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Teachers' Movement

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Views expressed by individual in this magazine are of their own and need not necessarily be taken as policy of the Federation

EDITORIAL**FIGHTING CORRUPTION - ANNA HAZARE'S WAY**

For the last two months media both print and visual gave more than life-size coverage to a strange phenomenon in Delhi: a short stodgy old man with a paunch, in white dhoti worn the traditional Marathi way and a Gandhi cap threatening the mighty union government on the issue of setting a legal mechanism to fight corruption specially in high public offices. It ended with the Gandhian breaking his fast while the wily and articulate ministers were forced to eat the humble pie. Hundreds and thousands of men and women, young and old, rich, middle class and poor, joined the movement in Delhi and outside of Delhi, in all major Indian cities, in ways not seen before. A live and unpredictable phantasmagoria attracts interest globally but most noticeably in rich Western countries. And true to its tradition, the U.S. State Department tried to fish in troubled waters advising the union government on what it should and should not do to control Anna's peaceful democratic movement.

We are not sure how Transparency International functions and how their ranking of corruption is actually formulated. But there is no doubt that in India corruption in public life and high offices has been widespread. It is also true that our tolerance level with respect to corruption has been rather high. Entrenched corruption in many spheres of our society has almost made it a way of life. In the early life of our independent democratic Republic, when many freedom-fighters and patriots who underwent sufferings of many kinds including imprisonment for long periods and economic deprivation were still alive mercifully, there arose a few cases involving serious corruption like the infamous Pratap Singh Kairon or the Haridas Mundhra case. And Jawaharlal Nehru whose honesty and probity were beyond doubt and who before India getting independence said that he was in favor of hanging black-marketers from street light posts, was seen as rather forgiving and compassionate towards culprits.

At the same time we should not forget that media has made ceaseless campaign against corruption, specially the corruption of ministers and political leaders. Introduction of visual media brought about a qualitative change in exposure to and, more particularly in the nature of anti-graft campaign. Purchase of defense materials as in Bofors' case or voting in Lok Sabha on no-confidence motion at the time of P.V. Narasimha Rao are noteworthy. Even after an expose of all these two instances, leading to regime change at the hustings, the present situation involving, incredible billions in tele communication and petroleum ministries surface and shock the nation.

Even conceding this not very enviable past, cases of corruption have been coming out in the media with tremendous frequency and magnitude, with each new case making the earlier case look small. People are getting restive witnesses to this spectacle under UPA II. Besides for quite some time now higher judiciary, both Supreme Court and High Courts have been coming out with orders and strictures against the Executive for serious lapses of omission and commission. There is no doubt that separation of power is a cornerstone of democratic structure of state. The executive legislative and judicial wings of a government should act in mutual respect and avoid usurpation of authority of other wings of the State. Yet in cases of serious lapses on the part of executive the higher courts have been coming out with such orders which may not strictly belong to the precincts of judiciary. But people as such have widely appreciated this activism of judiciary. Anna Hazare's dharna and fasting is an activism on the part of concerned common people or civil society.

Anna Hazare was at the centre and he is a Gandhian and non-political. This is in spite of Gandhiji being a thoroughly political man but certainly non-partisan. A large section of our citizenry, educated and neo-rich who had never been in politics here came to the fore in support of Anna. Many came to Delhi. Many took out impressive marches in their own towns and cities. Many of them came out on the street for the first time in their lives. The movement became the darling of the media both national and international. All these emboldened Anna and his friends. The union government and congress party moved from one blunder to another, from total rejection to total surrender. But the saving line was that the opposition particularly B.J.P. understood that it had nothing to rejoice but get its act together. So it became clear that the movement shed confrontation and take the entire political class with it. Hence a mid-way agreement without taking on the whole parliament, the symbol of democratic governance of India. No sensible person believes that creation of one person or institution can root out corruption. But the message is that people in general have become restive, that this drift cannot go on for ever, that the state has to act and act quickly to restore some sanity and honesty in public life, peacefully, legally and constitutionally.

AIFUCTO

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अखिल भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय एवम
महाविद्यालय शिक्षक महासंघ

ALL INDIA FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY
&
COLLEGE TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS
(Regd. Under Act XXI of 1860)

CIRCULAR NO. 07/2010-11

Dear Friends,

Date: 9-9-2011

Greetings and congratulations on the great success of our Dharna and March to Parliament on 26th August, 2011 and the observance of the Demands Day on 5th September, 2011. We are receiving very encouraging reports from all the parts of the country documenting the involvement of lacs of teachers in the programs of AIFUCTO. The objective of the program is to sensitize our members and the nation regarding our demands that include our professional agenda as well as the broad national issues related to the restructuring higher education in India. The media in many states, both print and electronic have given wide publicity to our program. We are gearing up to launch a bigger struggle including Court in the month of November-December when the winter session of Parliament will take place, if our demands of payment of arrears by the central and state governments are not accepted. You are to ensure the necessary organizational preparedness for the massive success of the programs.

Dharna and March to Parliament on 26th August, 2011

The program was a massive success as thousands of teachers from across the country assembled in Jantar Mantar to voice loud protest against non payment of arrears by the central and some state governments, non-rectification of the pay revision and UGC regulations anomalies moves to pass PFRDA and other educational restructuring bills in Parliament, privatization and commercialization of education and other issues.

