



Electricity Employees' Federation of India (EEFI)

JULY 2023

National Working Committee meeting

on 21st – 22nd July 2023 at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Electricity Employees' Federation of India (EEFI), held its two days' National Working Committee meeting on 21st – 22nd July 2023 at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

The meeting took a serious note on development of National and International issues affecting lives and livelihoods of working people and common mass in general. It expressed deepest concern over the lawlessness prevailing in Indian state of Manipur and the negligence of the ruling Central government to bring peace in the land.

The meeting discussed at length about the multi-directional, multidimensional attacks unleashed by the Central government to dismantle, destruct and gift out the Public Electricity Sector to its close corporate partners. The incessant attempts to enact Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022, the unilateral imposition of Regulations and Amendments in Electricity Rules, deliberate push towards corporate controlled High price Electricity market, sudden introduction of Time of Day Tariff (ToD), the privatisation of Public Generation and Transmission Utilities through NMP are some glimpses of these multifarious attacks.

Through Revamped Distribution Sector Schemes, the Central government is imposing the smart meters upon the household consumers through the TOTEX model to provide a market to lakhs of crores rupees to corporate like Adani at the cost of curbing the right to electricity to poor and rural consumers. It is to ensure the entry of private companies into State utilities' network through parallel licensing, to do away with all cross subsidies of agricultural and poor consumers, to rob and manipulate the Real Time Data of every household and thus to destroy Energy sovereignty and Food security of our nation. It is grossly detrimental and against the Federal structure enshrined in our constitution. It will lead to massive de-electrification in our country.

The Central Government is trying to forcefully enforce the scheme on State Governments through blackmail and threat of withdrawal of all existing Central support schemes. These schemes were framed within the provision and direction of the Constitution not at the mercy of BJP/RSS/Modi. EEFI National Working Committee has resolved to take up the issue to en masse people covering all workers, farmers and household consumers through massive campaign, house to house leaflet distribution, public rallies and

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meetings with the support of CITU state and down the level committees, wherever possible. EEFI will approach the other Working Class Organisations, Peasants, Students, Youths, Women and various Social Organizations to build united resistance movement against this scheme. EEFI along with the National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers (NCCOEEE), the largest conglomeration of Electricity Employees & Engineers federation, will build intensified and united movement to resist this onslaught on people of India.



Industry Scenario: Latest Attacks in Power Sector

Smart Electricity Metering Project Smartest Robbery on People!

The BJP government has desperately attempted to pass the Electricity (Amendment) Bill again and again since 2014. If the Electricity Amendment Bill 2022 is passed, then, private distributors will not need own distribution infrastructure for having parallel license for electricity distribution; state DISCOMs will be forced to offer their infrastructure and network to their competitors; the responsibility of incurring expenditure on maintenance, losses and network development will remain with state DISCOMs. On the other hand, private distributors can demand compensation in case of breakdown.

But, there is a technical problem regarding the introduction of parallel licensing through a single network in conventional metering system. If the real-time instantaneous electricity consumption data of different consumers cannot be measured, the companies providing electricity through single line can't settle among themselves that how much of electricity of which company is being utilized by the individual consumers at any specific time duration!

The Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) - the latest attack:

In this situation, the Ministry of Power, GoI under the direction of World Bank (WB) launched the disastrously nefarious smart metering project. This dangerous Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is devised to put the entire burden of the until now cumulative debt of the electricity sector upon the state distribution utilities, state governments and all consumers - which will practically lead to massive de-electrification in rural India. It will segregate the agricultural consumer lines from non-agricultural one, in order to antagonize one against the other and do away with all cross-subsidy. The farmers will run out of pump water and devastatingly it will impact upon the food security of our country.

It will finally make each and every consumer prey to the market forces in regard to their electricity bill. It will throw away the majority section of the electricity sector workers abolishing the jobs permanently. It clearly imposes the huge burden of Rs 2,06,127 crore on the consumers and state DISCOMs. This scheme is a desperate attempt to find alternate routes to implement the draconian clauses of this Electricity (Amendment) Bill without passing it in Parliament.

