

TRANSPORT SECTOR - SIGNIFICANCE : Transport is one of the key sectors in the economy of the Nation. The Country's overall development depends upon the efficient functioning of the transport sector. India's overall progress is dependent mainly on transport sector which plays an important role in the development of economy of the country. Transport sector not only serves the needs of Industrialization but also caters to the needs of the agricultural sector. Amongst all modes of transport sector, the road transport wing plays the main role. During the year 1950-51, the share of road transport was (total) 13.8% among goods transport in the country. By the end of the year 2012 - 13 its share rose to 66.4%. Out of this, 40% of the share goes to the transport of goods on national highways, which constitute only 2% of the total road length of the country. In total passenger transport, 85.1% is shared by road transport. This Claims 4.62% in the GDP for the year 2012-13. During the year 2013-14, Central Govt. got Rs.667,041.6, Crores, and the State Govts. got Rs.67,056.4 Crores, totalling to Rs.1,34,098 Crores of revenue altogether towards collection of all types of taxes from this sector. This clearly proves the vital role of the transport sector and the contribution of the transport workers .

The total no of Motor Vehicles registered as on 31st March 2013 are 18,24,45,000. In this the two wheelers are 13,25,50,000, Cars, Jeeps & Taxis are 2,48,53,000, Buses are 18,94,000, Goods Vehicles are 85,97,000, Other Vehicles (including Auto Rickshaw, Tractors, Ambulances, Cranes, etc) are 1,45,51,000. If we take all these vehicles excluding Two Wheelers, approximately 15,00,00,000 workers are directly engaged in this field. In addition to this crores of workers are engaged indirectly in the Vehicle Manufacturing, Spare Parts Manufacturing and in Repairing of Vehicles.

GOVERNMENT POLICES:- For the past 15 to 20 years there have been numerous changes which occurred in the transport field. Technical knowledge has enormously developed. Load Capacity of transport vehicles has significantly improved and the cost of the vehicles has gone up. Adding fuel to this the diesel price has increased substantially. The Toll Tax, Insurance premium etc were increased in a big way. Owner-cum-drivers having one or two vehicles constitute 90% of the total strength of the goods transport vehicles. They are Unable to get break even due to heavy burden of operational expenditure. Many of the lorry owners have become bankrupt. Except big companies all other small operators are unable to withstand. Some small owners, who got finance from private financing companies, are unable to pay even instalments to the financiers, have to lose their vehicles to the financiers, who have seized the vehicles. Such vehicles in the Country are in big number. This Situation has arisen due to faulty policies of the Govt.

WORKING CONDITIONS:- If Transport sector comes to a standstill, the whole Economy of the country will be in doldrums and the public life comes to a halt. It is the hard work of the Transport Workers that pulls and rotates the wheels of the economy throughout the year. But the working and living conditions of the workers are horribly distressed in general and that of the goods transport workers (Lorry) in particular. The 8 hrs work envisaged in the M.T.W.Act 1961 is limited to the papers and left unchecked. The provisions of the act that there should be two drivers on National Permit Lorries, is a standing example of violation of the provisions since only one driver is being utilized on such vehicles. Days together they (the drivers of such vehicles) have to be away from their homes and families and working day and night exposing themselves to the bad weather condition like hot sun, heavy rainy and bitter cold.

While performing the duties on line even in such bad weather condition, the drivers have to finish their natural calls, bathing, dining etc. on the road itself. If at all they have to take rest they should seek

the shelter of a tree along the side of the road as there is no other alternative. The rules that have been framed to construct rest rooms and hotels for certain distance are on the "Writings on the surface of water".

Because of the worst condition of workers and ardent nature of work involved in this field the young generation is not inclined to come forward to choose this profession. There is heavy dearth of drivers .Nobody is willing to come as cleaner. Thereby the plight of existing drivers has become unbearable as he has to perform the duties of a cleaner also.

HARASSMENT:- In addition to the pathetic condition of the workers prevailing in the transport field especially of the drivers the harassment of the police & other officials reached the peak. Two years back a driver by name Rama Rao was proceeding with loaded lorry to Uttar Pradesh. A check was exercised by the Deputy Transport Commissioner at a checkpoint near Agra. Though all the documents verified by the said transport official were found to be correct, the official demanded Rs.4000/-. The driver of the said lorry refused to pay the said amount. For this the DTC along with her staff attacked the driver and beat him to death.

