

ELECTRICITY EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION OF INDIA

B.T. Ranadive Bhawan, 13A, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi-110 002
Telefax : +91 11 23219670 W : eeficentre.org E : eefederation@gmail.com

President : K O Habeeb E : kohabeeb@gmail.com

General Secretary : Prasanta N Chowdhury
E : prasantaqst@gmail.com

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CIRCULAR

An online meeting of the Working Committee took place on 15th July, 2020 to arrive at suitable decision upon discussion of the agenda as under:

1. National situation and united movement of working class to oppose policy of the Government.
2. Electricity consumers and employees joint Forum and struggle – Electricity Bill 2020 – NCCOEEE
3. Privatisation of Odisha Distribution companies.
4. Energy Workers Struggle on the backdrop of Coal Mines privatisation.

Com K O Habeeb presided over the meeting. 38 members took part in the meeting. Discussion and decisions are given below:

Working committee expressed its serious concern on the grim National situation. Government of India lead by Narendra Modi and its allies has started undeclared war against the workers, peasants and all cross section of poor people. Lock down over a period of 100 days following COVID-19 pandemic, is being abused as veil to cover all their ill motivated action to curb the democratic rights of the workers and people as a whole, achieved through struggle over a century. Conscious and democratic people are in the path of struggle. Working committee appreciably noted almost all EEFI constituents took part in the ongoing struggle. Brief summary of the discussion is appended.

- A. Protest Day, called by NCCOEEE on 1st June to oppose Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was a magnificent show off by all electricity organisations all over the country. Around 20% of total electricity employees and engineers took part at more than 10,000 spots. Consecutive three days' (2-4 July) strike by all the unions and Federations in coal industry to oppose privatisation of coal mines placed a thunderous blow to the brute government. All EEFI affiliates organised solidarity demonstration on 2nd July in all the major workplaces in the states and UTs. Joint declaration in support of the coal strike opposing privatisation to jeopardize energy security of the country was issued by EEFI and Petroleum & Gas Workers Federation of India. Strike was a grand success.
- B. EEFI with all its affiliated and associated organisations took part in the National Protest Day on 3rd July against the anti-people policies of the Government. This Protest Day programme took place all over the country at the call of all central trade unions and industrial federations. Participation of workers and employees within the ambit of lock down was notable. This protest day initiated seriatim planned action against the government to convey Non-cooperation, defiance and resistance.
- C. EEFI decided in Faridabad Working Committee meeting on 9th & 10th February, 2020 to develop wider movement through joint platform of electricity consumers and workers to

oppose Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020. EEFI sought support from CITU to make the united struggle successful. CITU appreciated the concept and issued circular along with EEFI concept note to all the states and federations to extend the movement. EEFI is to prepare a “Talking Point” for campaign by the activists of other organisations. All our affiliated organisations are to take up with state, district and union level activists to develop and organise the forum.

Forthcoming Programmes.

- a. All India protest Day on 16th/17th July 2020 against privatisation of railways – demonstrations programme should be participated by all EEFI affiliated units.
- b. 23rd July Demonstrations to observe all India Demands’ Day focussing on the demands for all sections of poor people pressed into trouble due to lock down will be participated by EEFI constituents. Demands of life support with cash and food and MNREGA along with wages, adequate, accessible and free health care for all to be propagated.
- c. CITU, AIKS and AIAWU have decided to jointly organise massive and militant mobilisation on the 9th August, the day of Quit India movement against British imperialists. Working Committee encouraged and guided electricity employees to take part in this programme en mass.
- d. Working Committee decided to oppose Privatisation of Odisha. Detailed programme will be chalked out in consultation with EEFI state unit as well NCCOEEE.