The Dharna was inaugurated by Mr. Biju, MP and addressed by Mr. Azeez Pasha and Mr. Prabodh Panda MPs. They expressed solidarity with the demands of AIFUCTO and declared that they would raise the issues in the Parliament. Mr. Pasha raised the issue in Rajya Sabha the same day and Mr. Panda submitted a call attention notice to the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

Prof. James William, President and Prof. Asok Barman, General Secretary addressed the rally and gave a call for a movement to compel the governments to accept our demands. The General Secretary noted that AIFUCTO expressed solidarity with the anti-corruption movement of Sri Anna Hazare and demanded a strong Lokpal Bill to be passed by the Parliament.

The General Secretary informed the Dharna about the great victory of the movement to regularize the Maharashtra teachers without NET under the leadership of MFUCTO and actively supported by AIFUCTO. Prof Barman congratulated the fighting spirit and exemplary unity of Maharashtra teachers.

Speakers from the states criticized the central and some state governments for the stand on nonpayment of arrears of revised pay scales and moves to introduce reforms that would hurt the interest of the nation. They promised to come in very large numbers to attend any program in Delhi as and when decided by the NEC. The meeting was addressed by Prof. K.K. Thekedath, our former president. He urged the young teachers to decipher the proposed bills and remain vigilant to protect the interest of the teaching community. The teachers marched to the Parliament and were stopped by the police. The General Secretary and other leaders reiterated the demands and thanked the participants. Memorandum was submitted to the Prime Minister & Minister, HRD by the General Secretary.

Meeting with Chairman, UGC on 26th August, 2011

A delegation led by Prof. James William comprising Prof. V.S. Nehera, Vice President, Prof. V.P. Singh, Prof. Jaya Gandhi, Prof. Madhu Paranjpe, all national Secretaries & Prof. Lokendra, Zonal Secretary, met Prof. Ved

Prakash, Chairman, and UGC and discussed the pending issues including the final report of Anomaly Committee on UGC regulations, Ph.D benefits in the new scales, new Ph.D regulations, extension of the date of refresher and orientation courses, regularization of Maharashtra teachers without NET from the date of appointment and others. The chairman promised to look into the matters.

NEC meeting at Gandhi Peace Foundation

NEC meeting was held in the evening of 26th August, 2011. The meeting condoled the sad demise of our former leader Prof. Sambhaji Jadav. The speakers paid glowing tribute to the great leader.

The well attended meeting was presided over by Prof. James William. Prof. William introduced the agenda and explained the importance of the ongoing AIFUCTO movement. The General Secretary presented a detailed report on all the developments after the last NEC and congratulated the leaders for the massive success of the Dharna program. He proposed a Demands Day program. The meeting decided that 5th September, 2011 would be observed as Demands Day throughout the country and the members would wear demand badges and send telegrams to the Prime Minister, Finance Minister & HRD Minister. The General Secretary observed that if the demands are not fulfilled, AIFUCTO will have to decide for cease work & court arrest during the winter session of parliament.

The speakers from states apprised the NEC members of the latest developments.

Prof James William and Prof. Vivekanandan, Chairman, the organizing committee of 26th Statutory Conference hosted by MUTA invited all units and requested to send the names and delegation/participation fee at an early date. They appealed to raise advertisements at least one from each unit for the souvenir to be published on this occasion. The General Secretary appealed to all affiliates to secure advertisements to help the organizers. Women participants would be provided separate accommodations.

Meeting with Sri R.P. Sisodia, Joint Secretary, HRD on 6th September, 2011

General secretary and Prof. Jagwant Singh, Vice President held meeting with Sri R.P. Sisodia, Jt. Secretary, HRD and conveyed the sentiment and decisions of the NEC meeting held on 26th August, 2011. They enquired about the progress of the secretary level meetings between Ministry of finance and HRD and expressed concern about the slow headway.

Meeting with UGC officials on 6th September, 2011

General Secretary & Prof. Jagwant Singh met Dr. Kazmi, the Secretary, and UGC and requested her to take an early measure to enhance the date of refresher and orientation courses. Dr. Kazmi informed that the Anomaly Committee report is at the final stage and would be sent to MHRD soon. Sri Ashok Dogra, Jt. Secretary apprised the AIFUCTO leaders of the latest developments on all matters.

NEWS FROM STATES

Uttar Pradesh-LUACTA

A meeting attended by all the associated college teachers of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh was organized by the Lucknow University Associated College Teachers Association at JNPG College Lucknow on 12th August, 2011. Prof. Asok Barman was present in the meeting to inform the gathering of all the latest developments at the national level and to motivate the teachers to participate in the Dharna at Jantar Mantar to be held on 26th August. He urged the teachers to attend the Dharna in large numbers.

Prof. Vivek Dwivedi, General Secretary, KUTA came to attend the meeting all the way from Kanpur.

Prof. Manoj Pandey, President and Prof. K.K. Bajpai, General Secretary, LUACTA welcomed the initiative of the General Secretary to meet the teachers. They stressed upon various issues related to the teachers including the CAS mechanism of API system enforced by the UGC. Prof. Barman emphasized the fact that the college and university teachers should be treated at par on all respects and the retirement age should be 65 for all categories of teachers. Prof. Rocky John, FUPUCTA representative raised the issue of highhandedness of the management of various colleges including the denial of promotional committees to the teachers. The meeting expressed concern at the misuse of minority rights by some minority colleges. The LUACTA leadership proposed a movement program against the anti teacher activities. GS, AIFUCTO declared that the national leadership will be with the movement. The teachers supported the proposed movement unanimously. We extend thanks to the LUACTA leadership and Prof. J.N. Shukla, GS, FUPuCTA to make the program a great success.

