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World Unemployment Today— A Problem Threatening Human Community, Its Cause & Solution

I

Unemployment today is one of the most serious world problems (like worsening global warming, acute water scarcity, widening rich-poor gap, unprecedented poverty, etc.) that has now attained an alarming rate and level, unheard of in its history. Perhaps the world has hardly faced such a worst-ever employment situation as it is facing today.

As per 2003 and 2004 reports of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), unemployment is the most menacing global problem facing human community today.

The 2003-ILO report shows that global unemployment continued its relentless climb in 2003. Unemployment hit a record 185.9 million (i.e., 6.2 percent of the total labour force) for men and women) during 2003, the highest figure ever recorded despite a second half economic recovery, rising sharply for young people. Among the world's unemployed, some 108.1 million were men and 77.8 million women.

The ILO report—Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2004—is a new analysis prepared by its Employment Strategy Department. It says that young people, aged between 15 and 24 years, now represent nearly half of the world's jobless. In fact, youth unemployment has sky-rocketed worldwide over the past decade to some 88 million.

Report found that while youth represent 25 percent of the working age population between the ages 15 and 64, they made up as much as 47 percent of the total 186 million people out of work worldwide in 2003.

The problem even goes beyond the large number of young unemployed people. Even where there is employment, young people account 130 million of the world's 550 million working poor who work but are unable to lift themselves and their families above the equivalent of $1 a day poverty line.

The report puts the global youth unemployment rate at 14.4 percent in 2003 with the rate highest in the West Asian and North African countries (25.6 percent), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (21 percent), the transitional Economies (18.6 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean Countries (16.6 percent), South-East Asia (16.4 percent), South Asia (13.9 percent), the industrialised countries (13.4 percent), and East Asia (7 percent). The industrialised economic region was the only one where youth unemployment saw a distinct decrease from 15.4 percent in 1993 to 13.4 percent in 2003.

85 percent of the world's youth live in the developing countries where they are 3.8 times more likely to be unemployed than adults, as compared with 2.3 times in industrialised economies.

The report said that these young people struggle to survive, often performing work under unsatisfactory conditions in the informal economy. Those who can find work often face long working hours, short-term or informal contracts, low pay and little or no social protection, such as social security. Young people are, thus, increasingly dependent on their families and are more susceptible to illegal activities.

The report shows that the growth in the number of young people is rapidly outstripping the abilities of economies to provide them with jobs. While the overall youth population grew by 10.5 percent over the last 10 years to over 1.1 billion in 2003, youth employment grew by only 0.2 percent to around 526 million employment opportunities.

Warning that youth unemployment which has sky-rocketed to a record level, is dragging down the world economy, the United Nations has called for concerted and targeted measures to tackle the problem.

ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia said, "We are wasting an important part of the energy and talent of the most educated young generation the world has ever had. Enlarging the chances of young people to find and keep decent work is absolutely critical to achieving the UN Millennium Development goals."

These goals set by the UN Millennium Summit of 2000, call for achieving a set of specific targets by 2015, including halving of the extreme poverty and hunger and slashing of the child and maternal mortality rates.

Global Employment Trends for youth 2004, ILO Report says that halving world youth unemployment rate would add at least $2.2 trillion to global gross domestic product (GDP), equal to around 4 percent of the 2003 value.

According to a 2003-ILO report, unemployment rate in different parts of the world in as under:

Unemployment in Percentage (1990-2002)

S.No.	Area/Year	1990	1995	2000	2002
1.	Latin America & Caribbean	6.5	8.5	9.0	9.9
2.	East Asia	—	3.0	3.2	4.0
3.	South-East Asia	3.0	4.2	6.0	6.8
4.	South Asia	3.8	3.0	3.8	3.8
5.	European Union	8.0	11.0	7.0	7.0
6.	USA	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.2
7.	Japan	2.1	3.0	4.5	5.3
8.	Beneath Sub Saharan Africa	—	—	13.00	14.8
9.	Middle East & North Africa	—	—	17.8	18.0

Source: Business Standard 17.3.2004

As regards India, well known statistics amply illustrate that the problem of jobless growth is very serious.

According to findings of the two successive rounds of the National Sample Survey, the rate of unemployment rose from 5.99 percent to 7.32 percent and total number of unemployed rose from 20.13 million to 26.58 million.

