

Improving power supply

A long standing problem with the State is that of power supply. It is faulty; it has low voltage; there is pilferage; it has transmission losses; there is big gap between supply and demand; the transformers are not repaired in time and many more woes which can be counted severally. One more prominent fault is that the transmission lines are old and unable to bear the load. As such there is regular power failure. At times it is said that owing to very big gap between supply and demand, power cannot be made available for several hours and hence power cuts have to be imposed. This all is there despite the fact that our State has plenty of water resource and can produce electricity so as to be self sufficient. However that can happen when we have funds and adequate technical manpower at our disposal.

It has been the attempt of the State Government to establish connection with the Northern Power Grid so that we are able to overcome our power shortage partly if not in full. Among several measures that the Government has been taking to improve power supply to the state, one is that of setting up 400 KV Sub-station at Samba. But this station has remained unused for many months now. The reason for it being dysfunctional is that there was a dispute between the Power Grid Corporation of India authorities and the State Government. The basis of the dispute was about the 220 KV transmission lines that would transmit power from Samba Sub-station. We are pleased to know that an understanding on the issue has developed. It is reliably learnt that Standing Committee on Power System Planning, the apex organization of the Union Ministry of Power, has discussed power position in the Northern Region including Jammu and Kashmir. The Chairman of the Standing Committee has directed the Jammu and Kashmir PDD to submit within 15 days the time-line required to lay 220 KV transmission line network from Samba to Burn and from upcoming grid at Wanpooch near Qazigund. Additionally, it is also learnt that connecting Samba grid with Hiranagar by 220 KV line has found weight in the stand taken by the J&K PDD. The J&K has stressed that the Samba Grid should be provided 220 KV connectivity with the Hiranagar Grid by the PGCIL so that some power could be evacuated till the Samba-Burn transmission network is put in place.

But the most significant decision taken by the Committee and one that is of immense benefit to the State is that apart from the existing connectivity with the Northern Grid one more connectivity will be established via Mughal Road. The benefit of second Grid connection will be that it will provide alternate connectivity in case one connection line meets with fault. This connecting line will be far away from the one that is in use at present and as such the two lines will not be liable to be under weather conditions simultaneously. Another benefit of this new connectivity will be that the backward districts of Rajouri and Poonch will be benefited in terms of improved power supply as both of these two districts had been suffering under regular power default.

We appreciate all parties concerned for showing maturity and resolving the dispute amicably. After all the matter pertains to millions of people and the prosperity and development of a large part of the State is at stake.

Transformer repairing?

Transformers are part of the technical requirements of power supply system. But the experience with the electricity department is that transformers when desired to perform overload get damaged and have to be sent for repairs. There are about 7,000 transformers in Jammu region of which 3-5 per cent are damaged and waiting for repairs. It means that at least 350 transformers are damaged and have to be repaired. Repairing is partly done in three Government workshops but mostly private firms are engaged to do the repairing work. About ten or twelve of these firms have been engaged to repair the transformers. Their bill for repairs has accumulated to about 12 crore rupees but the Government has sanctioned only 2 crore and actually only one half has been released so far. This is despite the fact that the State Government formally announced that the amount of arrears of transformer repairing to the firms would be released. As a result, owing to nonpayment of arrears the private firms have refused to proceed with the work of repairing the transformers. The Government workshops cannot cope with the pressure of the work and the Government is delaying payment of repair charges. What is the net result and who is put to suffering? It is the poor tax payer and ordinary person who have been made to suffer. They get plunged into darkness and there seems no solution to the problem. There are two or three firms that are really in a position to carry on repair work and wait endlessly for the day when the Government is pleased to release the arrears. Generally all the other private firms are running their modest workshop and are living hand to mouth. Instead of helping them to stabilize their enterprise, the Government is creating hurdles for them by delaying the payment of arrears. We hope the Government will not make a joke of repairing the damaged transformers or of the people who expect it to be serious about solving their problems.

Food, Poverty & Politics

Shivaji Sarkar

The Food Security Bill is a classic case of putting the cart before the horse. It increases subsidy on food grain by over Rs 33,000 crore immediately and progressively in the next five years to about Rs 179,000 crore while almost eliminating subsidy on agriculture. The US did not do this despite the WTO, but India, which believes in action without a perspective has done it.