The program was well covered by the press.

Punjab-PFUCTO

At the call of Punjab Federation of University and College Teacher's Organizations teachers from Punjab University, Guru Nanak Dev University, Punjab Agricultural University, Guru Anagad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Govt. Colleges and Non-Govt. Colleges of Punjab and Chandigarh held an impressive rally at Chandigarh. The demand of teachers included release of arrears, pension for staff of aided colleges as per Act of 1999, full pension on completion of 20 years of service, enhancement of retirement age to 65years, filling up of vacant posts, enhanced funding of teaching and research, withdrawal of anti-education Bills introduced in Parliament in the name of reforms, adoption of UGC letters on refresher courses, better service conditions including security of service for teachers working on unaided posts.

The rally was addressed by AIFUCTO General Secretary Asok Barman, Vice President, AIFUCTO and General Secretary, PFUCTO, Dr.Jagwant singh, President PFUCTO, Prof. H.S. Kingra, President PUTA, Prof. Akshay Kumar, President GNDUTA Prof. Balwinder Singh, President GCTA Jaipal Singh, General Secretary, PCCTU Prof. H.S.Walia and General Secretary GCTA Prof. Hardeep Singh

The protest action was given wide coverage by both electronic and print media.

Conference at Kanya Kumari, Tamilnadu

We have announced that the next Statutory Conference will be held at the historic KanyaKumari The Conference is being hosted by Madurai University Teachers' Association (MUTA).The dates of the Conference are 20,21,22 October,2011. Please send the names of delegates and participants & registration fee @Rs.1000 per head well before the conference.

Kindly note the E-mail id of the conference: aifucto26thconference@gmail.com

Also note the phone numbers of contact persons for any information and assistance:

Prof. T. Manohara Justus, General Secretary, MUTA and organizing secretary for the Conference - 09443579457

Prof. C. Retnasigamani, Convener, Accommodation Committee - 09786049489

Dr. S. Murugan, Convener, Souvenir Committee - 09443580067

Prof. S.Subbaraj, Conference Treasurer- 09443970510

Prof. S. Vivekanandan, President, MUTA, 09443380252

Struggle Fund

I have been drawing your attention to the poor fund position of AIFUCTO.We have been continually staying in Delhi and holding meetings and other programs.All these involve substantial expenditures.Further, we are moving across the country for the purpose of organizational build up. I request all those who have not yet paid the struggle fund or paid only partially to send the some due for a long time as early as possible.

Reports of affiliates to be included in the Annual Report- Urgent request

All affiliates are requested to send a brief report of their activities and programs in the current year for the inclusion in the Annual Report of General Secretary. The report must be in soft mode and should be sent to the GS by e-mail at the id-asok.barman@gmail.com.

The size of the report should be one page (A-4, font size 11).We must receive the matter by 30th September, 2011

Notice for NEC Meeting

The next NEC Meeting of AIFUCTO will be held on 20th October, 2011, at 9-30 a.m. at the Conference venue


Agenda

1. The Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the consideration of AGM
All members are requested to attend.


Asok Barman
General Secretary

Eagerly waiting to meet you at the Conference.

Warm Greetings


Asok Barman
General Secretary

RAJYA SABHA

ZERO HOUR

26.08.2011

RELEASE THE CENTRAL SHARE OF FUNDS TO STATES FOR PAYMENT OF ARREARS

The All India federation of university & College teachers' Federation has organised today a massive Dharna of teachers demanding the release of Central government share of funds to the states for payment of arrears to college & university teachers which were to be paid even after a lapse of six years following VI Pay Commission and they are the only category who are deprived of it.

The pay scales and service condition of teachers of universities and colleges were revised as per the VI pay commission order of the MHRD which was notified on 31st December, 2008. Vide it the Central Govt. has notified that it would pay 80% of the expenses incurred due to the pay revision for 4years and 3months i.e. for the period from 01-01-2006 to 31-03-2010. The state governments would meet the remaining 20%. The notification stated that the arrears could be paid in two instalments as it was paid for the central govt. employees.

But till date the Govt. has not paid any share to any state govt. It is said that it is pending since most of the states have not raised the age of retirement to 65 years. The Education ministers of the States have raised the issue at the meeting of the Education Ministers and said that they could not raise the retirement age because of other compulsions.

The AIFUCTO, the national federation of university and college teachers organisations also have requested MHRD to delink the age of retirement and the central assistance. In spite of all these the Govt. has not released its share and hence most of the states haven't paid arrears to the teachers even 6 years after the date of implementation of the pay scales while all other sections of employees including teachers working in Central Universities have received cent per cent of the arrears long back. Thousands of teachers are squatting at Jantar Mantar today demanding payment of arrears and payment of the central share.

Hence I demand to the Government to take immediate steps to resolve the issue to resolve the issue at the earliest..

Thanking you sir.

Syed Azeez Pasha


AIFUCTO PRESS RELEASE ON THE MOVEMENT OF SRI ANNA HAZARE

Date: 18.08.011

The All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations (AIFUCTO) expresses its solidarity with the nationwide movement against corruption in the country. The AIFUCTO condemns the attitude of the Govt. of India in trying to muffle democratic rights of organisations to protest for genuine demands by arresting veteran Gandhian Anna Hazare and his team. The widespread support Anna's movement has received in the aftermath of his arrest shows the people's anger against corruption and against the Govt. which has been trying to shield and protect the corrupt. So instead of trying to suppress the movements against corruption, the Govt. should bring in an effective lokpal Bill which would enable the creation of an effective body to punish the corrupt. AIFUCTO believes that a Lokpal cannot be a panacea whatever its form and content be unless effective steps are taken to break the unholy nexus between the corporate, bureaucracy and the politicians. So AIFUCTO appeals to the Govt. of India to unconditionally release Mr. Anna Hazare and permit him to stage peaceful protests without placing unnecessary hurdles. AIFUCTO also believes that any move to bypass the Parliament and the parties in the opposition in bringing in a suitable legislation for a strong Lokpal will not augur well for the future of democracy in the country.

