

Editorial

Imphal, Wednesday, July 20, 2016

The neglected sector Will somebody in the Govt. listen?

Education - an enlightening experience, so says the experts. In our society mired with deep rooted beliefs and traditions, the one means of lifting the veil of superstition and bringing the public to their senses turns out to be enlightening the common people to the realities of the present world. The role of education cannot be emphasized enough in bringing about a change in the mindset of the people. Yet, and as we have been experiencing it, the critical role of education has been missing, leading to a slow progression and a hindrance to the fast paced race for development in the present world. In a welcome move by the present minister who is in charge of education, various changes have been mooted- and many have been implemented. Yet the fact remains that the system is still in need of a holistic overhaul- not so much for want of regulations as it is for want of an effective implementation of the various policies and programs drawn up to boost the quality of education being dispensed at present in the state. In what can be termed as a mass malpractice of reformation, the present practice of substituting local individuals in connivance with the appointed teachers to take their place in various far flung places is becoming an accepted way of escaping the harsh realities of the actual hardships that comes with the trade. An undeniable fact that has been conveniently overlooked- the end result felt only by the students. Promises have been made to make state run educational institutions an ideal place of study- a brave attempt to challenge the monopoly of private educational institutions. Though the move is a welcome one considering the exorbitant fees being levied by these private educational institutions of which there has been such a hue and cry about, the fact remains that almost every parent or guardian still prefers to enroll their wards in such private schools. Isn't it then reason enough for the state agencies and concerned authorities to delve deeper into the matter to find out the reason behind all these fiascos? What has the so called "model schools" become? What are the checks and balances that have been put in place to ensure such model schools perform to their optimum? How are the teachers, selected after much hype and controversies performing? Or are those selected teachers really performing their entrusted duties to the best of their abilities? Questions only those in the know of things can give a definitive answer to. Yet the undeniable results showed otherwise. It is time to question the facts and admit the lapses to bring about the desired result. The open secret of the surrogate teachers needs to be busted in time to prevent the decaying rot in the education system in the state. The media is ready- is the Government ready to take the fall?

ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE LOST

I have lost my original Certificate for Class -X examination bearing Roll No. 25667 of 1989, conducted by Board of Secondary Education Manipur (BOSEM) on the way between Chanchipur to Singjamei on 17-07-2016.

Finders are requested to hand over the same to the undersigned.

Sd/-
Seram Neken Singh

MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT NOTIFICATION

Imphal, the 18th July, 2016

No. 1/3(6)/2014-LA(E)/Rctt.: It is hereby informed that the shorthand & speed test (Computer Typing) for direct recruitment to the post of Reporter Grade-III on regular basis in the Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat will be held from 22-07-2016 to 23-07-2017 at 11 AM in the Reporters' Room of the Assembly Secretariat.

Therefore, eligible candidates whose names are displayed on the notice board of the Assembly Secretariat are hereby informed to collect admit card for the above tests from the MGEL Section, 2nd floor of the Annex Building of the Assembly Secretariat without fail.

Sd/-
(G. Tapankumar Sharma)
Deputy Secretary (Admn),
Manipur Legislative Assembly

IT Bill/20-07-2016

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Power Packed Reforms Get Global Recognition

By: Anupama Airy

Considered to be the backbone of any economy, India's power sector has never witnessed reforms as it has in the past two years. Not that reforms in the power sector were not talked about in the past but they somehow failed to take flight and remained just that- a collection of perfectly placed words on paper. May 26, 2014- Narendra Modi led NDA government assumed charge and that was the last day of silence in the power corridors. Ever since, the Indian power sector has been bustling with activity. Within days of new government taking over, Piyush Goyal the new Power Minister announced a host of flagship schemes that eventually have changed the face of India's power sector.

Global Agencies Laud Power Reforms

Today, the reforms in the power sector are being recognised by global agencies be it the World Bank or the ADB or for that matter international rating agencies like the Standard & Poor (S&P) or Fitch. During a recent visit, the group president of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim congratulated the government for its reform initiatives and announced over \$one billion support for India's solar power projects.

Two years back the power sector was an area of top concern with the domestic as well as international funding and rating agencies. Yet here we are two years later, talking about the very same power sector and those very same agencies but with a difference. A difference of leadership and vision. One, which has replaced all questions and concerns with an optimistic outlook.

