

Join the campaign against privatisation of electricity!

Appeal issued by Maharashtra Rajya Veej Karmachari, Abhiyanta, Adhikari Sangharsh Samiti, Maharashtra State Bank Employees Federation, Bharatiya Mahila Federation (Thane Samiti) and Kamgar Ekta Committee

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The license to Adani for parallel power distribution in Maharashtra, if granted, as well as the proposed Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022 (EAB), if passed will both adversely affect you, because:

- **Electricity will become more expensive. Small consumers and those in remote areas will get neglected, affecting crores of people.**
- **Food prices will go up as crores of farmers will stop getting subsidised power.**
- **Many of us will get inflated power bills, which we will be asked to pay first or else they will disconnect the power.**
- **The burden of providing electricity to farmers, small and remote consumers, public water supply and lighting and socially necessary areas and sections of people will be borne by only the Discoms (government owned distribution companies) who will need to be funded through taxes.**
- **A vast distribution network for electricity has been created using people's money; our money will now be used to enrich big corporates. They will make profit without making any investment and private monopolies will be created.**
- **As per the new law there will be no public grievances redressal mechanism and there will be no option but to go to the court.**

Dear Consumers,

People of Bhiwandi have been suffering ever since power distribution has been handed over to the private company Torrent. There is tremendous opposition and dissatisfaction among consumers against Calcutta Electrical and Torrent that supply to Malegaon and Mumbra.

Adani Power has recently applied for license to distribute power in Mulund, Bhandup, Thane city, Navi Mumbai, Kharghar, Taloja and Uran. It is understood that Torrent has made a similar application for Pune and Nagpur and Tata Power for Vasai-Virar. In all these areas power is currently distributed only by the government owned Mahavitaran.

The government claims that the entry of a private distributor in competition with Mahavitaran will give the choice to consumers to select the distributor they like and that competition will make electricity cheaper. However, in Mumbai where both Tata and Adani distribute power the customers have no choice and the rates are among the highest in the country. The claim about the choice has been made only to win people's support for giving distribution licence to private companies.

A private company is driven solely by profit. Private companies will focus only on large profitable consumers and leave small, loss-making consumers and consumers in remote areas, which are difficult to serve to Mahavitaran. That is why areas chosen by private companies are highly urban, commercial, industrial and profitable.

In Nagpur, Aurangabad, Jalgaon and in many other places all over the country, private companies ran away when they did not make the expected profits. Government Discoms had to take them back at the cost of hundreds of crores of rupees. All over the country it is the experience that after calamities like floods, cyclones, big accidents, covid, etc., Discom workers promptly restore power whereas private companies run away.

Allowing more distributors is a part of the plan to hand over the thousands of crores worth distribution network of Mahavitaran built over the. Once all large and profitable consumers are taken away by private distributor, Mahavitaran will be left with only small consumers and consumers who today are eligible for subsidised electricity. Soon the losses of Mahavitaran will soar up and will have to be made up by levying more tax on people. After some time, we will be told that the government cannot continue to bear the losses of Mahavitaran so it must be privatised. Assets worth thousands of crores of rupees, built with public money, will then be sold at a throw away price to big corporates like Adani, Tata, Torrent, Jindal, etc.

The central government has proposed a new Bill, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022 (EAB). It is claimed that the Bill is for giving a choice to consumers to select an electricity distributor capable of providing cheaper and more reliable power supply. However, the real aim of the Bill is to privatise electricity distribution. If the EAB is passed, Mahavitaran will necessarily have to offer its existing infrastructure to all private licensees to distribute power anywhere in Maharashtra. Private companies will have to make no investment to build infrastructure. They will use the Mahavitaran infrastructure itself to take away all its existing large, profitable consumers. How can that be called competition? It will make all government-owned power distribution companies sick in due course. Electricity distribution will become monopoly of a few private companies who would then have no restraint on exploiting consumers. This is the reason why electricity workers all over the country are opposing the Bill.

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022 and the proposal for parallel licensing are against the interests of consumers, workers and the society. Electricity is a basic necessity today. It must be made available to everyone at affordable rates just as water and other necessities should be.

Your support and participation are crucial to stop these anti-people, anti-worker proposals.

Do spread this message among all your relatives and friends!

For further information, visit aifap.org.in (the website of the All India Forum Against Privatisation, AIFAP)