It has become a regular feature for the police officials to harass the drivers, using filthy language and beating them on one pretext or the other. At the check post of both the state highways and interstate routes the degree of harassment of police and other officials reached the peak and the untold miseries faced by the drivers, by way of making them to wait for long time hours together with rebukes and man handling awarded to them by the said officials. The state & Central Govt. neither they provide the jobs nor they allow the drivers who want to seek this private job to get on with their livelihood. This is in contrast with the saying that "the mother doesn't feed and will not allow to beg". Which means the mother who is supposed to feed the children neither she feeds them nor allow them to beg.

Now a days professional criminals are rampant and poor Lorry, Auto and Taxi drivers are the victims of such criminals and antisocial elements put together or individually resorting to the attacks on the drivers and looting their money and valuables etc. In some cases the Lorries had been snatched away and the criminals resorting to slain the drivers also.

WAGES:- The workers in the goods transport are getting the lowest wages. There is no proper wage policy in the sector and even the existing statute policy is not being implemented. The labour department which is empowered to check and implement the policy statutorily, observing silence and remained as a paralytic patient. The families of the workers are facing lot of troubles to meet the day to day expenditure. It is not a matter of surprise that no driver could be found having "No debts" and most of the families live in slum areas, As such they will not be provided with purified drinking water and clean lavatories. Their health and the education to their children is not taken care of.

STATUTES- FACILITIES:- There are several transport companies in Ports. In each Company, more than 40 workers are employed in various categories like driver, helper, operator etc. In such cases the statutory provisions like PF, ESI, Gratuity, Bonus, MTW. Act and Work Men's Compensation Act have to be implemented without any reservations. But practically no company is implementing the said statutory provisions. The minimum requirements like drinking water at the places of work ,no proper facility for rest to the workers in the gap between loading and unloading .Workers don't have a facility to dine the food which they bring from their homes and they have no other go than to sit in the dust and mud for their dining.

COMPULSIONS:- In case of simple and unavoidable damages caused beyond the control of drivers they are made responsible and in such cases cost of damages are being recovered from the meagre salaries apart from the punishments like abuses and assaults. In Kakinada Port (Andhra Pradesh) the contractor resorted to brutal attack and injured 16 workers who approached him requesting to implement the already agreed wage revision. Finally the union was damaged severely and the leaders were made to experience many hardships and sufferings for having formed the union.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT:- The Labour Department has become “Management Welfare Department”. The activity to be performed in Ports will be governed by the Govt. But no attention is paid in regard to the condition of workers and the implementation of statutory provisions of labour laws. When the Situations prevailing even in Ports are so worse and unruly, we can easily imagine how the situation will be in other places.

AUTO SECTOR:- The responsibility of providing safe and affordable transport lies with the government. But there seems to be no proper transport policy existing with the govt. On the other hand the unemployment devil has spread its paws throughout the country in large scale. Under these circumstances lakhs of people including unemployed youth are living by taking up the profession of auto driving either purchasing the auto by disposing off the meager property and ornaments they possess with them or obtaining loans from private financiers .Many villages are dependent upon the autos for their transport needs, since the buses are inadequate and irregular.

Since the govt. needs income from all the sources, registration, licenses and permits are issued to autos though the beneficiaries, are subjected to many hurdles and hardships. Even after issuing registration and licence the auto drivers are not free from harassments like, uniform , license, badge, overloading, insurance, R.C etc and finally operating on restricted routes, highways by the police officials. These officials are also imposing hundreds and thousands of rupees as penalties on the auto drivers. The penalty so collected in majority of the cases, exceeds the total days earning of the auto driver, by way of frequent and continuous checks conducted by the officials.

Even in cases of issue of license and badges, the auto drivers are being subjected to so many hardships. Through the educational qualification for issue of a license to the driver, is 8th class as per the M.V.Act, the officials are insisting a pass in 10th class. As per rules while issuing a transport vehicle driving license a badge also should be issued . But practically badges are not issued. Even then, the driver is harassed by the Officials for the non production of badge.

To cite an incident of harassment of the police officials, that happened 2-3 years ago near Tenali in Andhra Pradesh, where police officials were checking the vehicles. An auto driver who came to know about the checking, in order to save himself from heavy burden of penalties and harassment, tried to proceed on another route. one police officer observed the diversion of the route taken by the auto driver, chased the auto, caught hold of the driver and beat him severely resulting in his death.

OIL TANKERS:- The nature of driving the Oil Tankers it self is highly dangerous. The Driving License for Oil Tankers is a special one. The drivers and cleaners of tankers, which transport diesel, kerosene, petrol and gas are working in dangerous conditions. The oil companies Viz. IOCL, HPCL, BPCL Etc. will supply their stocks from their storage depots to the oil bunk dealers located at various places of consumption through oil tankers on contract system. The contractor's place the oil tankers with the oil companies “On Hire”. The Oil Companies are the Principal Employers, but claim no responsibility of the Oil Tankers

workers even though the companies earn huge profits. The concessional rates of eatables applicable to the company employees in the canteens are not made available to the oil tanker workers. Neither the Oil Companies nor the contractors take the responsibility of implementation of statutory provisions like, minimum wages and other facilities to the oil tanker workers. Even the Personal Insurance premium is not paid by the Company/Contractor.