Sd/-

Prof. James William
President



Prof. Asok Barman
General Secretary

जंतर मंतर पर ताकत दिखाएंगे शिक्षक

सखनर, 12 अगस्त (अनन्य संवाददाता) : प्रदेश भा से विद्यापीठालय और महाविद्यालयों के शिक्षक 26 अगस्त को दिवस के जंतर मंतर पर इकट्ठा होंगे। अपने नांगों के सभर्भन में हजारों की संख्या में शिक्षक यहां से संसद तक पैदल मार्ग निकालेंगे। सुकचार को राजधानी के शीतल नगरपाल पीली कॉलेज में हुई शिक्षकों की बैठक में पूरी कार्ययोजना बना ली गई है। जयदा से जयदा शिक्षकों की भीड़ नुदाने के लिए बसबाद शुरू कर दी गई है।

श्रीत इंडिया कैम्पेसन ऑन यूनिवर्सिटी कॉलेज टिचर असोसिएशन (एआइएफुओ) के महासचिव प्रो. एके. चर्भन ने राजधानी आकर शिक्षकों के साथ सम्मेलन किया। इसे बेसन आरंभ से संबोधित बिस्मिलिया, शिक्षकों की सेवासिद्धि, विद्यापीठालय एवं महाविद्यालय के शिक्षकों के बीच विभागत को दान करत अदि मार्गों को संकरन दिवसों में सभर्भन को निर्णय दिया गया है। उन्होंने विधि और महाविद्यालय के शिक्षकों के बीच किसी प्रकार का अंतर न रहने पर जोर दिया। सखनर विद्यापीठालय संबद्ध महाविद्यालय शिक्षक संघ (सुआवदा) अध्यक्ष डॉ. मनके कास्टेप ने कहा कि कर्षित वैशिक प्रोन्नति योजना में सुआवदा को संभवत करत को धारत है। महाविद्यालयों में डेफेन्स पर कर प्रोन्नति के लिए सुचौती को संसर्भित

• बीजानानगरम बीजे कॉलेज में शिक्षकों ने की बैठक • 26 अगस्त को दिवसों में मार्ग निकालने की सूबरेखा धनी



बैठक में बोलते एआइएफुओ के महासचिव प्रो. एके चर्भन

को सार्विकृत करके सभे तौर पर सखत सैशियक प्रोन्नति योजना की सार से सखत किए जाने की सिपरीत करने की बात कही। शिक्षकों की सेवासिद्धि अनु 62 से बढ़ाकर 65 किए जाने को धारत कही गई। महाविद्यालयों के शिक्षकों को भी संध परबिधाक बनाने की बात कही। महामंत्री केके चार्भनी ने बताया कि प्रबंध तंत्र इस महिला महाविद्यालयों में किए जा रहे संधेप के पर प्रो चर्भन ने कड़ी आर्षित जताई है।

नोडल अधिकारी को दें रैगिंग की सूचना

बाबा गार्डेन भोमराब अधिकातर केन्द्रीय विद्यापीठालय में सुकचार को नुले विद्यार्थियों के लिए स्वागत समारोह का आयोजन किया गया। विधि के परबिधाक अध्ययन केरु के सभासद ने आयोजित समारोह में कुलपति प्रो. वं. हनुपेबा ने छात्रों को अभुवासन का पठ पढ़ाया।

कुलपति ने सूर छात्रों को विद्यापीठालय के धारों में विस्तार से संधकरी देने के साथ ही सेवासिद्धि का सम्मान करने की सलाह दी। उन्होंने कहा कि विद्यार्थियों को एतना है कि उनके साथ रैगिंग हो रही है तो वे इसकी सूचना सैशियत अधिकारी अधिकारी अजय कुमार को दें। छात्र इस दी गई सूचना सुन रखने के साथ ही अपनी सार पर सखत कार्यवाई की सारने। प्रबसा पीपी प्रसिद्ध ने बताया कि समारोह के दौरान छात्रावासों के चार्डन के साथ ही प्रोमोट सेल के प्रोफेसर और शिक्षक मौजूद थे। सखनर के दौरान नए विद्यार्थियों को निवार्थनी भी कही गई।

प्रो. चर्भन ने सुआवदा के असोसिएशन का सम्भर्भन करने की बात कही।

ANGCTA 'Demands Day' today

DIMAPUR, SEP 4 (EMN): The All Nagaland Government College Teachers Association (ANGCTA) will observe 'Demands Day' on Teachers Day together with university and college teachers all over the country. In line with the resolution of the National Executive Council of the All India Federation of University & College Teachers Organizations (AIFUCTO), all constituent members will observe the Day by wearing blue badge, a press note by ANGCTA president and general secretary Dr Vizovol Mekro and Wenyitso Kapfo informed. The teachers are demanding release of central assistance for pay revision and state governments to ensure payment of their share, to rectify pay anomalies on the basis of AIFUCTO recommendations, to withdraw Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill, to implement UGC regulations on Career Advancement Scheme and PhD prospectively and not retrospective-

ANGCTA to observe 'Demands Day' on Teachers Day, to wear blue badges

DIMAPUR, SEPTEMBER 4 (MExN): The All Nagaland Government College Teachers Association (ANGCTA) will observe 'Demands Day' on Teachers Day together with university and college teachers all over the country. In line with the resolution of the National Executive Council of the All India Federation of University & College Teachers Organizations (AIFUCTO), all constituent members will observe the Day by wearing blue badge.