At the same time, there is a positive side unwittingly to the Bill. For the first time since Independence the Government has officially accepted that there is hunger in the country and people die of it. Else the officials always state that deaths are due to "malnutrition" and not starvation. Additionally, there is an admission that inflation has gone through the roof. People are unable to buy food at high prices. It also accepts that the Government has virtually not acted to keep the food prices under check.

The bill also admits that the number of poor are 67 per cent of the population - 81 crore and not the various figures shelled out by the Planning Commission which range from 26 per cent to 36 per cent or a bit more liberal ones at 40 and 50 per cent. The Arjun Sengupta Committee, however, had put the figure at 77 per cent. Undeniably, food remains the centerpiece of politics, as India is only a few notches above some sub-Saharan countries in the Global Hunger Index. Indeed, it pays dividend to keep the masses in abysmal poverty. A lot can be promised as freebies - laptops, TV sets, saris - a dreamland could be created to lure votes.

The Bill virtually censures all Governments that have

ruled this country since 1947. There has been complete failure by all. During the past 66 years, almost an additional 67 crore more people have slipped into abysmal poverty. The number of poor have more than doubled with the population at the time of Independence being 34 crore.

Additionally, the Bill is a sure prescription for the impending collapse of Government finances. It has taken upon itself to be legally obligated to provide food grains at the fixed rates of Rs 3, 2 and 1 without ensuring whether it would be available to it at affordable rates. Undoubtedly, the Government would play into the hands of the food mafia, which include some large corporates, both domestic and multi-national.

The nation shouldn't be surprised if the Government is forced to buy food grains at high prices and sell at the lowest it has fixed. This would open up new routes for scams, as the poor, which constitute the largest vote bank, would need to be fed. Thus, the motto of feeding them and getting the votes is natural. But at what cost? Obviously, this is not a problem for a political party which wants credit at public expense.

Sadly, nobody wants to learn from recent history. The best model State in terms of welfare was the Soviet Union. It collapsed not because of a failed ideology, but under heavy unaffordable expenses on its commitment to provide food, commodities and shelter to everyone. Entitlements kept the citizenry happy but eroded the nation's financial base.

What India is doing today reminds one of late Indira Gandhi's famous slogan "garibi hatao". Are we putting the clock back to 1971?

Maybe, but Indira didn't raise entitlements. She ensured a green revolution to guarantee food availability and stopped imports of rotten wheat and rice from the US. She made people in large parts of the country less dependent on the public distribution system (PDS). And, in the initial days, she was able to check spiraling prices.

Successors of Mrs Gandhi should have learnt something from her-- that country's path to better days was ensured through investment and research in agriculture. Chariman of Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission states: "We shall have to change the rules of the game". The farmers cannot be paid less and asked to subsidise the economy. The present minimum support price is almost 30 per cent less than what he invests in each of the crop.

Since 1991, public investment in agriculture has drastically fallen and private corporate investment has increased in a selective manner. Today, the corporate have emerged as the biggest zamindars (landlords). Their profits are soaring and prices of food items are rising. The recent National Spot Exchange (NSE) scam has exposed betting in food items, something the UN agencies had warned about years ago.

Yes, Manmohan Singh's market has failed the poor. The middle class has been pulled down to the edge of poverty line. Massive entitlement without proper mechanism to deliver would only drain public finances. Surprisingly, even the Opposition did not object to the Bill. Perhaps, rightly as it too cannot risk losing votes on a sensitive issue.

The impending dangers are far too many. Even now, the Government doesn't have any

control on prices. Under compulsion of buying food at a high price and supplying it at the lowest price, it has burdened all future Governments with enormous unwanted expenditure. It will be very difficult to undo the damage by withdrawing it as the political fall-out would be just too intimidating.

With the new Land Acquisition law, there would be further strain on farm land. Over the past two decades over 27 lakh hectare arable land has gone for other uses. The new bill is likely to ensure a further diversion. How would food production, even at the current rate, be ensured?