PLAN OF ACTION TO OPPOSE ENERGY SECTOR PRIVATISATION:

Working Committee reiterated its firm determination to continue ideological struggle of EEFI is for “Right to Energy” for the poor people of our country. Seriatim attack of the Government is being intensified in the arena of energy. Government is destined to “Ease of making Business” with energy resources for its cronies. This is not confined in manufacturing or trading of commodities. Their ultimate goal is energy, as modern society cannot sustain a single moment without energy, importance of energy lies there. Price variation of petroleum product besides huge tax burden upon the petroleum consuming people, Amendment of Electricity Act to make it market driven as well coal sector privatisation is tied in a single chain. Coal Workers’ Strike of three days between 2nd & 4th July last has hit the bull’s eye. Modi himself inaugurated the coal block auction. Brave coal workers issued Strike Notice for consecutive 3 days on the very same day. It is an open challenge to him by the coal workers. After the successful 3 days’ coal strike, ambience to develop such sector specific joint strike in public utility services as well public sector has been triggered. Working Committee discussed pros and cons of resorting to one day’s strike in electricity sector. At the event of our decision to take part in power sector strike, we should go ahead with other Federations of electricity industry itself and other sectors of energy. It is gathered they also are following the same methodology independently. All the federations of coal workers resolved to resort to further one day’s strike on the day of bid opening on Commercial Coal mining auction on 18th August, 2020. Working Committee discussed in details whether we may go ahead to call a strike of the electricity industry.


The Working Committee discussed all the items of forthcoming programme and noted intensity of COVID-19 pandemic has not yet been declined in most of the states. Situation is not conducive to wider struggle of the working class. But nefarious attitude of the government at the centre and its allies in some of the states is also to be taken into consideration. They are taking the opportunity of the global as well national crisis. State proclaimed lock down, when people of the country cannot exercise their democratic rights through public demonstration and mass mobilisation in protest and to oppose the

government's contemptible decision or legislation. In practice, Modi Government and its allies is unscrupulously taking advantage of the critical as well disadvantageous situation for the people of the country. Hence, working class of the country must not tolerate this treachery with the people. Electricity Employees of India, being the advanced part of the working class, should carry forward the struggle.

Accordingly, Working Committee discussed over all aspects and decided to activate its weapon of direct action of strike. Working Committee took note of limited energy resources of the country. Out of all the resources, coal is most essential component for primary energy of the country. As of now, coal supplies 58% of our country's primary energy. Study of Government through NITI, reveals our import dependence for coal is 17% and will be escalating spirally in the forthcoming decades taking into account economic growth, conservative usage pattern and all blooming renewable energy resources. Knowing the consequence in full, Government of India has opened our coal mines for commercial mining through international bidding and the bidders will be given the fullest liberty to export extracted coal anywhere in the globe endangering energy security of the country. Upon this situation, valiant coal workers resorted into strike action. Working Committee underlined that only coal workers alone should not be assigned to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring energy security of the country. EEFI and other sectors are to explore, how electricity workers may be encouraged to come forward to play patriotic role towards resorting to direct action like taking part in one day's strike. EEFI is to go ahead united with other National Federations of energy workers, irrespective of affiliation. Constituents of NCCOEEE will also be consulted before formal notification of strike. Obviously, besides materialising our broad slogan "Right to Energy is human right", EEFI constituents should also raise our immediate call "Scrap Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020".

All EEFI constituents are to shoulder the responsibility to make this strike to be called on a serious patriotic issue. Government is playing clear anti-national role to sell off the India's economic potentiality and resources to indigenous and foreign business houses. This is being done in the high sounding name of "ATMANIRBHARATA" with its hidden agenda of vending the sovereignty of the country.

EEFI constituents are to take up the issue to all its members' as well common electricity workers and employees' as well wider section of the people. They are to be taken into confidence and to be narrated upon which situation, EEFI and other section of electricity as well energy workers are compelled to resolve to strike action. Difficulties in life, livelihood and energy security of the country is to be focussed in its totality. We are to involve Electricity Consumers towards development of united forum of Consumers-employees forum. In order to make the strike successful, when we cannot mobilise in huge number in one place, we are to organise virtual / online meeting in state & District level, local / unit level meetings may be with physical presence. Campaign material issued from EEFI centre in English / Hindi is to be translated into local language and circulation is to be ensured.


(Prasanta N Chowdhury)
General Secretary