

## **The Question of Minimum Wage.**

Suppose, we want to bat like Sachin Tendulkar. Apart from his talent, we may look at how he plays, how he trained, how much time and effort it took him to be what he is. Essentially, we learn from the player, his development and experiences.

Similarly, we plan to be a developed nation. In this respect, let us look at a developed nation – United States of America. Various issues catch my attention, but it is incomprehensible for me to give justice to each in one article. Over years, I have learnt that it is fine to start with something what we understand or we think we may have a better chance at understanding it. Thus, I am starting with a reflection over one small area related to nutrition and health of Indians.

Often we see that people in India work on measly wages, which are not enough to provide good nutrition to a person. I realize that in US, it does not happen. Given that a person is employed, he can at least eat a good meal. Why? Because, laws in US force “a minimum wage” to be paid to that person.

I know that we can all crib about lawlessness in India and kill the issue. Proper implementation may be an issue, but if we never pay any heed to it, how will we ever change things. Thus, today I want to raise the following questions. How can a minimum wage be provided to every worker in India? And, how much this minimum wage should be?

I do not have the answers yet, but I want all of us to think about it. I know that there may be thousand things, which are linked together. Income may not be directly related to nutrition and health. Health may also depend on how families choose to spend the money they earn. I do not know. We may have economists amongst us who may know better and who may want to write on the issue. All I know is that every worker deserves a standardized minimum wage, working below which should be considered exploitation.

Let us make our government aware of this. Let us make our people aware of this. Let us ask for this change, which will at least provide enough resources for proper nutrition to every working Indian.

*Silent Change, February 5, 2007*

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