Why MODI Government is desperate for Prepaid Smart Metering under RDSS:

1. The segregation of agricultural feeders and linking them with private renewable is nothing but to ensure the market for private players, especially Adani!
2. The household level consumer smart metering will enable private players to enter into the existing DISCOM's network through parallel licensing without developing their own network. Already Adani and TATA are trying deliberately for this parallel license in different states!
3. Through this scheme, all cross subsidies will be withdrawn and every consumer will become prey to dynamic high-priced electricity.
4. This imposed burden of prepaid smart metering is to create a consistent market to sell prepaid smart meters of Rs 2 lakh crore or more to India's consumers in every 7-8 years. And the prime bidders for these projects are Genus, Adani and TATA!
5. This scheme is dictating the DISCOMs to impose actual high cost reflecting tariff upon the consumers, so that the private players can also charge whatever rate they want. This is actually to lure the private players that the ground for their sure profit is already ready.
6. It is to snatch away entire financial control of the state DISCOMs to hand over to the smart metering agencies.
7. It will rob the enormous household data of each and every consumer and handover it to electricity market controllers so that they can impose maximum tariff in peak demand hours.
8. It is to identify the cherry picking regions for entry of private distribution companies.
9. It will devise mechanism to impose and manipulate Time of Day Tariff in most profitable way to the private energy corporate controlling market!

Why EEFI is vehemently opposing prepaid smart meters – an Attack to the sovereignty of the people and the Nation:

1. It will lead to massive de-electrification as, if the deposited amount in prepaid meter is finished, even through any fault of the metering company, it will automatically cut the household electric connection.
2. It will rip out all sorts of subsidies especially for the agricultural consumers. The segregation of agricultural feeders is to ensure that. The farmers will be prey to market high pricing and the tariff will rise high.
3. Under TOTEX model, it is a huge burden over the consumers and the DISCOMs.
4. It will throw away lakhs of workers working in meter reading, billing and related jobs; almost 1/3rd of DISCOM employees will be redundant in the first blow!
5. It will pave the technical way for intrusion of private corporate in DISCOM's established network through parallel licensing. It will make the pick and choose of most profitable regions easier. Obviously, in due course, it will make state DISCOMs severely vulnerable in financial parameters and will lead to liquidation or taking over of these by private companies.
6. For last one decade, the Central government is trying to withdraw all kind of regulatory mechanism in regard to fixing the tariff of the electricity. Now, the ceiling of per unit tariff has been enhanced up to Rs 50! The smart metering will establish a technical infrastructure to push the consumers towards open electricity market.
7. It will handover gigantic volume of individual as well as cluster data to international market players so that they can manipulate the market to fix high demand driven Time of Day Tariff.
8. The state DISCOMs have to build the infrastructure, have to purchase and ensure the supply of electricity and then will be forcefully compelled to pay to the smart metering agency each and every month without any failure. The state DISCOMs will be financially indebted to the third party smart metering agencies for their revenue collection.
9. It may lead to disastrous grid collapse through cyber attack. Even the World Bank, the pioneer agency advocating smart metering, is publicly cautioning that the smart meters may be attacked breaching cyber security and may be utilized by Central government against any state.
10. It will jeopardize the sovereignty of the people and the Nation.



Time of Day (ToD) Tariff: A win-win for corporate, lose-lose for consumers:

While all the risks to link the smart metering scheme with the dynamic pricing of electricity was coming into public discourse and discussion, the Central government in a swift and sudden blow, amended

Time of Day (ToD) tariff means a completely flexible tariff. Only the lower limit of the tariff will be fixed as the normal tariff. Dynamic tariff will be priced as per the rules of the market – if demand is high, the consumers have to pay higher prices for availing electricity.

the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules vide a notification dated 14th June 2023. Practically our words are vindicated now!