The affiliates of the Organization will also write to the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and the Human Resource Development Minister to address the following issues: to release central assistance for pay revision and state governments to en-

sure payment of their share; to rectify pay anomalies on the basis of AIFUCTO recommendations; to withdraw Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill; to implement UGC regulations on Career Advancement Scheme and Ph.D prospectively and not retrospectively and to stop commercialization and privatization of education. Being an affiliate of AIFUCTO the executives of the ANGCTA has directed all its members in the fourteen government college to show solidarity by wearing blue badges while attending to their normal duties. This was informed in a press note issued by Wenyitso Kapfo and Dr Vizovol Mekro General Secretary and President respectively of ANGCTA.

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अखिल भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय एवम
महाविद्यालय शिक्षक महासंघ

ALL INDIA FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY
&
COLLEGE TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS
(Regd. Under Act XXI of 1860)

PRESS RELEASE

26.08.2011

More than three thousand college and university teachers across the country under the banner of the All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Associations (AIFUCTO) gathered today at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi to highlight their long pending demands including the payment of the Central share for the implementation of the UGC pay scales, rectification of the pay revision anomalies, withdrawal of the PFRDA Bill and also several Bills introduced in the Parliament. The Dharna was led by Prof. James William, President, AIFUCTO, Prof. Asok Barman, General Secretary and other leaders of the Federation. The Dharna was inaugurated by Mr. Biju, MP and addressed by Mr. Azeez Pasha and Mr. Prabodh Panda MPs.

The pay scales and service conditions of teachers of universities and colleges were revised as per the VI pay commission order of the MHRD which was notified on 31st December, 2008. Vide it the Central Govt. has notified that it would pay 80% of the expenses incurred due to the pay revision for 4years and 3months i.e. for the period from 01-01-2006 to 31-03-2010. The state governments would meet the remaining 20%. The notification stated that the arrears could be paid in two instalments as it was paid to the central govt. employees.


But till date the Govt. has not paid any share to any state govt. As the Govt. has not released its share, most of the states haven't paid arrears to the teachers even 6 years after the date of implementation of the pay scales while all other sections of employees including teachers working in Central Universities have received cent per cent of the arrears long back.

Apart from this, the teachers are also opposing the new PFRDA Bill introduced in the Parliament which would effectively deny pension to those teachers and employees who joined service after 01-01-2004. The Govt. is trying to privatise pension as the pension funds are going to be maintained and operated by private regulators.

The Govt. of India has introduced various other Bills with regard to Higher Education without consulting the stakeholders in education. In fact this is against the spirit of the PM's statement in his Independence Day address that a national commission for Education would be constituted to discuss the reforms to be initiated in Education to make it an effective one.

The teachers also demand that the anomalies arising out of the VI pay revision should be immediately redressed, that the UGC Regulations on PhD should be implemented prospectively and not retrospectively.

Sd/-
Prof. James William
President


Prof. Asok Barman
General Secretary

UNIVERSALISATION OF EDUCATION : INDIA IN A TRAP

- Prof. A.K. Biswas

There is hardly any need to dwell on the boon education endows to a human being any where under the sun. Nelson Mandela, the South African Nobel Laureate, underlined succinctly. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." People all over the world duly recognise its potential. There were vocal and sincere advocates in India to underline the need for education for all, irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Nevertheless India is awfully backward. A nation that shuts up its educational avenues for all and sundry and favours the privileged alone has to rue in the long run for the selective hostility. With a vast humanity outside the pale of education, as is the case with India, ultimate prosperity eludes the country. Those left behind become an unmitigated and monstrous drag on its march to the pinnacle of glory and achievement. In his inauguration speech on January 20, 2009, the President of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama, drove this point home with his characteristic clarity and gush: "A nation cannot prosper long when it favours the prosperous." India, known to favour the privileged since time immemorial, needs to note this warning with the seriousness it warrants.

The wisdom of the two observations cited above can hardly be underestimated by any yardstick. They are so self-evident in their consequences that no proof is required. The moot question that needs to be grappled with for an answer is: why is India, boastful of glorious ancient civilisation and culture, a laggard in education?

Educationists Shied Away to Advocate Education for the Indian Masses

The road to national prosperity and happiness can be achieved by educating and thereby equipping every soul with modern knowledge and skills in every nook and corner of the vast country. Failure to do so is an inescapable prescription for pitfalls. The planned economy and its development are sure to falter sooner or later. The turmoil engaging rural India is the result of criminal negligence and disregard for education of the disadvantaged in the lower social strata. The apparent Indian prosperity in the upper crest is ephemeral and will dissipate sooner than later.

