service Recruitment Board.
5. Provide unemployment allowance to registered unemployed persons and modernise employment exchanges.
6. Expand the coverage of the MGNREGA to all adult individuals and raise the limit of 100 days of guaranteed employment.
7. Initiate an urban employment guarantee scheme at minimum wages.
8. Enhance financial support for self-employment schemes, self-help groups, and small enterprises.
9. Implement far-reaching land reforms and land distribution among the landless in order to reduce massive rural unemployment.
10. Release employment data along with quarterly GDP estimates.