However this task wasn't easy. It took a great deal of new reforms and initiatives which is what we must examine in detail.

Until 2014, the country's entire focus was on power generation without similar work being done on

the transmission and distribution side. And even with the focus on generation, fuel scarcity — both coal and gas — led to investments and projects getting stranded and bank finances getting stuck. Banks were unwilling to lend and investors did not want to invest in the power sector. Depleting financial health of state distribution companies resulted in poor offtake of power thus leading to massive power outages across the country. To put it simply, the power sector was in chaos.

When the NDA government assumed power, it came to terms with the actual hay wire state of the power sector. However, the Power ministry soon swung into action and announced sure shot initiatives to stabilise the tumbling power sector. The first such initiatives, was announcing a few flagship programs like the 24x7 Power For All plan. The road wasn't smooth. The first hurdle came their way when they realised that most of India's state distribution companies (DISCOMS) that purchase electricity from generators, were facing massive financial issues and were unable to either procure sufficient power for the customers they serve or upgrade their age old distribution networks that needed modernisation.

The outstanding debt of Discoms was estimated to have increased from Rs 2.4 lakh crore in 2011-12 to about Rs 4.3 lakh crore in 2014-15, with interest rates up to 14-15%. It was also estimated that DISCOMS suffer a loss of over Rs 60,000 crore every year. Therefore, for the 24x7 affordable 'Power for All' mission to reach its potential, the first and foremost task was to set right these DISCOMS — identified as the weakest link in the entire power value chain.

At the same time, it was also realised that with power being a concurrent subject, no scheme could be forced upon any State and had to be an optional one. But at the same time if

it is made lucrative enough, it will see active participation of the States.

This led to the launch of UDAY or the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana for the financial and operational turnaround of the State Distribution Companies in November 2015. UDAY provides the ailing Discoms with a clear roadmap and opportunity to become profitable in the next 3 years.

Presently, despite the scheme being an optional one, as many as 20 States have given their consent to join of which, 13 States, viz, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab, Bihar, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh have already signed MOUs with the Central Government.

In the year 2015-16, Bonds worth Rs. 99,541 crore were floated by the participating States to clear 50% of the outstanding debt of States and outstanding CPSU dues in Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir. Further, DISCOM Bonds worth Rs. 11,524 crore were floated. In the year 2016-17, Bonds worth Rs. 48,391 crore have been floated by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

With this, financially and operationally healthy DISCOMS would be in a position to supply more power. Higher demand for power would mean lesser cost per unit of electricity which would again mean lesser cost per unit of electricity to the consumers.

While it will take a while to witness the results of the UDAY scheme, the government is simultaneously seen fixing fuel shortages to revive the stranded gas-based plants. Banks have also been approached to pitch in towards the equity of these plants to revive them.

Energy Efficiency Measures

The story of reforms initiated by the government would be incomplete if one did not touch upon the success of energy efficiency measures. As energy saved is energy generated, the unassuming strides that have been made by this government through energy efficiency measures is anybody's guess.

The state-owned Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) that did around 6 lakh LED bulbs a year is today doing close to Rs 8 lakh bulbs a day—a record of sorts by any standards. 'Affordable LEDs for

All' programme, being led by EESL, involves replacement of incandescent lamps/CFL bulbs with LED bulbs to save energy and reduce the bills of customers.

Empowering Rural Areas

Another innovative scheme of this government has been the distribution of SIM enabled mobile phone connected smart energy efficient agricultural pumps to farmers and replacing the age old agricultural pumps.

These smart agri pumps give Indian farmers the advantage to sit in the comfort of their homes and operate pumps through mobile phones. Distribution of energy efficient fans, tube lights and Air conditioners are some other initiatives by EESL.

Empowering its people especially those staying in the rural belts has been recognised as the topmost priority by the Prime Minister. In his address to nation on Independence Day, PM announced a plan to electrify the remaining 18,452 unelectrified villages of India within 1000 days i.e. by 01st May, 2018. Power Ministry has decided to take this project on mission mode and put in place a strategy for electrification of villages almost a year ahead of the deadline set by the PM.

