

KARNATAKA STATE IT/ITeS EMPLOYEES UNION

Reg. ALC-Bengaluru-04/TUA/REGN/CR-17/2017-18

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Press Release

14-hour work day in IT Sector; biggest ever attack on working class in this era: KITU

Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees Union (KITU) calls upon the entire working class to come in resistance against the Karnataka Government move to increase the working hours in IT/ITES/BPO sector to 14 hours a day. The proposal to amend the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishment Act to facilitate 14-hour working day is presented in a meeting called by the labour department with various stakeholders in the industry.

Labour Minister Shri Santosh S Lad, officials from Department of Labour and IT-BT ministry attended the meeting. Representing the employees in IT/ITeS sector, Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees Union General Secretary Comrade Suhas Adiga, President VJK and Secretary Sooraj Nidiyanga attended the meeting. KITU representatives strongly raised our opposition to the proposed amendment, which poses an attack on the basic right of any worker to have a personal life. While replying, Labour Minister agreed to have one more round of discussion before taking any decision.

The proposed new bill 'Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2024' attempts to normalize a 14-hour work day. The existing act only allows a maximum of 10 hours work per day including overtime, which has been completely lifted in the current amendment. It will facilitate the IT/ITES companies to extend the daily hours of work indefinitely.

This amendment will allow the companies to go for a two shift system instead of the currently existing three shift system and one third of the workforce will be thrown out from their employment.

During the meeting KITU pointed out the studies on the health impact of extended working hours among the IT employees. As per the report of KCCI, 45% of employees in the IT sector are facing mental health issues such as depression and 55% facing physical health impacts. Increasing working hours will further aggravate this situation. WHO-ILO study says increased working hours will lead to an estimated 35% higher risk of death by stroke and 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease. Karnataka Government in

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their hunger to please their corporate bosses, completely neglects the most fundamental right of any individual, the right to live.

This amendment shows that the Government of Karnataka is not ready to consider the workers as human beings who need personal and social life to survive. Instead it considers them as only a machinery to increase the profit of the corporates to whom it serves.

This amendment comes in a period when the world starts to accept the fact that increased working hours are negatively impacting productivity and more countries are coming with new legislations to accept the right to disconnect as a basic right of any employee.

The Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees Union urges the government to rethink and warns that any attempt to go with the amendment will be an open challenge to the 20 lakh employees working in the IT/ITeS sector in Karnataka. KITU calls upon all the IT/ITeS sector employees to unify and come forward to resist this inhuman attempt to impose slavery on us.

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