It would play havoc not only with Government finances but with the economy as a whole. As the Government would become the largest procurer, the farmers are likely to see freezing of the MSP, another disincentive as inflation soars. As this also may create shortage of food for the 33 per cent left out of the scheme, food prices may rise. Since this chunk of the market is being controlled by the corporate, it is likely that they would offer better prices to farmers and choke the Government supply line.

In such a case, would the Government buy food from the corporate houses at very high prices to meet its commitment? In an extreme situation, India may even have to approach the international grain market. No sooner this happens, will the international prices rise. With the ongoing forex crunch what would be its implication on the rupee, no one has even tried to foresee. Ultimately, food may not only elude the poor but shall also open the flood gates of corruption in the purchase of food grains. A double whammy! --- INFA

Imperative to Save Dairy Sector

Ashwani Mahajan

In the last couple of years, Government of India is indulged in making a free trade agreement (FTA) with European Union, which would require us to reduce import tariff on dairy products to zero percent. It is notable that European countries give huge subsidies to their dairy producers to promote and safeguard their dairy sector. If subsidised dairy products are allowed to import into India, our dairy products would not be able to withstand the competition.

Development of dairy sector in the last four decades, have benefitted the national economy in general and farming community in particular. Today we produce 35 crore litre of milk daily and India has the distinction of world's largest producer of milk. In 2012-13, total milk production in the country was valued at Rs. 4 lakh crores. If we compare the production of any single agricultural produce, may it be rice or wheat, milk values much higher than any single crop. Milk production has surpassed 1300 lakh tonnes, whereas production of largest single agricultural crop rice's in 2012-13 was 1040 lakh tonnes. Therefore one can conclude that farmer gets higher income from milk than any other produce.

On the eve of independence, per capita availability of milk in the country was merely 129 grams per day. Today this has reached 233 gram per day. Production of milk got a boost after 1970, when a special program started in the name and style of 'Operation Food'. Fast increase in production of milk in a short period of time is also called 'White Revolution'. Leader of this revolution, who is also called 'India's milk man' was Dr. Kurien. Today nation is fighting against the menace of malnutrition. In this context it is notable that whereas per capita availability of food grain has declined in the last 20 years, rising per capita availability of milk,

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definitely gives us a sigh of relief. Therefore dairy sector has worked hard to save Indian agriculture and provide nutrition to the nation.

Co-operation: Key to Dairy Development

Role of cooperative movement, especially 'Amul Model' was instrumental in dairy development in India. Today organised and unorganised sector both have been helping in dairy development in India. In organised dairy sector, cooperative sector has dominant presence. Today the world acknowledges the role of Milk Man Dr. Kurien led 'Amul Model'. Milk is procured from small milk producer from all over the country. Thereafter in the processing units, takes place the value addition when milk is processed and purified in most modern plants. In the process more than three-fourth of the price of the milk goes to the farmer, which is exemplary is the world.

Looming Dangers on Dairy Sector

Though India has made significant progress in dairy sector, and income of the farmer has also increased significantly, future of the dairy sector is in danger, as government is entering into international and regional trade agreements in the name of free trade. Dairy sector in India is already faced with several problems like indifferent attitude of government, FDI in retail, old and less productive breeds of cows/buffalo etc. Indian dairy sector which is also faced with several problems including high cost per unit; may lose the battle of competition and Indian dairy may be forced to push out of the market. Dairy sector is also faced with the problem of lack of national leadership.

After Dr. Kurien there is no national personality to represent dairy sector. Under these circumstances, proposed FTA with EU may cause havoc for the dairy sector. If we import milk and other milk products at say 10 percent cheaper, our domestic producers may not be able to compete with the imported stuff as our farmers would be deprived of the fair price for their milk, in tune with domestic cost of production. The farmer who is already facing the brunt of rising cost of milk production will be pushed out of the market. Milk production of the country would be adversely affected and India dependence on imports would go up. Farmer for whom dairy production means supplementing the income would no longer find it remunerative to continue with milk production. Under these circumstances proposed FTA with European Union may not only affect the future development of dairy sector, rather it may doom the dairy sector at large.

Need to mend Government Policy

Undoubtedly, dairy sector has been instrumental in the survival for the farmers, woman empowerment and their self prestige; however most unfortunate part of the whole story is that government still does not treat dairy to be part of agricultural sector.