Today, 8,681 villages have already been electrified till date (3rd July, 2016) and out of remaining 9,771 villages, 479 villages are uninhabited, 6,241 villages are to be electrified through grid, 2,727 villages to be electrified through off-grid where grid solutions are out of reach due to geographical barriers and 324 villages are to be electrified by State Govt own. In order to expedite the progress further, a close monitoring is being done through Gram Viduyt Abhiyanta (GVA) and various actions are also being taken with the state Discom, identifying the villages where milestone progress are delayed.

The ideas, initiatives and promises of the government seemed too good to be true in the beginning but as time as has gone by these dreams have transformed into reality and if this is the way things are looking now, this author can only imagine what the final outcome would be and all she wants to say is, "I like what I see".

*Anupama Airy is a senior freelance journalist and a regular contributor of Articles on Energy Sector.
(A PIB Feature)

National & International News

No Newspapers for 6th Day, owners demand assurance from Govt.

Courtesy NDTV

Srinagar, July 20: Local newspapers in curfew-bound Kashmir Valley failed to hit the stands for the sixth consecutive day today, even as the state government said there were no restrictions on their printing and publishing.

No local newspaper - whether English, Urdu or Kashmiri - was available in the Valley as the newspaper owners decided not to publish them after the alleged clampdown by the government on Friday night and demanded that the government must "own the ban" and issue a statement guaranteeing that media operations will not be hampered in any way.

The newspaper owners claimed that police raided their printing facilities and seized newspapers, plates and even detained the printing staff last week.

Following the police action, a meeting of Kashmir-based newspaper editors, printers and publishers, was held on Saturday at Press Colony in which the issue was discussed. The journalists also held a protest against the government action, terming it as an attack on the freedom of press and stopped their publications.

However, yesterday, the government said there said there were no restrictions on printing and publishing of newspapers. "The District Magistrates of Srinagar and Budgam have clarified that there are no restrictions on printing and

publishing of newspapers in the districts," an official spokesman said here yesterday.

A statement issued by the owners and editors of Srinagar-based newspapers yesterday said since the government has "not changed its press emergency", the editors and the owners of the newspapers regret that it may not be possible to resume the publication of newspapers.

"On Monday, Chief Minister's Adviser Amitabh Mattoo approached us insisting that it was a mistake for which he apologized. "At the same time, however, the state government resorted to propaganda blitzkrieg insisting that there was no ban. They used all the available media to hit the credibility of the newspapers that have a history of not ceasing publication even when their members were killed," the statement said.

It said the government must "own the ban" and issue a statement guaranteeing that "media operations are not being hampered from the movement of staff, to newsgathering, printing and the distribution of the newspapers". "We have not heard anything from anybody in the government since then. It indicates that the government has not changed its press emergency," the statement said.

The newspaper editors and owners said "we will review the progress today (Wednesday)," they said.

Reservation for SC/ST and OBC

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Article 16(4) of the Constitution enables provision of reservation to Backward Class of citizens, who are not adequately represented in the State. Reservation is provided to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) through executive instructions issued from time to time, which has force of law, as held by the Supreme Court in Indra Sawhney case.

As per extant instructions, reservation is provided to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes at the rate of 15%, 7.5% and 27%, respectively, in case of direct recruitment on all-India basis by open competition. In case of direct recruitment on all-India basis otherwise than by open competition, the percentage fixed is 16.66%, 7.5% and 25.84%, respectively.

As per information received from 71 Ministries/Departments, the representation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in the posts and services under the Central Government as on 01.01.2014 is 17.35%, 8.38% and 19.28%, respectively. While the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is as per the prescribed percentage, the representation of Other Backward Classes is less than the prescribed percentage due to the following reasons:-

- (i) Reservation for Other Backward Classes started only from the year 1993.
- (ii) OBC candidates who are appointed upto 1993, that is before introduction of reservation for OBCs, are not included for counting their representation;
- (iii) There is generally a time gap between occurrence of vacancies and filling up such vacancies, as recruitment is a time consuming process. Based on recommendations of a Committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, time bound action plan for filling up backlog reserved vacancies has been intimated to all concerned Departments/Ministries on 20.11.2014 for filling up such vacancies by August 2016. The Action Plan includes study of reasons for non-filling of backlog reserved vacancies, review of prescribed standards, if required; conducting Special Recruitment Drive and conducting pre-recruitment training programmes.

This was stated by the Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Jitendra Singh in a written reply to a question by Shri Laxmi Narayan Yadav and Shri Harishchandra Chavan in the Lok Sabha today.