



Founded on 31.10.1920
Founder President, Lala Lajpat Rai

अखिल भारतीय ट्रेड यूनियन कांग्रेस All India Trade Union Congress

President : Ramendra Kumar

General Secretary : Amarjeet Kaur

01st February 2023

Press Release

The following statement is issued by the AITUC Secretariat on Budget 2023-24

Budget 2023-24 - Unimpressive and hollow

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman has presented her last full budget, placing it with pomp as 'amrut kaal budget'. As usual the bombastic jugglery of words and encomiums on the Prime Minister filled the substantial part of her budget speech. In sum, the budget woefully is hollow without addressing the crucial issues of employment, health, education, price rise etc.,. Except that there are some handouts with an intention to woo the electorate, there is nothing aimed at moving towards a people centric economic growth and human development. The speech was laced with falsehood and jugglery. The estimations presented as achievements were far from true.

The seven key priorities as listed in the budget such as the inclusive growth, reaching the last mile, youth power etc remain empty without any substance further.

None of the real issues concerning people have been addressed. Trade unions have been demanding Old Pension scheme, Social security to all, Pension to all, regularisation of schemed workers, minimum wages for the unorganised sector workers including the agricultural workers etc.,. This is a budget that leaves behind the interests of the nation, its 94% unorganised work force who contribute 60% of the GDP.

Budget has not addressed long term employment and creation of quality jobs. 8 million new job seekers enter the job market every year. Unemployment is at its peak of 34%. Budget talks about demand based skilling. Skilling comes with formal education. Leaving behind the reality of formal education in India, skilling makes no sense. This is a flawed approach lacking in commitment. Priority of 'youth power' fails in reaping the demographic dividend of having the highest youth population. New age courses for Industry 4.0 aims at a very small section of technically educated youth leaving behind a large section of the deserving.

Spending in education is inadequate. Rate of Mean school education in India has fallen drastically. The budget speaks on spending on higher education. It has made a blue print already to bring foreign universities. This spending seems to match with that plan to support higher education. BJP has only been allocating less than 3% of GDP on education so far.

There is no health spending in the budget, except specific programme of eradication of Sickle Cell Aneamia by 2047. Reduced public spending on health has made poverty accentuate in India.

Spending on agriculture is reduced to the extent of paying doles to farmers which is the election year gimmick. Fisheries, there are some plans for future falling short of budgetary commitments. MGNREGA is a demand based work. Cut in allocation for the scheme deprives nearly 7 crore job seekers under the scheme.

Middle class is wooed with tax exemption upto 7 lakhs. This is a small section of the formal salaried work force. This again is a measure to attract vote bank.

The relief to women and senior citizens by way of enhancing the limit of deposit does not translate into any big benefit. Widening Gender wage disparity and dwindling women employment rate is not addressed.

GST exemption on selected items only reduces prices of non essential commodities. No relief to common man who pays indirect taxes.

Budget talks to make Ease of doing business simpler. It has to be seen what are the decriminalised areas and sops offered to the employers. It will be a hit on the workers' rights.

MSMEs are not adequately addressed. What is given by way of enhancing guarantee is too small for the huge sector, that is the engine of growth and employment generator.

Budget is silent on where the revenue is generated from. No attempt to increase tax income by taxing the rich and corporates. It talks of more borrowings to make up deficit. India's debt burden is already heavy and further burden will increase the debt servicing load.

Budget has totally failed to uplift the human and social development. It does not address the crucial issues of hunger, poverty, unemployment, increasing.

AITUC Secretariat
Mob: 9810144958