Around 8 million Indians are joining the labour force every year. But during 1993-2000, period that we are considering, only an average of 3.6 million new jobs have been added every year.

Unemployment situation in the base year of the Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002 showed that to clear the backlog of unemployment, 35 million employment opportunities are to be created. Job opportunities have also to be generated for 45.56 million persons during 2002-07.

Visaria's study ''Unemployment Among Youth in India'' notes that increasingly large numbers of young people are joining the labour force and unemployment is higher among the youth than in the population as a whole. The most alarming form of unemployment today is educated unemployment.

(The whole of the above text taken from
rediff.com home news Business website)

As per the official employment exchanges in India, "4 crore unemployed youths were registered in the year 2000."

Employment growth rate had been 6.68 percent during 1988 to 1999, while the rate of registered unemployment youths seeking jobs in the same period was 22.56 percent.

The Government of India has acknowledged in the Economic Review 2002-03 that in the period 1988-94, employment growth rate was 2.7 percent every year, while between 1994-2000, it came down to 1.07 percent per year. This means that it had decreased at the rate of 1.67 percent per year. According to the same source, while the percentage of unemployed was 5.99 percent in 1993-94, in 1999-2000 it rose to 7. 32 percent. And all this was in the period of sloganeering about achieving economic growth through the new economic policies.

From the same review, it is clear that the economic situation in Bihar was the same as in the rest of India. In the same period, the rate of employment growth was 1.59 percent and the growth rate of unemployment 7.32 percent.

The figures pertaining to the availability of labour (i.e., unemployed) only enhance the frightening dimensions of the issue. Whereas 61.8 percent of the total population of the country is shown as available work force, the figure for Bihar is 57.3 percent. Thus over 50 percent of the population at both Bihar level and all-India level is part of 'available labour' and is standing in the lines of the unemployed.

The frustrating employment situation country-wide is clearly revealed in the latest round of attacks in the examinations which were being held for 'C' and 'D' Groups in railways (leading to violence in Assam and Maharashtra). There were 751akh applicants for 38,000 posts. There were MBAs, graduates and postgraduates, B.Techs. among applicants where the requirement for the posts was 12th pass.

II

Coming to the question of the cause of unemployment, its immediate cause rests with the market-led corporate development model whose sole aim is to maximise profit by relying more on the most advanced technology and shunning the human labour as much as possible, The high productive capacity of the advanced technology, by misusing and overusing resources and emitting more waste, pollutes and damages natural environment, on the one hand, and, by disposing off the majority of labour, creates inhuman gap between the rich and the poor and thus harms human resources, on the other.

The ultimate cause of unemployment lies in the money and power-oriented corporate social system that furthers the cause of corporate development model and its operators and defends them against all odds.

The corporate social system is characterised by the following main essentials, each of which is led and controlled by one of the corporate groups or its representative body at one time and by another corporate group or its representative body at the other time.

(1) The state structure is controlled and operated through political parties which, while waging a highly sharp struggle among them for attaining and retaining state power, are united on the basic corporate principle that the corporate orientation and system represent the best social outlook and arrangement for human development. All these pro-corporate political parties operate and contend in elections among themselves on the basis of funds provided to them by their respective corporate backers. Every corporate state wields unchallenged constitutional and legal control over the natural and human resources within its domain.

(2) The economic structure is controlled and operated by the corporate capitalists themselves (both big and small) collectively. The economic structure also called the mode of production includes all categories of productive sectors. The existing corporate mode of production generally comprises three following main productive sectors:

(a) Agriculture and its allied branches,

(b) Manufacturing and its other related professions, and

(c) Services and its concerning activities.

Today, the services sector, particularly its IT branch, being the most productive sector in terms of growth rate, occupies the first position, thus constituting the priority component in the economic system.

(3) Culturally, the vast area covered by numerous cultural activities has come under the corporate control. Every cultural activity has today become a commodity, which can be obtained and disposed of at some price. The present visual and written media (including the film and cine sector) has today become the defender of the existing corporate system.

III

Turning to the solution of the unemployment problem, it is necessary to attend this question from a three-sided angle—the immediate, the medium term and the systemic.