Prior to independence, India embarked upon

framing her future Constitution. In the Constituent Assembly, one of its illustrious members, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), acclaimed as an educationist and philosopher, was the first to be called upon to deliver his maiden speech after the election of Dr Rajendra Prasad as the permanent Chairman of the august House. It was on Wednesday, December 11, 1946. On December 9, 1946 the Constituent Assembly was inaugurated with Dr Sachchidanand Sinha as the temporary Chairman. Dr Radhakrishnan had observed, *inter alia*:

- "Take the problems from which we suffer: our hunger, our poverty, our disease, our malnutrition - these are common to all. Take the psychological evils from which we suffer - the loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection - these are common to all: Hindus or Muslims, Princes or peasants. The chains may be made of gold but they are still chains that fetter us. Even the Princes will have to realise that they are slaves in this country."

The damning national illiteracy, strangely, escaped the eminent educationist's attention. He did not stress that mass illiteracy should receive the highest national priority of official policy for attack in independent India. He was most eminently placed to demand that education and education alone for all, irrespective of caste, creed, sex and place of birth, should be the only agenda for the government of independent India. It would have befitted Dr Radhakrishnan if he had echoed the Japanese imperial declaration on education which, in 1869, enunciated that there should be no village in the country with an illiterate household and no house with an illiterate inmate in Japan. In three decades Japan emerged as the powerhouse of the world, undoubtedly the gift of education. But the eminent educationist, on whom India takes immense legitimate pride, turned a Nelson's eye to the colossal Indian illiteracy.

Our hunger, poverty, disease and malnutrition were serious problems to merit attack and nobody could have questioned any emphasis on these. But failure to accord mass education the pride of place in the scheme of prioritisation of the Indian

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social and political agenda is no accident per se. The Indian mind has been shaped and conditioned by its ancient religious scriptures and practices. Sacred scriptures have ordained against the lower social order getting education at all. Had some of the rulers of the Princely states (quite a number of them were there) in the Constituent Assembly ignored the need for education for the masses as a priority issue, no question could have been asked. But Dr Radhakrishnan adorned the offices of the Vice-Chancellor first in the Andhra University (1931-36) and next in the Benares Hindu University (1939-1948). Prior to it, he held the prestigious King George V Chair of Philosophy in Calcutta University. In Oxford University he taught for over a decade (1936-1952). In 1931, the British Government knighted him for his services to education. The Chancellor of Delhi University (1953-1962), Radhakrishnan, chaired free India's first Higher Education Commission (1948-49). A Vice President for two terms as also the President of India (1962-1967), he was a towering personality to dictate the educational agenda for free India. His birthday is celebrated as the Teacher's Day. The first step for drafting the future Constitution was marked by noble sentiments and lofty ideals as India was emerging out of the shadows of colonial rule to the light of freedom. Nevertheless, the enlightened philosopher ignored, without any qualms of conscience, the issue of education for the masses. How come? Does it not throw poor light inasmuch as that his profession was not in his passion, nor in his vision? Though he taught, he lacked commitment to education. The psychological evils, for example, loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection of Indians, were results of a blinding darkness caused by widespread illiteracy. In colonial India, these evils afflicting Indians could be placed at the doorsteps of the rulers. Over six decades ago they left the shores of India, consigning things to Indian hands to manage. Have we overcome the evils of loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection of vast section of Indians? Those evils have become the hallmarks of the lives of the underdogs. The elite Indians, who have been at the helm of affairs, are not really concerned about the well-being of the disadvantaged. They prescribe palliatives but do not want lasting cure of the diseases. Universalisation of education with commitment and sincerity would have altered radically the situation long back. The

elites had different calculations for the millions of deprived Indians.

Why Don't we have a Ripon?

See, in comparison, what the graduates of Calcutta University were told in one of the finest convocation addresses 127 years ago:

"It is not desirable in any country to have a small highly educated class brought into contact with large uneducated masses: what is wanted is, instruction should be more equally distributed, that the artisans and peasants of the land should have brought within their reach facilities as may be possible under the circumstances of their condition, and that there should be no sharp line drawn between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many."

In these words Lord Ripon, the Governor General of India, addressed the students of Calcutta University on March 11, 1882. This alien ruler, whose regime saw the first Indian Education Commission with William Hunter as the Chairman, had issued a clear warning of impending disaster in store for the country if the sharp line between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many was not erased soon. A deceitful, brutal and cliquish intellectual class since the colonial days had occupied the centre-stage of Indian education. They not only did not pull down the discriminatory line between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many, they perpetuated it as a standing feature of the national life. The masses were not allowed any space for education. The educated few have penetrated in every layer of Indian polity and frustrated every attempt to ensure education reaching the common man. We have no parallel in authority with integrity and honesty to issue a warning as Ripon eminently did. On the contrary, illiteracy of the masses has been used, true to Ripon's apprehension, as opportunity by the "small highly educated class" to harvest golden dividends at the cost of the ignorant masses. In a word, the havoc wrought in India's education and consequent ills inflicted on national life can be attributed to none other than the educated few, who usually have assumed the role of self-proclaimed heaven-born guardians of the masses.

India Does Not Audit her Heroes' Performances

India is a land of hero-worshippers. The perception of an idol in the hero here, is more often than not built up by the orchestra of relentless hype: he is projected as pious, blameless, faultless and

peerless. By relentlessly dinning into unsuspecting ears, ignorant people are made to believe that their hero suffers from no shortcomings or frailty of human beings. Divine glow is smeared over him, making him look dazzling, supernatural and surreal. This ensures that no finger is ever raised by any critic at such a luminary. Faults, frailty and failures in his character and actions are shoved out of sight. Anybody pointing a finger at him is stigmatised as blasphemous. Alas! we never attempted at auditing the public cost of negligence or failure to point out the faults of many of our noble and celebrated souls, particularly when they guided the course of public life in narrow lanes, if not to murky directions. The Indian "great men" are placed on high pedestals, far above reproach or critical analysis by the common man. Anybody doing or attempting to do so is hauled up before the public bar as a malicious campaigner or malcontent. Nobody questioned why Dr Radhakrishnan, the quintessential educationist and philosopher, was so apathetic to giving education its rightful place in the future official agenda in the august House of India on the threshold of freedom from British domination. India did not boast even of 20 per cent literacy in 1946. This is India's disease, not the symptom.