No doubt dairy sector today is a major source of food security, employment and income enhancement of the farmer. At the same time dairy sector today has become the symbol of upliftment of the women folk. But it is unfortunate that even today the government does not consider dairy as part of agriculture. It is notable that dairy sector does not get priority treatment in bank loans. Whereas agricultural incomes are exempted from income tax, dairy income attract income tax has applicable on non agricultural incomes. Inclusion of dairy sector in MNRGA may go a long way in the development of dairy sector; however the government does not seem to be in any mood to go in this direction. Today on the one hand the government is talking about food security, a major source of food security is being sent to the danger zone. Today it is imperative to ensure the feed security for the milch cattle along with food security for humans to ensure growth in milk production. If we include milk also in mid-day meal program, it may help increasing the production of milk in the local areas along with provision of nutritional meal to the children.

Handle with Care

It is imperative that the government takes utmost care in reaching at international and regional trade agreements and does not make any commitment to open dairy imports, which may doom the dairy sector. Rather there is need to draw short term, medium term and long term plans for healthy growth of dairy sector.

Reasons behind scams

Ramesh K Raina

There has been a phenomenal increase in scams in our country in the last decade or so. The country has earned the tag of land of scams.

Why there has been so much upsurge in these scams has to be understood in its historical context. Every society is passing through an evolutionary phase. The only difference is that some societies are in the initial stages of evolution and some are in the latter stage and even some societies have evolved much faster than other societies.

Taking a look at European society, this society passed through a phase of peasantry system which was replaced by feudal system. After the industrial revolution there was a complete change in the social and economic fabric of European society. Society began to be polarized into two main economic classes. Those who owned means of production were called capitalistic class and who sold their physical and mental capacity called labour power merely for earning wages for subsistence were called working class.

In fact capitalistic mode of production started to emerge with the onset of industrial revolution. However, traces of this system were even before this but modern capitalism which has become a paradigm showed its presence with the advancement in technology. In this history of class struggle capitalism became the brutal form of economic struggle. It is in the nature of this struggle, that power plays a decisive role. This gives rise to power relations. Those who can wield power over others can gain hold of resources called means of production. Power is wielded in any form which can be money, muscle, knowledge numerical social strength and et al. Means of production over which control is gained can be in the form

of land, factories, real estate or the huge capital. In fact there means of production are the wherewithals which are prerequisite for capitalistic mode of production.

Taking this historical context further, it has been witnessed that any form of brutality is by nature pre-requisite to gain control over the means of production. In this struggle many kinds of crimes, extortion, scams or even murders have taken place to grab the capitalistic goods. Thus there is a set coercive formula that is adopted by the powerful persons who use any unscrupulous means to gain control over the capitalistic goods.

What adds to the problem is that it becomes a vicious circle and the social order becomes anomic. The law enforcing agencies become helpless and lose their control over these powerful agencies and groups. In other words it becomes a situation free for all. It becomes a "Jungle Raj" where big and mighty rule the roost. During disintegration of erstwhile USSR, mafia groups indulged in all kinds of brutalities to gain control over means of production and distribution and the middle class was left at the mercy of barons.

Once these means of production are owned by using any form of brutality or unscrupulous means, situation becomes stable. Now, the criminal becomes a saint. Now workers are employed in factories and industries on paltry wages which are just enough for his subsistence. Profit making starts and expansion of enterprises takes place. Workers sell their labour power and work overtime for their survival. This is how the take off stage of capitalism reaches its mature phase.

Indian society at present is passing through a transition phase of economic evolution. After economic liberalization,

private ownership has become stronger and the state control is losing its grip. People are in the mad race to accumulate wealth required for gaining control over means of production and even means of distribution. It has become a competitive culture which is vicious in nature.

In the present scenario, it has become a market situation and in a market situation there are chances. These chances are according to the capacity of individuals. Those individuals who have a chance to grab capitalistic resources can become barons. Indian society at present is in the process of transition from a traditional agricultural economy to an industrial economy, from a traditional value system to a modern rational value system, from a traditional religious ideology to a western secular ideology. People in today's society are in a dilemma. On one side there is traditional socialistic conception of economy. Caste ideology, religious ideology patriarchy are deep rooted concepts particularly in rural areas. On the other side, market forces have dominated every aspect of society be it social, cultural, political.

