

## **An open appeal to electricity consumers/residents**

Respected residents of Chandigarh,

We all know that electricity is not a luxury item. Electricity is a basic necessity for everyone in today's time. There is an urgent need for the government/administration to provide electricity at affordable rates to make agriculture, drinking water, and health facilities available at affordable rates. If electricity is privatised, it will be out of reach of the common man. Corporate houses will loot people by charging them exorbitant rates. In our country where electricity is being supplied by private companies, the electricity rates are skyrocketing. The Chandigarh electricity department is earning a profit of about Rs 1000 crore for the last 5 years, even after providing round-the-clock uninterrupted electricity at the cheapest rates in our country. Yet it is being sold today by the Chandigarh Administration and the Government. Not only this, the company to which the government is going to hand over the electricity of Chandigarh is the most expensive seller of electricity in the country.

### **Astonishing facts of Chandigarh Electricity Department**

- ❖ When the electricity department was formed there were 1 lakh 10 thousand connections and 2200 employees. Today there are 2.50 lakh connections and there are about 600 permanent employees and 450 employees are working under the contract system.
- ❖ Despite the shortage of power department staff, the electricity department received "Best Utility" award from all Union Territories for best performance for the last five years.
- ❖ Chandigarh Electricity Department has not increased the rates for five years. Despite providing the cheapest electricity in the country, it has made a profit of about Rs 1000 crore in the last five years.
- ❖ The machinery and assets of the power department are worth around Rs 20,000 to 25,000 crore. The government is selling it for Rs. 871 crores and giving the land on lease at Rs 1 per month. This is a direct robbery of public property.
- ❖ The rate charged by the private company, which is buying the electricity department, is the most expensive in the country. The rate in Chandigarh is likely to increase manifold even compared with their present rate.

### **Rate Slabs**

The difference in rates of Chandigarh Electricity Department and Calcutta Company (Company which is buying the Chandigarh Electricity Department):

| <b>Electricity Department Chandigarh Household Rates</b> | <b>Company's Calcutta Domestic Rates</b>  |
|--|---|
| 0-300 units – Rs 2.50                                    | First 25 units – Rs 4.89, Next 35 units – Rs 5.40, Next 40 units – Rs 6.41, Next 50 units – Rs 7.16 |
| 301-800 units – Rs 4.25                                  | Next 150 units – Rs 7.33  |
| Above 800 units – Rs 4.65                                | Above 300 units – Rs 8.92   |
| Department's two-month rates                             | Company's prepaid rates   |

It may also be mentioned here that the government has sold the electricity department to private hands in violation of the Electricity Act 2003 and the law. With this move of the administration, the common man will get electricity at an expensive rate, while it will be out of reach of the poor. If we still do not take action then we will repent for the rest of our life. The Chandigarh administration and the government are going to push the people of Chandigarh towards slavery, which we will have to strongly oppose.

In protest against the decision of the administration to privatise Chandigarh Electricity Department, the electricity workers will be on strike for three days (72 hours) from February 22. There was a massive rally organised by the residents of Chandigarh in collaboration with UT Powermen Union, including all political, religious, and social organizations of Chandigarh, in front of Parade Ground, Sector 7, on February 5. A memorandum will also be submitted to the Hon'ble Governor and Administrator of Chandigarh. The people of Chandigarh should participate in this rally in large numbers so that they can raise their voice against this suppression by the administration and can reverse this decision of the government.

**Appeal by All Members of UT Powermen Union, Chandigarh**