

AGAINST CORPORATIZATION OF POSTAL SERVICES

At present in the name of National Monetization Pipeline Policy, the Govt. of India has been running with privatization spree. Naturally as like as other Central Governments Departments, presently Postal Department has been facing serious threat from the Govt.

Outsourcing and privatization of Postal services is not a new phenomenon. Mainly after introduction of new economic policies introduced in 1991, as like as many service sectors Govt. of India started outsourcing, shrinking and thereby privatization of Postal services, be in Post Offices, RMS/MMS offices everywhere. Corporate plan for India Post, Introduction of Franchise out lets were basically aimed at outsourcing and corporatization and thereby privatization of Postal services and allowing the private couriers legally in postal services. National Postal Policy 2012 was nothing but a road map to PPP (Public Private Partnership) model with final intention to privatization.

Aggressive role of the present Central Government

In 2014, within 3 months of its coming to power the NDA Govt. has appointed the high-level Task force Committee headed by Shri T. S. R. Subramanian, Retired Cabinet Secretary to the Govt. of India. The report submitted to the Govt. by the **“Task Force on Leveraging the Post office Network”** was nothing but a blue print for corporatization and eventual privatization of different services as below.

Dak Mitra/Common Service Centre (CSC)/Centralized Delivery System/Road Transport Networks - Road map to corporatization

The Department used the corona pandemic as an opportunity and announced ‘Dak Mitra’ in middle of 2020. The proposal circulated is to subsume all existing failed franchises outlet scheme. Again the Department is moving fast with booking of Speed Post Parcel & Registered Parcel by CSC VLEs (Village Level Entrepreneurs) using the CSC’s Digital Seva Portal. This admits that despite the existence of 1-55 Lakhs of post offices, there are further need of post offices mainly in growing area. The correct way and methodology of meeting effectively such demand is opening of new Post offices and certainly not through franchise. Sudden growth of franchise will only eat into the income of the Department and in no way going to be helpful for the finances of the Department.

Apart from the above, introduction of Centralized Delivery System of Postal articles in place of all delivery sub offices is also a basic reason for delayed delivery. Moreover, in case of transmission of mails the Department taking advantage of corona and disruption of express trains etc. has been switching over from Railway transit section to Road Transport Network System. This is also a big reason for delayed delivery of Postal articles for which common members are losing faith on Postal Department.

Attack on Small Savings/PLI

The department functions as the outlet of small savings scheme of the Govt. of India through its vastly spread network at every corner of the country, with about 30 crore accounts and nearly Rs.10 lakh Crore outstanding balance (Annual Report for the F. Y. 2021-22). The post office small savings scheme has become a house-hold name, face of the department and has established a bond of trust between the department and the low to middle income group citizens of our country. Moreover, nearly 50% of its revenue, DoP has been earning from POSB. But the department is inclined and more focused to develop the infrastructure of IPPB Ltd. In last budget announcement also, it has made clear that the intention of the Govt. and the department is to strengthen the IPPB, not the P. O. Small savings sector.

Finally our all apprehensions come true when very recent the Govt. has announced its key direction that Core Postal Operation should be the domain of Dept. of Posts and rests of operations should be merged with IPPB. It also mentioned that in financial sectors there will be no dual structure and only single IPPB structure to be used for banking, insurance and other financial needs. It is learnt that on 15th August 2022, the Prime Minister of India will announce migration of POSB A/Cs to IPPB Ltd. Already they have ordered DoP staff to work in IPPB. Actually, these are disastrous steps which will finally legalize the grip of corporate over the huge amount of public money in POSB and finish the

future of POSB and also the security of huge amount of public money as invested in POSB since its introduction. It is surprising to note that how Department can take such unilateral decision without any consultation with staff side and also without reading the mind set of our investors/stake holders. People have been investing their hard earned money in POSB with the understanding that their money is safe under govt's custody. But this will surely come to an end, when there will be only IPPB Ltd. for banking, insurance and other financial services. Not only the postal employees but also our customers, pensioners and small saving agents will be left as worst victims.

Contractual recruitment against permanent post

Already on 21 Oct'2021, E-tenders on behalf of the President of India have been floated allowing youths to work as MTS in Delivery Post offices on outsourcing basis against Permanent Posts. The SSPOs, New Delhi Central Division, The SSPOs, Jodhpur and The Manager, Beliaghata, Kolkata MMS already issued consequent notification and it is expected to spread everywhere. Without permanent recruitment, now the Department will purchase labour at cheaper rate and shouldering no responsibility of the outsourced employees. Even after 16 days' successful strike in 2019 across the country, the Department has not yet implemented the positive recommendations of Kamalesh Chandra Committee Report in case of GDS. Thousands and thousands of Daily rated majdoor are working in Postal Department mainly in RMS/MMS. But their payment of proper wages, job security in time all are either delayed or under questions.

Attack on Trade Union Rights

Again now Department, issuing unjust and unreasonable circular is trying to curb our trade union rights. They are also trying to poke their noses into the business of unions so that union leaders will play at their hands and support the govt. policies.

Organisational Stand

In these circumstances Federal Executive meeting of NFPE has been held on 16.06.2022 which approved any kind of trade union action including strike prior to migration from POSB to IPPB. On 3rd July-2022 there is a meeting with other recognized Federation (FNPO). In that meeting campaign programme as well as token strike programme during 1st half of August is expected. We have to carry forward intensive campaign amongst the employees, common men including pensioners/small saving agents across the country. Guidance of CITU is also solicited.

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