The immediate wayout should be based on three demands:

a) A monthly allowance, based on the principle of two dollars per head per day, for all undergraduates and below (including uneducated);

b) A monthly allowance, based on the principle of three dollars per head per day, for all graduates and above; and

c) A monthly allowance, based on the principle of four dollars per head per day, for all specialists and professionals.

The medium term wayout lies in developing the following three sectors:

a) Environmental sector with air, water, land, forests, bio-diversity, etc. as its constituents,

b) Human sector with its social, economic, cultural and political dimensions, and

c) Scientific and Technological sector engaged in research in the entire domain of nature or the universe.

The systemic change, that will eradicate the evil of unemployment, necessitates a basic transformation from the existing corporate system to a new Nature-Human Centric order. The main points of the new system comprise as under:

Nature-Human Centric Model Of human society

1. Nature-Human Centric model of human society holds environment and humankind as the 2 most precious phenomena in human society, considers the two as its social capital (supreme thing) in human society whose (i.e., environmental-human resources) growth brings development, prosperity and progress and maintains them as its guiding principle in thinking, saying, doing and organising.

2. It strongly advocates the fundamental task of environment (i.e., air, water, land, forests, bio-diversity, etc.) promotion at all times and places.

3. It maintains the fundamental right of every human to bio-social existence ensured through a network of social security with regard to clean air, pure drinking water, nutritious food, housing, clothing, free health facilities and education.

4. It stands for fundamental human right of fair equality, based on 1:5 income differences.

5. It firmly upholds the principle of world peace and steadfastly follows the path of peaceful resolution of all disputes in the world, particularly Jammu-Kashmir, Palestine and Sri Lanka, etc. In case of a just solution to Jammu-Kashmir problem, a joint Indo-Pak condominium be entrusted to handle its (Jammu-Kashmir's) defence and foreign affairs. In all other matters (except defence and foreign affair), Jammu-Kashmir should have independence, while each of its nine ethnic regions be given maximum possible autonomy. A similar type of just arrangement be worked out in case of Israel, Palestine and Jordan also.

6. It demands the restructuring of the world order by ending the veto power to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and by giving the absolute power of deciding any issue to the UN General Assembly on the basis of simple majority vote. In due course, UN be restructured on the basis of a constitution framed by a constituent assembly elected by the people from various constituencies in the world.

7. It argues for the restructuring of WTO, WB and IMF on the basis of substituting their free market economic perspective by Nature-Human Centric perspective and their (i.e., WTO, WB and IMF) development strategy favouring money and money-owners by a Nature-Human Centric development strategy, comprising two top priorities, i.e., human and environmental, and five principles, i.e., environmental promotion, fair equality, productivity, peoples-led democracy and all-sided transparency.

8. It champions the women's cause and demands their empowerment, ensuring them 50 percent representation in all social institutions at all levels.

9. It promotes the organising of agriculture on co-operative basis, ensuring the livelihood security of all concerned.

10. It forcefully speaks for labour (both physical and mental) empowerment, ensuring workers one-third elected representation in the management of all institutions, projects and factories.

11. It pleads for the decentralisation of all industrial and services sectors by ending their corporate and state monopoly control and managing them through ordinary shareholders (with two-third representation) and workers (with one-third representation).

12. It proposes for a democratic management and control of finance. While the corporate sector upholds the monopoly corporate management and control and the state sector supports the monopoly bureaucratic management and control, the Nature-Human Centric development model stands for

democratic management and control of public companies by elected joint committees, each comprising two-third elected members from ordinary share holders and one-third elected workers representatives in place of permanent corporators. All promoters' shares purchased at cheaper rates (than the market rates) and owned by the corporate management be ended.

13. It encourages the spending of all development funds through elected peoples development committees (including the Gram Sabhas and not above that), abrogating the current rule of allotting Rs. 2 crores to each MP and lakhs of rupees to each MLA for development spending in their constituencies.

14. It proposes the restructuring of corporate capitalist oriented constitution and jurisprudence in each country on the basis of Nature-Human Centric outlook.

15. It strongly favours the fundamental principle of safeguarding and protecting the interests of environmental and human resources. Any disregard of the foregoing principle to be dealt with the aim of reforming the offender, while prescribing punishment according to the severity of the offence. Punishment may include all humane forms that have existed in history, except the sentence to death and human cruelty.

