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MEDIA RELEASE

Teachers' salary increment a colossal disaster

The teaching fraternity has been exploited and held to ransom by the current Government, which has forced them to enter into discriminatory contracts under the pretext of offering them salary increases.

Principals, Vice Principals, Heads of Department (HOD), Head Teachers, Assistant Head Teachers and other post holders have been demoted to a lower rank and then offered acting appointments to the substantive positions they previously held.

Teachers who held substantive positions have been first appointed to a rank lower than the position they were holding, and then given a second contract offering them an acting contract to the position they held substantially and an acting salary of 95% of the substantive salary.

We have cited contracts of several teachers to confirm the exploitation and discriminatory nature of the contract.

In one case a principal was first offered the contract of a vice principal. The person has been holding the position of Principal prior to this ill-conceived reform. On the same day, the person was given another contract of Acting Principal of 95% of the increased salary.

In another case a teacher holding the position of HOD (Head of Department) was first offered the contract of Assistant Teacher. On the same day, the person was offered an Acting HOD Contract at a salary of 95% of the new salary.

All correspondence should be addressed to the general secretary

Furthermore, teachers who have been in the service for over 25 years have been given a meagre pay rise of 6.4 percent and the same as teachers with far less experience because they do not hold a Diploma. The teachers are furious because their experience counts for nothing.

Worse of all, all contracts render meaningless the teachers' employment security and make them totally subservient to Government.

Some of its regressive provisions are: -

- (a) Renewal of the contract is at the absolute discretion of Government
- (b) The Civil Servant irrevocably agrees that non-renewal of the Contract will not give rise to any course of action whatsoever against the Government
- (c) The duration of the Contract expires immediately upon a civil servant reaching the retirement age of 55
- (d) Renewal of the Contract is subject to Government requiring the services of the civil servant and that too if he or she agrees to enter into another contract on mutually agreed terms
- (e) The decision of Government to transfer a civil servant on the existing terms of the Contract to anywhere in Fiji is final
- (f) Government has the right to change or vary the Contract anytime

This discriminatory and exploitative contractual employment that is being forced upon our teachers will not result in a harmonious, unified and productive civil service.

Such draconian contracts are subjugating our teachers and have no place in a genuine democracy.

The two teacher unions must rise and take immediate action to protect their members and prevent this Government from eroding their employment conditions and all teachers must also reject this enforced condition.



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