

## Labour welfare policies not implemented properly: CITU

- Staff Reporter

With the participation of 725 persons, the four-day 13th State conference of Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), which concluded here on Monday, evoked an overwhelming response from members of several trade unions.

At the end of the conference, several labour-friendly resolutions were passed to protect their rights and provide them livelihood support, R. Russell, State secretary of CITU, said here on Tuesday evening while addressing the media.

At the conference, which saw the participation of CITU's All India general secretary Tapan Sen and several State-level leaders, the activities carried out by the CITU over the last three years were analysed. Problems faced by the workforce and difficulties of unemployment were also discussed. Social security was not being guaranteed to 93 percent of unorganised workers and the government should ensure them minimum livelihood support.

Workers, mostly women in anganwadi centres and in other Centre-supported schemes were being paid low salaries under the concept of 'honorarium.' The workers on a temporary basis in State-run TASMACH shops were also being paid lower salaries. The government should ponder over the economic condition of these workers and absorb them as permanent employees with higher salaries.

The CITU has been stressing the need to provide minimum wages of Rs. 18,000 and pension of Rs. 4,000 to retired workers. Further, he said the CITU also condemned the industries functioning in Thoothukudi, which had not recruited local workers in adequate numbers.

Industries located within eight kilometre radius had been polluting the city and any further industrial establishment should be made away from Thoothukudi.

The labour welfare policies had not been properly implemented to benefit the workforce. Referring to Tuticorin Thermal Power Station, which was established 35 years ago, he said the worn out infrastructure should be replaced with latest equipment so as to avoid frequent breakdowns.

Besides, vacancies in the TTPS should also be filled to ensure effective functioning.

The conference also focused on the immediate need for establishing the Udangudi power plant, for which efforts had been initiated by the State government.

Two years ago, foundation stone was laid for constructing a 100-bedded ESI hospital in Thoothukudi, but there has been no sign of any such development since then.

Hence, the government should initiate construction works soon. Priority was accorded to upgrade the Thoothukudi airport into an international airport, for doubling of railway track from Madurai –Thoothukudi and an exclusive freight corridor from this Port City. To fulfil these projects, the State and Central governments should work in coordination, he said.