16. It firmly believes that all constituent processes of human society, i.e., environmental, human and scientific-technological should be controlled and conducted by the people.

17. It propounds the empowerment of people (or people-led governance) at five levels from the village/ward to national level with powers to manage the three basic facets of social life—political, economic and cultural.

18. The process of empowerment be decided through the method of election, which will be entirely free where everyone has the right to participate as a candidate and to express his opinion as a voter. It urges for ending the state power monopoly of the corrupt and money and power-hungry political parties by introducing the rule of the state funding of elections of each individual candidate (who is required to produce one thousand signatures of his electors in state assembly and five thousand in central assembly elections), without any consideration to his party affiliation. Concerned voters right to recall any assembly member if one-fifth of voters demand in writing a re-poll on the ground that the afore-mentioned member has lost the confidence of his electorate.

19. Political aspect demands the establishment of Political Assembly at five levels (i.e., national, state/regional, district, block and gram) which stands for a democratic order and is based on fully democratic principles, functioning and structure. Such a model necessitates the introducing of the principles of the maximum possible empowerment of the people in decision making.

20. Economic aspect needs the establishment of development assembly at five levels for a rational and realistic economics whose concepts, laws and rules are required to be framed in the light of former's two top priorities (i.e., humankind and environment) and five principles (i.e., enviornmental promotion, fair equality, productivity, peoples-led democracy and all sided transparency). In view of human's bio-social nature, both Adam Smith's basic economic principle of "self-interest" and Marxian basic economic principle of state nationalisation of everything are one-sided. But, ironically, both measure development, prosperity and progress in terms of monetary growth and not in the context of human and environmental development.

21. Cultural aspect requires establishment of cultural assembly at five levels that calls for a way of life (or lifestyle) that is embedded in basic human and environmental values and promotes rational humanist and environmentalist thinking, behaviour and organisation among the people.

22. The political, development and cultural Assemblies at five levels elect their respective political, development and cultural commissions of specialists to implement the agendas and policies framed by them (i.e. Assemblies). The commission of political specialists may deal with political issues like law and order, crime prevention, judicial working, the commission of development specialists may handle economic, financial matters like development planning, agriculture industry, services, finances and budget and the commission of cultural specialists attend to education, health, moral ethical values and other cultural subjects like languages, music, dancing, cine industry, etc.

23. Every elected body whether at the lower or the higher level will be sovereign within its respective domain. If at any time there is a difference of opinion between the two elected bodies or public institutions, the concerned units will appoint their respective representative groups to settle the concerned question through talks. If the matter is mutually settled, that will be accepted as a valid

decision. In case the two cannot agree on a common decision, the matter will be got resolved through a referendum of the concerned people.

24. It maintains that the question of internal security of any territorial unit will be handled by the people concerned. The issue of border defence of different territorial units will be conducted by the defence agency formed by the concerned people according to the rules approved by the UN.

25. It will forbid every polluting technology, however productive capacity it may have, to operate in society.

IV

Taking up the question of Course of Action, it is necessary to launch an intensive awareness campaign about the worsening problem of unemployment (embodying its nature, cause and solution) among the people, in general, and the students, youth and middle aged unemployed, in particular.

To begin with, it is necessary that campaign and organisational work among the unemployed (i.e., students, youth and middle aged) be undertaken without any delay. Those who are prepared to campaign and organise unemployed on the basis of a minimum agenda concerning the unemployment problem in any area, region, state, India or in any other country, be motivated to proceed ahead without any delay. Better, if the organisation of unemployed is formed and organised under the name of Nature-Human Centric Unemployed Organisation, front, movement etc. it can also adopt any other name, provided it adopts the Nature-Human Centric Unemployed Agenda. The unemployed programme will include immediate, mid-term and systemic agenda.

The unemployed organisation, holding Nature-Human Centric Agenda, will be a fully independent organisation to take all decisions concerning its programme, constitution and activity.

The unemployed organisation, holding Nature-Human Centric Agenda, will be having the closest and the most cordial relations with the Nature-Human Centric Movement.

The Nature-Human Centric Unemployed Organisation will work for uniting all the unemployed organisations into one organisation. If this is not possible, it will try to from a united front of all the unemployed bodies.