

Hold Demonstrations on 1st December 2011 in support of the Retail Trade Bandh against FDI in Retail Trade

BSNL Employees Union calls upon all the BSNL employees to hold demonstrations on 1st December 2011 in support of the All India Trade Bandh being observed on the same day by the retail traders, protesting against the decision of the Government to allow 51% FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in retail trade.

Allowing the FDI in retail trade means allowing the giant retail trading MNCs(Multi National Companies) like Walmart, Tesco, Carryfour etc to set up their giant malls in India. It will create havoc to the 1crore 20 lakh kirana shops in India employing 4 crore people. Many of the kirana shops will be closed and millions of people will lose their jobs. The jobs that will be created by these MNCs will be far less compared to the jobs that will be destroyed by them. These giant corporations with monopoly power will compel the farmers to sell their products at lower prices to them. They will squeeze the small and medium enterprises by compelling them to sell their products to them at lower prices. The statement of the Government that these retail giant corporations will be asked to procure 30% of their requirements from small and medium enterprises(SMEs) is of no use since it is based on self certification and also the WTO agreement signed by the Indian Government will not allow such reservation. With monopoly power and greater storage capacity they will resort to hoarding and profiteering at the expense of the customers buying from them.

In the name of second generation reforms, all the important sectors of our economy are being opened to the looting of the foreign capitalists in collaboration with the big capitalists in India. The retail giants in America and Europe like Walmart etc are not in a position to increase their business due to the economic recession there. Hence they wanted to enter the Indian retail trade, and occupy the market by destroying the small traders. Similarly the investment companies in America and Europe etc are not having bright future in the pension funds and insurance markets there. Hence they wanted to come to India and make money. Therefore the UPA Government decided to allow 26% FDI in pension fund companies in India. Similarly they want to allow FDI in a big way in India in the name of expanding its infrastructure. All this is nothing but the joint looting of the Indian economy and attacking the livelihood of the Indian people for the sake of large scale profits to the Indian and foreign big capitalists.

The BJP which proposed 26% FDI in retail trade in the manifesto of NDA in 2004 is now opposing FDI in retail trade since it has support base among traders. The DMK and Trinamool Congress are opposing it since they have to compete with their rivals AIADMK and Left Front. Similarly the Kerala unit of the Congress Party also opposing it since they have to compete with their rival LDF. The opposition of these parties is not a principled opposition. In spite of the allies DMK and Trinamool Congress opposing it, the Government is not ready to take back its decision since these allies are not ready to vote against the Government. It is to be noted that although the same Manmohan Singh Government tried to decide for allowing FDI in retail sector in 2005 itself, it was compelled to avoid it since it was depending on the support of the Left Parties which opposed it. Now, besides the Left Parties, so many parties and even a section of the Congress are opposing it due to their own political considerations. But the Government is not ready to withdraw its decision since the allies Trinamool and DMK will not vote against the Government on this issue. But since the decision of the Government is effecting millions of retail traders, the struggle against it will be serious.

As BSNL employees, we know the destruction done by the FDI in telecom sector. The private telecom operators are having a large proportion of FDI. They refused to procure the telecom equipment made in India and procured only the telecom equipment made by foreign companies. As a result the telecom equipment manufacture industry is destroyed. The research and development in telecom technology came to a stand still. BSNL and MTNL are facing losses. The ITI, HCL etc have become sick. The employees in BSNL and MTNL are facing the threat of job loss in the name of VRS. The FDI dominated private telecom operators are doing their business only where there is profit and are not fulfilling their social responsibilities. While BSNL and MTNL together have given 70% of the internet connections in India, the FDI dominated private telecom companies have done very little in expanding the internet services. This is because internet services are to be given mainly through the landline network which is a loss making business. The Indian telecom sector is paying more to the foreign companies than what it is getting as FDI.

Hence in each sector the struggle has become unavoidable against such anti people policies. When the struggle is taking place in one sector, those in other sectors have to support such struggle in order to defeat such policies. Hence BSNLEU appeals to all BSNL employees to organise demonstrations on 1st December 2011 in support of the retail trade bandh.