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as the normal tariff. Dynamic tariff will be priced as per the rules of the market – if demand is high, the consumers have to pay higher prices for availing electricity. As per this amended rule, immediately after installation of smart meters, all consumers will be brought under ToD tariff latest by 1st April 2025. As per the ToD tariff system, only 8 hours of the daytime will be off peak hours. It is obvious that, the household consumption is greater in night time and the irrigation is also done majorly after sunset. The consumption of electricity will be higher at peak time and as demand will be higher, the consumers have to pay higher and higher dynamic tariff for using electricity! Though the Power Minister has claimed that it is a win-win for the company and the consumers, the reality will be devastating for the households.

Withdraw Electricity (Amendment) Rules 2023:

EEFI and its constituent Unions have strongly opposed the rule and submitted their objection to Power ministry. Rules are executive orders designed to implement the law created by the Act, making them secondary legislation.

Meanwhile, the Central government has released a draft Electricity (Amendment) Rules 2023 for comments in public domain. EEFI and its constituent Unions have strongly opposed the rule and submitted their objection to Power ministry. Rules are executive orders designed to implement the law created by the Act, making them secondary legislation. It is important to note that these rules cannot supersede the provisions outlined in the Act. Through any rule under Electricity Act 2003, the Act itself can neither be amended nor can any fresh provision be made

which is inconsistent with the Electricity Act 2003. The proposed draft rules contain several provisions that seem to be contradictory to the Electricity Act 2003, as outlined below and thus EEFI has opposed it vehemently and has asked the government to withdraw the draft rule proposals in their entirety.



The Myth vs. Reality about Smart Metering and ToD Tariff:

Myth	Reality
Without Prepaid Smart Metering, the T&D loss can't be controlled.	T&D loss is to be reduced through entire network up-gradation. Household metering is a small section of entire distribution network whereas more than 2/3rd of the project cost is to be spent on household metering!
It will reduce down the ACS-ARR gap	Since the days of drafting the Electricity Bill 2000, these sorts of illusion have been created time and again by Governments which ultimately proved to be hoax. The ever increase in the ACS-ARR gap is due to the heightening price of electricity and it is continuously increasing due to the market dependence and price of electricity.
It will make DISCOMs financially profitable.	It may make DISCOMs entirely obliged upon third party smart metering agencies for their own revenue.
It is financially beneficial to the consumers.	The household consumers of India will have to pay more Rs 2 lakh crore (Rs 8,000 or more) in every 7-8 years from now on.
Consumers will have the option to choose the Supplier	State owned BSNL had been over burdened and denied even the spectrum license to provide benefit to Jio and other private operators. Finally Jio has established the market monopoly and no tariff is increasing.
The consumer service will be better.	The consumers, who have less approved contractual load, will be in problem if suddenly the consumption exceeds the sanctioned limit. For extension of sanctioned load, they have to run to the distribution offices. If there is some technical problem in the meter, or any overbilling is appeared, the consumers have to complain to the third party smart metering agency; the DISCOM's customer care centers will have no functioning. If power is cut due to no-balance in prepaid smart meters (even due to some technical fault of the metering agency), the consumers have to pay fine and the reconnection may take hours.
Time of Day Tariff will enable the household consumers to reduce their use of electricity in peak hours.	In India, 90% of consumers use electricity as per need only. The peak hours are the evening and night time. How can one reduce the electricity consumption due to high price during the peak hours! It will obviously enhance the bill.
RDSS will help DISCOMs to reduce their burden of loan.	The cumulative loan of all DISCOMs of our country from till date hovers around Rs. 6 lakh crore. The RDSS is an imposed burden of Rs 3 lakh crore in a single stroke that is also for every 6-7 years!
Prepaid smart meter is about technological up-gradation.	The existing electronic meters are more or less of same accuracy compared to prepaid smart meters. And most importantly the prepaid version doesn't have any link with accuracy!