These market driven forces have had personal influence on the common man of Indian society. These forces are profit driven and exploitative in nature. In the garb of raising the standard of living among the people these market forces are making a good market from the consumption of manufactured goods. In order to improve their standard of living and raise their social status, people have resorted to all kinds of practices which include mass corruption, scams and so many frauds. What has conflicted the problem is that money accrued through unscrupulous scams is partially invested in productive enterprises. Much of the money is used for unproductive purposes such as extravagant mar-

riage ceremonies, dowry and so many other social evils. So the ethics that is being followed in matured capitalism is not being followed here in its true spirit.

Now an important question is that who has the chance of getting hold of means of production. Here one more element comes into play its role and that is the means of administration. So who are at the helm of affairs in the administration have a bright chance to wield influence in accumulating wealth. In these circumstances, elites and sub elites who are the important functionaries in administration are in complete control of means of administration. They are in command of reign and take policy decisions. All the schemes, their execution, implementation are being formulated by these functionaries. Means of administration and means of production are the two sides of same coin. These two have a dialectical relation. Those who are in control of means of administration have a better chance of controlling means of production and vice versa. A new mafia group emerges in administration and huge amount of money is channelised through a network. This is how scams take place. Wealth accrued through these scams is invested in gaining control of capital goods which are necessary prerequisite for entrepreneurship.

In the existing scenario, large scale scams that are taking place are the result of unending quest to acquire entrepreneurship and become the owners of means of production, because the backbone of capitalistic mode of production is the means of production. In the present circumstances, it seems that these scams shall continue though intermittently till the stage of capitalism reaches its stable phase where people may use only scrupulous means to a mass wealth.

Vacancies in Education Deptt

Sir,

There are 19,000 posts of teachers vacant in the State. These posts need to be filled at the earliest to ensure that shortage of staff may not affect academic ambience of schools.

Shortage of staff particularly in rural areas is one of the reasons of poor performance in Government run schools in the State. It may be mentioned here that there are many posts vacant despite the Service Selection Board's recent notification of selection of teachers fast-track employment scheme.

Education is one sectors where there is no compromise. The Government instead of focussing on this sector, usually attaches no importance to it. This is why Private Sector with all its draw backs is growing in the State. This automatically has pushed Government schools in the background.

There is urgent need to revamp the working of these schools at the earliest. Any delay would further erode their credibility.

Yours etc....
Ramesh Sangral
Jammu

Oil price rise

Sir,

The constant price rise in petroleum products is a matter of concern for the countrymen. The price rise has a cascading effect on other sectors where petroleum products are used. To avoid further rise (there are apprehension that prices may be raised further) the Government must take some remedial measures at the earliest.

The Government must stop misuse of Government vehicles. Ministers, bureaucrats and police officials have a large number of vehicles at their disposal which they use for carrying out domestic chores and shopping. It will be better for the country if it withdraws this facility from them. The burden of burning oil by these people falls on the common man. The Government must also find alternatives to petroleum and diesel as these are affecting our economy and make us dependent on their whims and caprices. Besides, people should use petrol judiciously.

In case misuse is not stopped right now, it will have serious repercussions on the economy in the coming times.

Yours etc....
Madan Lal Khajuria
Rehari Colony, Jammu

Readers Write

Holding of public darbars

Sir,

The fundamental and the most important duty of the Government is to look to the comforts of the people. If all these requirements are provided to the people to their entire satisfaction, they will feel satisfied with working of their elected representatives in particular and the Government in general. Besides, the functioning of the elected representatives of all the constituencies the present young and energetic Chief Minister has taken an initiative to hold public darbars in order to delve deep into the problems of the people by having a direct interaction with them and some of the problems are ordered to be solved/mitigated on the spot. Such steps bring the administration to the gate of the people and the people have not to move from office to office to get their problems solved. The Government on its part takes such beneficial measures but the execution lies in the hands of bureaucrats and if acted upon judiciously will take the country to the status of the welfare State.

Yours etc....
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