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**Swarna Bharat Party asks the Modi Government to abolish labour laws**

Mr Sanjeev Sabhlok, a professional economist and Overseas Cooordinator for Swarna Bharat Party, called upon the Modi government to abolish most labour laws, including minimum wage laws, laws restricting hiring and firing of labour and laws that set employment conditions, such as the *Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017*.

Mr Modi lied to Indians when he spoke about “minimum government, maximum governance”. Immediately upon coming to power, he has dramatically expanded the remit of government in every field.

The expansion of maternity leave to 26 weeks (for the first two children) for women who work in any establishment with more than ten employees has been a particularly damaging intervention. In a country with chronically high unemployment, this Tughlaquesque provision is going to put many young women out of jobs, depriving them of the opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

Mr Sabhlok emphasised that SBP is not against longer maternity leave. But this is a matter purely between employers and employees. Indeed, across the world, many companies voluntarily choose to implement strong maternity leave policies in order to attract and retain top female talent.

On the other hand, most jobs only require low level skills. For such jobs, no employer can afford to pay half a year’s wages without any work. They will necessarily reject young women and hire male labour, instead. Or they will pay all women employees less. Moreover, we know that government inspectors’ bribe demands will increase.

The government must get out of the way and leave the people of India free to agree to their own wage bargains and other labour conditions as grown up adults. The only function a government has in relation to private employment contracts is to ensure strong enforcement of these contracts through the judiciary. A government has no business to set the terms of these contracts.

Mr Sabhlok said that the Modi government’s focus should be only on one thing: on the urgently needed governance reforms to provide basic rule of law, security and justice – as detailed in SBP’s manifesto. He regretted that Mr Modi is even more wedded than his predecessors to the failed ideology of socialism and big government.

**Notes for Editors**

SBP is India’s only liberal party, committed to defending liberty and promoting prosperity.

**Contact:**

Rahul Pandit (Hyderabad) National Working President, +91 9703425422

Sanjay Sonawani (Pune), +91 9860991205

Sanjeev Sabhlok (Melbourne), sabhlok@gmail.com