EEFI Demands:

1. Stop Smart Metering through TOTEX model under RDSS.
2. Any kind of meter technology up-gradation should be done by the DISCOM or any other PSUs. No third party private agency should be allowed to install smart meters in DISCOM's network.
3. The operation and maintenance should be entirely done by the DISCOM itself. No household data should be shared with any other agency.
4. All the jobs becoming redundant due to technology up-gradation should be recreated through expansion and diversification of the DISCOM. The worker strength of the DISCOMs should not be reduced.
5. There should be necessary capacity building and enhancement in DISCOM's IT section to handle the big-data, to protect the sovereign information of individuals and to deal with the all possible cyber attacks and failures.
6. No intrusion in DISCOM's network through parallel licensing will be allowed.
7. A time bound target should be set to reduce DISCOM's dependence on flexible power market. The prospects of long and mid-term PPAs should be given most preference in DISCOM's power purchase plan.
8. The market price ceiling in the power exchange should be immediately reduced and make at par to the tune of average regulated tariff of the previous year.
9. All the generators have to ensure production of power at the necessary level of PLF and ensure the supply to the market, if not through PPAs, to meet the demand of electricity.
10. All the existing PPAs should be honoured and allowed to be renewed for entire life of the existing as well as to be installed or commissioned Generating plants operating under State and Central power utilities.

With clear conviction, we must understand, these all schemes are no way related to the up-gradation of network or central grant related to it. These are the final blows on India's public electricity distribution sector. It is an attack on federal structure of India. Already some State Governments have started refuting the RDS scheme. It is our time to act! EEFI calls upon the entire electricity workers of the country in particular and workers, farmers and people in general to get united, rise and resist this smart metering project and imposition of ToD tariff! Even if the state distribution utilities are compelled to surrender, resist and defy at the villages, slums, households. This not only for the present but for future of the Nation!

Glimpses of Activities : State Report

Haryana

Haryana Bijli Nigam Limited is compelled to postpone the decision to privatise 18 subdivisions due to rigorous movement:



Haryana Power Sector always had been a Guinea pig for the corporate led governments to introduce newer forms of Anti-people, Anti-worker reforms. And, the conviction, strength and unity of the Haryana Power Workers under the banner of All Haryana Power Corporations Workers Union(AHPCWU) has resisted each and every privatization onslaught. This time the BJP-JJP Government in Haryana decided to outsource all the vacant permanent posts in the 18 subdivisions of Gurugram, Faridabad and Rewari Circle. The management also tried to privatise the job of operation & maintenance through a secret tender in the month of April & May, 2023.



The Union met on 17th June and took resolution to build vehement movement against this privatization attempt. Demonstrations and gate meetings were held in front of every division office on 20-21st June, 2023. On 23rd June, 2023, demonstrations were staged in the division offices and deputation was given to the executive engineer. Then union circle committee declared cease of work on 27th June, in the Faridabad circle.

The union state committee also decided to stage protest statewide on that very day by wearing black badges and warned the management that if they try to open the tender ignoring the protest of the workers then the workers will resort to boycott the work. A

huge turnout was possible in the demonstrations, mainly due to the participation of the technical and the clerical staffs.

Under serious pressure, the management was compelled to sit across the table with the Union



on 30th June, 2023 and has postponed their plan of privatizing the 18 sub divisions. It was a valiant victory of the fast and strong response of the electricity workers under the banner of AHPCWU and EEFI. EEFI working committee congratulates the fighting electricity workers of Haryana for their jubilant struggle against privatization attacks.

Assam

The Assam State Electricity Supply Workers Union organized a day long sit-in demonstration in front of the State head quarter on 17th May, 2023 demanding regularization of temporary/outsourced employees, withdrawal of outsourcing of 33/11kV sub-station and many other burning issues of electricity employees of Assam. This agitation programme drew the attention of state media as well as management to a great extent. The union is now delving into intensifying this movement for regularization of temporary workers.

Preparation of Movement against the Prepaid Smart Meter: Assam State Electricity Supply Workers Union had organized a workshop on smart prepaid meter on 8th June, 2023. This session was addressed by EEFI national secretary Com Sudip Dutta. After that the union has planned a state level decentralized awareness campaign among the various strata of electricity employees with special focus on the right of temporary workers as well as consumers. The

Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees Engineers & Pensioners, the joint platform of all unions and association of the state has shown its strong resentment over the disastrous model of smart prepaid meter. The Coordination Committee has demanded to stop installation of smart meters till the anomalies and grievances of the masses are redressed and submitted a memorandum. The CCOEEEP is planning to initiate a broad based movement on this issue in the near future.



