

**President's message on the occasion of the 68th
Foundation of the ITEF.**

Dear Comrades,

On 10th February 2020 all of us will be assembling in front of our offices to hoist the ITEF flag to commemorate the 68th founding day of our Federation. We shall assemble on this foundation day as the members of a proud organisation, the ITEF, which could ensure cent percent participation of its members in the recently organised one day strike on 8th January 2020 under the banner of the united platform of Central Trade Unions. 8th January strike was yet another manifestation of the resentment and opposition of the Indian working class against the neo-liberal economic policies that have been pursued by the successive Indian Governments since 1991. The 8th January strike was in a sense unique in as much as for the first time perhaps, the Kisan and agricultural workers organisations in the country called upon its members to be an integral part in the struggle. While about 250 million workers are reported to have taken part in this mammoth strike action, the participation of kisan and agricultural workers have far surpassed that number. The rural India for the first time experienced the reverberations of the opposition to the economic policies of the Govt. The participation of kisan and agricultural workers, their programmes of rasta roko and rail rokho immobilised many States.

Ever since the TMC came to power in West Bengal they had used state power and had unleashed brutal methods to break the strike action of workers. This time, however, it did not work out fully as the people at large were in a combative mood. Kerala remained on complete hartal. Incidentally, it must be mentioned that the anger generated in the minds of all right-thinking people in the country over the recent political decisions did contribute immensely for the success of the great strike action, which could surpass all earlier

records. Unlike in the past, the I.T. professionals and workers are reported to have taken part in the strike reflecting the deteriorating state of affairs in this sector. The anxiety over the new pension scheme had been the compelling factor in most of the government offices, be it State or Centre, in the large participation of the young comrades in the Strike. While we can be proud of the fact that we have acquitted creditably in this action programme ensuring cent percent participation, we must critically look at certain weakness that has emerged in our functioning to avoid the sliding back of our organisational strength.

Despite our best efforts this time we could not maintain the organisational unity we have built up with the members of the ITGOA, as in a few charges, the ITGOA units did not take part in the Strike. There had been certain mal-propoganda unleashed during our campaigns creating confusion in the minds of our members. The ability of vested interest to create chaos during action is indicative of our losing grip over certain fundamental trade union principles. More than anything, it has indicated our weakness in creating the trade union consciousness. Presently, we are on an agitational path over the inaction of the CBDT in settling the departmental issues and problems. Obviously the said programme ought to have elicited larger participation of our members in these programmes. But we witnessed lesser and lesser number of our members taking part in these demonstrative actions. It has unfortunately gone to demonstrate our weakness rather than strength. It has exhibited our weakness in inculcating the trade Union consciousness amongst our members. Have we not failed to convey to our members that they belong to the working class, who are the most organised segment in the society to lead battles against the present regime which stood for the Corporates. We must note that our members have not fully realized the pernicious impact of the disruption of the unity of the people. Constant interactions with our members at all levels are needed. The stand

we take on contemporary issues has to be properly explained. It was very disturbing to note that some of the issues we have taken up with the authorities for resolution are not appreciated by some of our members. The conflicting interest emerge at the time when we go in for action programme affecting its very capability to create sanctions. Needless to emphasise the need to identify our weakness and take steps to eradicate it in the shortest possible time.

The dangerous impact of the neo-liberal policies, its capacity to accentuate inequality and exploitation and the ever-growing incapacity to create jobs, the suppression of wages through contractorization etc. had been the main thrust of the campaign program in the last several years. We must realize the weakness in our campaign and our capacity to carry conviction with our members when the proponents of these policies are elected to govern this country in successive elections. This must agitate our minds to enable us to take corrective actions as quickly as possible and thereby strengthen the internal strengths of our organisation, ITEF.

On the 68th founding day of our Federation I once again convey my greetings to all of you with a pledge to inculcate the trade union consciousness amongst all our members and preserve our unity in all action programmes.

With greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/
(Ravindran B Nair)
President