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Title : Need to constitute 6th Wage Board for the working journalist and non-journalist employees in media industry.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Thank you, Sir, for having permitted me to raise an important matter of concern pertaining to the working journalists and other non-journalist employees in the media industry.

Media is considered as the fourth pillar of our supreme democracy and it acts as a watchdog for the maintenance of India's democracy. Journalists and non-journalist employees of print media and visual media form the cornerstone of this pillar. But unfortunately these employees are being denied salaries and service conditions commensurate with the new challenges in the professional arena and all round increase in the cost of living. The salary and service conditions of journalists and non-journalist employees in newspaper and news agencies are governed by the Working Journalists Act of 1955. Under the provisions of this Act, it is mandatory on the part of the Government of India to constitute Wage Boards every five years to revise the salaries of the workforce of newspaper and news agencies.

The last Wage Board was constituted in 1993 under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajkumar Manisana Singh. Already 12 years have lapsed. The last five years have seen wage revision being effected in banking, insurance and other similar industries as well as for the State Government. The Government here has now decided to constitute VI Pay Commission. But still the workforce in the media industry who stand for democratic rights of the society is being denied wages that would justify their workload and increase in cost of living[V79]. Delay in revision of wages would only weaken the firm commitment of journalists to fearless and fair journalist practices and that will not augur well for the country.

Several anti-labour and unfair labour practices are prevailing in the newspaper and TV industries. Contract employment is on the rise....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : What is your demand?

DR. K.S. MANOJ : I am coming to it.

There is an increasing tendency among several management to force employees to switch over to contract employment. In the TV industry almost the whole recruitment process is on contract basis. This not only leaves the journalists

and non-journalists employees at the mercy of the management but also weakens the collective bargaining power. So, I urge upon the Government to:

1. Constitute a new Wage Board for journalists and non-journalists employees in newspapers, news agencies and TV channels with stipulations about the timeframe for submitting the report.
2. Bring journalists and non-journalists employees in TV channels under the ambit of Working Journalists Act.
3. Announce 25 percent interim relief for all journalists and non-journalists in newspapers, news agencies and TV channels.
4. Initiate measures to curb contract employment and other anti-labour practices in the print and visual media industries.

Yesterday, the leaders of the Kerala Unit of Working Journalists met the hon. Minister of Information and Broadcasting. He had assured that the Wage Board would be implemented....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. You have made your point. Nothing will go on record.

(*Interruptions*)* â€