West Bengal



EEFI West Bengal chapter conducted a workshop on the issues of prepaid smart metering on 17th June where the main speakers were Com. Prasanta Nandi Chowdhury and Com Sudip Dutta. Resolutions have been taken to organize similar workshops across the state and also make arrangements for public awareness in order to pave the way for resistance.

Chandigarh



4th July Demand Day



4th July 2023 Demand Day



14th June Dharna



14th June Dharna



The electricity employees of Chandigarh held a massive protest dharna on 14th June 2023 at Sector 17, Chandigarh in support of their long pending genuine demands including grant of promotion, removal of pay anomalies etc. They massively participated in the demands day rally held on 4th July in Chandigarh. On the next day, 5th July 2023, electricity employees of Chandigarh observed 2 hrs work-boycott against the decision of Chandigarh administration to re-appoint the retired employees and retrenchment of the outsourced workers i.e. driver, ALM's MTS etc. It was a massive united action.

Tamilnadu

Wage revision settlement of Tamil Nadu Assembly on 28th March 2023: At the call of all Trade Unions operating in Power Sector of Tamil Nadu, 32,000 Workers and Engineers participated in the historic rally on March 28th towards the TN Assembly with various demands including the long pending wage revision of the employees, filling up of the vacancies etc. Total 45,247 employees participated in the district level rallies converting it into a historic day for TNEB Trade Union Movements.

The massive movement compelled the power minister to finalise and sign the wage revision agreement on 16th May, 2023. However, COTEE did not sign in

this settlement as the management had not assured necessary steps to regularize non-regular workers and due to some other pertinent issues. Further COTEE could not accept the management's decision of removing vacancies in the name of Right Sizing of man power. The Union conveyed the reasons behind not signing the wage revision agreement to workers by distributing 1 Lakh pamphlets through District level general body meetings.

Contract workers' struggle: On 4th July, 2023, COTEE conducted a massive demonstration and submitted petitions to the Chief Minister through the District Collectors where thousands of contract workers participated.



10th State Conference of TNEB working women co-ordination committee: The TNEB WWCC 10th State conference was held on 2023 May 7th at Coimbatore. The conference was inaugurated by Com Deepa K Rajan, Convener of WWCC (EEFI) and All India Secretary of EEFI & CITU. 192 Comrades took part in the meeting. Com E. Vijayalakshmi was elected as a convener and 9 Co-Conveners were elected in the conference. Com

AR Sindhu, National Secretary of CITU addressed and concluded the conference.

Smart meter: Tangedco already has installed smart meters in trial basis in one division in Chennai (T.Nagar) by Genus Company. COTEE opposed the installation and organised agitation on 6th July at section levels. Further COTEE has printed 2 Lakh pamphlets and circulated it on 18th July 2023 all over the state to propagate its consequences.

Kerala

RDSS and: KSEB Workers' Association along with Officers' Association and Contract Workers Association conducted joint campaign on April 18th in all 71 divisions and corporate headquarters at Thiruvananthapuram against the imposition of Smart Metering through RDSS and Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022. 7500 employees and officers took part in the meetings.

On 10th may 2023 NCCOEEE convention "declaring strike" was held at Thiruvananthapuram. The convention unveiled a multipronged plan of campaign against the KSEB management move to adopt the TOTEX model smart metering. KSEB workers' Association organised massive dharna and rallies in divisions and KSEB headquarters on 26th May 2023 demanding completion of online transfer process in a time bound manner, release of promotions, issuance of compassionate appointment and finally to protect the establishment in public sector.

House campaigns and district level rallies were conducted in June. EEFI President Com Elamaram Kareem inaugurated the convention. More than 1000 participated in the convention. On June 8th, 2023 NCCOEEE conducted a protest march towards KSEBL headquarters against the move to implement the smart meters in TOTEX model.