Betrayal of Friends Responsible for Gokhale's Death

Did our intellectual class fail to pinpoint this? They did not fail. It seems, they acquiesced in giving low priority to, if not displaying total neglect towards, universal primary education for reasons of their clannish convenience and benefit. The educated and privileged Indian elite did not want education to spread far and wide. They even brazenly offered opposition to education reaching the illiterate and unlettered millions, who have been beyond the pale of consideration for decent human treatment. Many would perhaps be surprised to note that Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, the earliest to launch the nationalist movement, soon after his dismissal from the ICS in 1874, vigorously opposed the Compulsory Education Bill of Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the Governor General's Central Legislative Council in 1911. Indian history is replete with the bitter and vicious discourses that the Education bill met with the colonial rulers' vehement opposition leading to its defeat. This is not a fact. The truth, however, is just otherwise. Those who vigorously campaigned against and voted for the disgraceful rejection of Gokhale's Bill included the political giants

of the day like Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea. The reputed scientist and founder of Bengal Chemicals, Prof P.C. Ray, had long later bemoaned that Gokhale died not because his Bill was thrown out by the Central Legislative Council on account of bureaucratic arrogance, as it is often made out, but because he could not bear the shock of betrayal of his close friends who had back-stabbed him over it. Nobody called the bluff of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea.

Gokhale was Not Radical

In any case, the Bill, though eulogised in sonorous voices by the Indian intellectual class, has hardly any laudable or radical provisions to warrant notice. To drive this aspect home and to disarm adverse attack, I would quote just the central provision in the Bill:

"In any area, where 33 per cent of the male population is already at school, there this principle of compulsion should be applied."

No village in the subcontinent qualified during the colonial rule for enforcement of compulsion under the 33 per cent yardstick. Perhaps a few towns and cities, for example, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Poona, Karachi and Lahore, had 33 per cent population already in school in 1911. Even today the urban population barely exceeds 30 per cent. Who did then actually benefit from the introduction of compulsory primary education as such in India? The answer is quite simple. Looking closely at such developments, one would be convinced that our heroes in history are more often than not creatures of shrill, orchestrated propaganda!

Legendary Educationist and Education Minister Frustrated the Dacca University Plan!

Truth, we were taught early in childhood, is stranger than fiction. We were asked to write stanzas or paragraphs on this theme. Often practical instances were waiting to understand the deeper implications of such a proverb. Here is one culled from the history of Bengal.

On revocation of the partition of Bengal in 1911, Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India, declared that a university would be set up at Dacca [now Dhaka]. India had by then four universities at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Allahabad. This benevolent proposal was greeted by trenchant opposition from Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and others. As an educationist, Sir

Ashutosh till date is a legend in Bengal!!! Egged on and propelled by the geniuses like them, the Education Minister of Bengal, Provas Chandra Mitra, and their cohorts ensured that budget provisions on account of the proposed Dacca University were not passed by the Bengal Legislative Council year after year till 1921, when the university came into being.⁹ Rarely in history do saboteurs of the establishment of a university occupy as high a stature as Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee. The fifth university of India and second in Bengal could not be established as a result. We cannot imagine why Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee set themselves against a university at Dacca so pugnaciously. But we cannot, however, overlook a demographic truth that the overwhelming majority of the population in Eastern Bengal was Muslims, low-caste Hindus and untouchables. The opposition of these luminaries of Bengal had dashed the aspirations for higher education of those educationally backward people. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, who had emerged victorious by defeating Gokhale's Compulsory Primary Education Bill, conjointly with Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee throttled the Dacca University plan. Both actions synchronised in the immediate post-anti-partition agitation (1905-1911) era of Bengal. The elite and intelligentsia in general, and of Bengal in particular, have strangely overlooked the misdeeds and grave socio-political implications of these actions. These sordid episodes have been swept under the carpet lest it became embarrassing public knowledge.

Vidyasagar Opposed Education on Comprehensive Scale beyond Higher Classes

The Charles Woods Despatch, 1854 is considered on all hands as the Magna Carta of Indian education. It adopted a new policy towards 'mass education'. Hitherto the official focus was on the upper classes of population for education, euphemistically called the 'Down Filtration Theory'. In 1859, the government's education policy reiterated: "The spread of vernacular elementary instruction among the lower orders." Upon this Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar addressed a letter on September 29, 1859 to John Peter Grant, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, underlining his perception:

"An impression appears to have gained ground, both here and in England, that enough has been done for the education of the higher classes

and that attention should now be directed towards the education of the masses... An enquiry into the matter will, however, show a very different state of things. As the best, if not the only practicable means of promoting education in Bengal, the Government should, in my humble opinion, confine itself to the education of the higher classes on a comprehensive scale."

The words "higher classes" does not or should not construe in Bengali parlance anything but caste which ipso facto bestows or forfeits privilege of education on a person, as the case may be, by birth. The same renowned scholar earlier in 1854 had scoffed at the representation of the wealthy goldsmith caste of Bengal for admission in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. His argument to deny their prayer was simple: he wrote that "in the scale of castes, the class (goldsmith or Subarnabanik) stands very low".

