

30th April, NCCOEEE's Foundation Day

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Revolutionary Greetings to all on 30th April'2024, the auspicious 25th Foundation Day of the National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers (NCCOEEE).

The National Federations, Trade Unions & Associations associated with power Sector of the country namely, All India Federation of Electricity Employees(AIFEE), Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI), All India Power Engineers Federation(AIPEF), All India Federation Of Diploma Power Engineer(AIFOPDE), Akhil Bhartiya Vidyut Mazdoor Sangh (ABVMS), Indian National Electricity Workers Federation (INEWF), National Working Group on Power Sectors (NWGPS), Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat (HMKP), All India Powermen's Federation (AIPF) & others had taken part in the National Convention held at Jaipur (Rajasthan) on 30th April, 2000 & formed the umbrella organization, NCCOEEE to fight against the Draft Electricity Bill-2000 vis-a-vis anti-people power Policy.

On this auspicious day, let us pay homage & tributes to the founder national stalwarts, namely Late Com. A B Bardhan, Com E Balanandan, Com, D Janakiraman, Com Chakradhar Prasad Singh, Er H N Singh & many others who are no more but their thoughts are always with us as pioneers of the joint movement in Electricity Sector & Working Class struggle. Let us also express our gratitude to the founder leaders namely Shailendrs Dubeyji, Mohan Sharmaji, B D Pandey, Akhtar Hussain, K O Habeeb, S Dev Roye, P N Chowdhury, K Ashok Rao, K C Naikwadi, Girish Pandey, S N Deshpande, Kuldip Singh, Mukund Gore & many others who are still with us & fighting against privatisation of power sector & anti-people power policy.

It is worthy to mention here that, adopting the New Economic Policies since 1991-92, the Government of India had started Power Sectors Reforms in the country to pave the way of privatisation. Some State Electricity Boards had already been unbundled, enacting Bills at their own Legislative

Assembly. Odissa was the first State to undertake reforms & unbundling. OSEB new entities were privatised but they were not successful. Dabhol power project of Enron caused bankruptcy of MSEB.

GOI had not drawn any lessons from the disastrous failure & adverse affect of so-called reforms. UP Govt passed the Electricity Reforms Act in 1999 to undertake the reforms of UPSEB against which electricity employees and engineers of UP unitedly had been fighting and ultimately called for continuous strike from 14th January, 2000 which was also supported by the all electricity employees federations. Extending solidarity, they observed one day countrywide electricity strike, creating history which also inspired to form a joint forum.

Despite strong opposition, GOI had been pursuing the new Electricity Bill-2000, repealing Electricity Supply Act-1948. Late P R Kumarmangalam, the than Power Minister, placed the Draft Electricity Bill-2000 in parliament on 26th Feb, 2000 for Reforms & Reorganisation of SEBs of the country to pave the way of privatisation.

GOI had not taken any lessons from the disastrous failure of unbundling of Orissa & Enron Episode of Dabhol project & Reforms SEBs. So it was felt necessary to build a countrywide united movement of electricity employees & engineers to defeat the move of the Centre. EEFI in its 4th National Conference held at Chandigarh from 7-9 April, 2000 resolved to take the responsibility to organise a National Convention to form a united front to give effective resistance to the new power policy vis a-vis power sector reforms. At the initiative of EEFI, its affiliates in Rajasthan organised the National Convention at Jaipur. The Convention resolved to carry out united struggle against the anti-people power policy and constituted the National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers with its 11 constituents of national level Federations headed by Convener Com. A Bardhan. It may be worthy to be mentioned here that Com B S Meel GS, EEFI from Jaipur took the pain to coordinate all the National Federations to come to gather at Jaipur for successful convention.

The Convention resolved to hold Regional Conventions in Bangalore, Patiala, Kolkata, Chennai in May-June & hold mass rallies in all state capitals in the July and then the historic March to the Parliament on 9th August, 2000, wherein around 50,000 electricity employees & engineers gathered & called for All India Electricity Strike on 12th December, 2000 where more than 5 lakhs electricity employees & engineers took part in the countrywide strike which is also a milestone after independence. Thus the beginning of the struggle by NCCOEEE took place. The GOI had to step down due to the mass movement of NCCOEE&E & send the Bill to the Standing committee of the parliament on Power.

It was delayed for more than three years due to strong opposition. After so many corrections, amendments of the Draft, the Bill was passed by NDA-I government & the Electricity Act-2003 was enacted on 10th June, 2003.

Now, GOI has been pursuing for amendment of the Electricity Act-2003 since October 2013 and three attempts in 2014 ,2016 & 2018 were made but in vain. Then tactfully the government made the fourth attempt made on 17th April 2020 during Covid-19 pandemic & the nationwide lockdown.

The Electricity Amendment Bill-2020 was vehemently opposed by 13 States and could not be passed. But Finance Minister through the Annual Financial Budget 2021-2022 announced Electricity Amendment Bill-2021 which was not placed in the public domain for the comments of its stake holders. Still Minister of power tried to table it in the last sessions of the Parliament.

Even without Passing the EA Bill2021 GOI has been pursuing the privatisation of power sectors of UTs under the name of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. In the mean time a strong joint struggle was organised throughout the country against this. Meanwhile MOP prepared the Electricity Amendment Bill-2022, modifying some provisions of earlier EAB-2021, even violating the Constitution but for the interest of Corporates. The Power Minister placed the EAB-2022 in the Parliament very tactfully on 8th August last day of Session, which was referred to the Standing Committee of Power for examination.

NCCOEEE organised Bijlee Kranti Yatra on 23rd November 2023 at Jantar

Mantar, New Delhi, with the slogan Save Power Sector - Save India. The Standing Committee asked the comments of the stake-holders but still no discussion was held on it with power sector employees and engineers. But, the Power Minister repeatedly claimed that all the Stake holders have been consulted and supported the Bill. It is apprehended that the Bill may be passed without any discussion with electricity employees, consumers & farmers but by virtue of its majority of the members in the Parliament.

Now it is the call of the hour to fight unitedly by all in & outside the Parliament. Ensure the Right to Electricity as a fundamental right is achieved through Joint struggle. Let us all pledge today on 25th Foundation day of NCCOEEE to fight unitedly in democratic ways till Electricity Amendment Bill-2022 and anti-people power policy is withdrawn.