In all 14 districts, NCCOEEE conducted rallies. In each district the campaign continued 3 to 4 days and attracted many masses. More than 1500 public meeting was organised in connection with the district rally. Eminent Trade Union, Political leaders and Legislatures participated in the rally. More than 1 lakh leaflets were distributed throughout the state. This campaign created awareness and revealed the hidden privatisation agenda behind the TOTEX model smart metering.

KSEB Workers' Association organised division level general bodies in all 71 division offices; 10,300 attended. May Day, CITU Foundation Day and World Environment Day (June 5) were celebrated and massive campaigns were conducted throughout the state.



Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh



In Andhra Pradesh 3 regular employees unions and 4 contract workers unions unitedly formed the AP Vidyuth Trade Unions Struggle Committee. On behalf of that committee, a state level seminar was held on 26th July 2023 at Vijayawada. EEFI General Secretary Com P.N.Choudury addressed the meeting.



Future Course of Action

Concrete Joint Plan of Action

Sl. No.	Concrete Action Plan	Targeted Time Frame
1	All State Committees of the Union should meet and discuss the decisions of the EEFI Working Committee Meeting and frame a concrete plan for implementation of the adopted tasks.	By 15th August 2023
2	EEFI Centre will prepare a series of small leaflets written in lucid language (Hindi and English) describing the attack of current stage of reforms on consumers.	To be ready before 15th August 2023
3	The campaign materials have to be translated by States/Unions in their local languages, should be colourful, decorative and self-explanatory.	To be ready before 31st August 2023
4	'PROTECT THE RIGHT TO ELECTRICITY, RESIST ANTI-PEOPLE REFORMS' - massive State Level open Conventions has to be organized by State level unions/EEFI state committee. (In the states, where we have already made significant advancement in the campaign, the massive convention may be converted into massive public meeting in front of the Electricity Department /Ministerial Office). We have to invite CITU, AIKS, AIAWU, SFI, DYFI, AIDWA and all other fraternal Mass Organisations in these massive conventions/ meetings to ensure their active participation in next course of campaign and struggle.	By 15th September 2023

5	Same structured Conventions have to be organized with the slogan of 'PROTECT THE RIGHT TO ELECTRICITY, RESIST ANTI-PEOPLE REFORMS' at District Level along with the participation of Consumers.	By 10th October 2023
6	REACH EACH HOUSEHOLD - District level intensive campaign has to be meticulously planned and organized with the help of other class and mass organizations to approach and distribute leaflet to every household consumers.	3 weeks of campaign from 11-31st October 2023
7	District level Jathas have to be organized covering every block and city, with large number of street corners for one campaign week.	25-31st October
	The states where it is a festival week, can organize the Jathas before 15th October.	8-15th October
8	In the meantime, the foremost step is to have a coordinated meeting with the NCCOEEE at National and State Level to bring all sections of Electricity Employees and Engineers into intensified joint action against power sector privatization with the clarion call of "Save Power Sector, Save India". A pan India struggle against the victimization of employees has to be planned and initiated.	To be decided in NCCOEEE meeting on 27th July 2023
9	Next step will be to have meetings with agricultural front organizations (AIKS & AIAWU) at National level.	By 31st August 2023
10	Prepare for a United intensified and stringent Struggle in coming months.	Due date and form to be decided in coming days

Ensuing National Convention of Power Women

National Convention of Power Women
The inaugural National Convention of Power Women, organized by EEFI, is planned to convene on October 14th, 2023. The event will take place in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, hosted by COTEE. An anticipated gathering of about 100 delegates is expected to participate in this significant convention. The participation structure is outlined as follows: a minimum of 2 delegates from each union, with an additional delegate for every 100 members or fraction thereof. To ensure the smooth execution of this pivotal gathering, a preparatory committee consisting of 9 distinguished members, including the President and General Secretary,

has been constituted. Further organizational efforts include the establishment of a committee tasked with composing the event's report and formulating the resolutions to be presented during the convention. Com. A. R. Sindhu, the Convenor of the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women, will also be participating in the convention. With a dedicated commitment to ensuring the resounding success of this event, all constituent unions are strongly urged to play an active role. Their contributions are essential in guaranteeing the triumph of EEFI's inaugural National Convention of Power Women.