Since ancient times, there has been no advocate of education for the socially disadvantaged in India. Sympathy, if any, has been showered selectively on higher education as we have seen in the case of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee. We have also seen how the prospect of higher education for the underprivileged provoked the ire of Bengali educationists and intellectual classes. No person in high position, irrespective of political persuasion or ideological affiliation, has ever been sincere in promoting education. We have not heard from any person of eminence to declare: "It is not at the summit of our educational system that improvement is most urgently required but at the base. Nor have we ever been warned by men in authority like Prof Rushbrook Williams, who observed: It must be plain that until the proportion of literates can be raised, the masses of India will remain poor, helpless and prey to political dangers too serious to be contemplated with equanimity."

Social Superiority Education-centric

The census of 2001 revealed that India's literacy stood at 65 per cent. The definition of literacy has not overcome the colonial yardstick yet: ability to read and write small sentences is still considered as the objective of the Indian literacy drive. But why has the planned economic development failed to accord education its primacy in priority for the masses? It is not an oversight or accident but a calculated design to keep vast sections in the eternal abyss of ignorance, deprivation and segregation. The history of Indian education does not suggest a

carefully designed roadmap for educational reform and development. An American researcher of repute, Prof Mayron Weiner of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has highlighted the aspiration of the dominant Indian society.

"Education in India is regarded as a form of social superiority. Those who are educated dress and speak differently than those who are not educated. Those who are educated have power over those who are not. The educated can give commands to and shout at the uneducated and can expect deference and obedience."

The most liberal, enlightened Indian does not want to forgo the advantages of the social superiority bestowed by birth. So they do not drive education in the direction its reform merits. The education that is being imparted across the country for the lower strata starkly lacks quality. The reforms in education face opposition from the mandarins of education themselves. They do not want such reforms in education that the men who work with hands would start working with brains. That would bring down the age-old distinction between men who work with brains and those who work with hands. They are afraid of this undesirable implication of the educational reforms, if any. The aforementioned MIT researcher found this out after prolonged interactions with a cross-section of Indians including the officials in the Ministry of Human Resources in Delhi.

Can Election Commission of India Step In?

Education endows a man knowledge, which is power capable of equipping him with skills, tools and techniques, unknown to him or his forefathers. Education showers wisdom. An enlightened man has vision that opens up multiple avenues before him for prosperity and happiness. A visionary man sets up a mission for himself and the people. A man bereft of education is worse than an animal. India occupies almost the lowest rank in the human development scale by international reckoning. The illiteracy of the masses contributes maximum to India occupying that embarrassingly low position. The claim of 65 percent literacy is not above genuine suspicion. In truth the actual level of education is far less than projected. A cursory visit to villages even within 30 miles of the national Capital would unfailingly convince any impartial man about the futility of the claim that the percentage of India's literacy is 65.

Elections to Parliament have come to a close. Before the end of the polls one wondered if the

Election Commission of India could issue a commandment to political parties to accord the highest priority for quality universal education for the masses in their manifestos. The fundamental objective of a democratic polity is all-round uplift and actualisation of the aspirations for the happy and contented life of every citizen, irrespective of race, religion, caste, sex and place of birth. Illiteracy of a citizen denies him the fundamental right to life with dignity, happiness and freedom. Elimination of illiteracy is, therefore, the most urgent agenda of immense public importance for the nation. So a direction by the Election Commission to political parties contesting polls to incorporate universal compulsory quality primary education as the highest agenda in their manifestos would have gone a long way to combat the evil of illiteracy. Else the political parties have discovered goldmines in illiteracy among the masses. The illiterate and ignorant voters do not complain, nor do they pose questions to their elected representatives on issues seriously affecting them. Neither do they hold MPs, MLAs or MLCs accountable for failure to ameliorate their life and living. They deceive and cheat them with impunity. Look how a Chief Minister, otherwise known as suave and cultured, camouflaged his party's deceit on education as the official policy: *"To us communism means land reforms, agricultural growth, industrial development and cultural progress."* He was candid. Even out of pretension, education for the masses is not incorporated as an instrument of growth and development, though that is the solitary key for advancement of man. It is unnerving to imagine that a cadre-based party with deep penetration among masses excludes universalisation of primary education as an ideological strategy for growth and development. It may be a tragedy but its ideology does not favour or encourage the masses getting education any more than literacy!!! Rushbrook Williams had correctly foreseen this danger nine decades ago. The illiterate masses have fallen *"prey to political dangers"*. Illiteracy, left to ongoing political processes, will be perpetuated. India is in a deep trap.

Educational destitution forms the darkest chapter of Indian history. Alas! this chapter cannot be attributed to the enemies of India. We have perforce to point our fingers for this at our countrymen, hailed as noble, celebrated and dedicated. When will India come out of the blighting shadows and pernicious influences of the past legacy and present political trap?

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September 2011

Teachers' Movement

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Where the mind is without fear
 and the head is held high,
 Where knowledge is free;
 Where the world has not been broken
 up into fragments by narrow domestic
 walls;
 Where words come out from the
 depth of truth;
 Where sireless striving
 stretches its arms towards
 perfection;
 Where the clear stream of reason
 has not lost its way into the
 dreary desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward
 by thee into ever-widening
 thought and action —
 Into that heaven of freedom,
 my Father,
 let my country awake.

Sentiniketan

Rabindranath Tagore

On the occasion of Rabindranath Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary

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