TAXIES: There are about 2,48,53,000 Cars, Jeeps and Taxis in the Country. Most of the taxies are owned by the drivers themselves. These taxi drivers are owning the Taxis by getting loan from private finance companies and somehow managing to lead the lives of their family and children. They are also not exempted from the harassment of police & other officials. Now a days these taxi drivers are also subjected to kidnaping and at times they are murdered.

SMALL GOODS VEHICLES:- Due to the growth of urbanization the necessity of the use of auto trolley, Tata Ace vehicles of small wheelbase, has been ever increasing. In this field also majority of the drivers are the owners of the said vehicles. As in the case of other drivers the harassment by the police authority is faced by these drivers also.

AMBULANCES:- There are a good number of Ambulances in the Country. These Ambulances are meant to save the lives of people. But the drivers working on these ambulances do not have any kind of rights and facilities to safeguard their own lives and livelihood.

SCHOOL & COLLEGE BUSES:- Education has become a trade now a days. All most all the medium and big Educational Institutions are operating Buses for the transportation of their students. There by the number of School/College buses in the Country has gone up phenomnally. There are enormous complaints against the condition of these buses. Though the managements gain much profit in the operation of these buses, they take a little care on the maintenance of these buses and do not care to provide even statutory facilities including minimum wages to the drivers of these buses.

THE ROLE OF AIRTWF

All India Road Transport Workers Federation is an umbrella organization of all the Segments of Road Transport Workers in the Country. It is established to unite the Transport Workers and to fight for the welfare of the Workers and for the betterment of the industry at large.

In order to achieve statutory rights and to provide better facilities and working conditions for the road transport workers and for their living with self respect, AIRTWF always demanded and stood with the Transport Workers. AIRTWF is continuously making efforts to Unionize the Transport Workers in the Country. Separate Conventions of Workers of Goods Transport, Auto, Taxi, Mini bus, Private Bus and STU sectors have been organized. The problems faced by the workers of the above sectors was discussed in the conventions and prepared demands sector wise. Nationwide agitations/struggles have been organized including Marches to parliament and relay "Satyagraha" in Delhi. Discussions with Officials, Minister and Prime Minister was also held.

On the basis of the memorandum of All India Road Transport Workers Federation, the Central Govt. entrusted the work of studying the working conditions of Road Transport Workers to the V.V.Giri National Labour Institute and to submit a report.

A team of the said institute undertook tours throughout India , visited several places and personally interacted with the drivers, conductors, Cleaners, Mechanics and Booking Office Personnel working on Lorries, Autos, Taxis and private and STU Buses and enquired their working conditions.

The Committee while submitting its report to the Govt. hailed and appreciated the role of the Transport Workers. The Committee highlighted the worst conditions under which the workers are subjected to work, and emphasized the immediate necessity to change the working conditions and suitable steps to be taken by the Govt. The committee suggested to formulate a social security scheme exclusively for the Road Transport Workers in general and emphasized the need to improve the condition of the workers of private transport sector in particular.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Labour welfare Acts such as P.F, Gratuity and E.S.I should be amended as such that they are applicable to all the workers irrespective of the number of workers working in an Establishment.

A) This Committee has observed that there exists the Management-worker relation in the sector. Therefore management should give an appointment order to the workers and the appointment order should contain the recorded numbers of P.F and ESI. All the working regulations and all the welfare Provisions including payment of wages should be recorded in the orders of appointment. At the time of Registration of the vehicle, this order shall be invariably produced before the transport authority.

B) At the time of vehicle Fitness, Payment of tax and permit renewal the management should submit a certificate to the effect that “all the benefits payable to the workers have been paid at the end of the year”. M.V Act should be amended as such that this certificate should also be carried along with the R.C and Insurance certificates kept with the vehicle.

3) Irrespective of as to how many workers are there working, the Govt. of India should amend the E.S.I Act 1948, Provident Fund Act 1952, Employees linked insurance scheme-1976 and Work men’s Compensation Act 1923, and make them applicable to all the workers. Diseases like Piles and Injuries to Spinal Cord also should be included in the list of ESI applicable diseases.

4) Training on the sophisticated technology and changes in the rules etc, Should be imparted to the workers prior to his appointment and the expenditure so incurred should be borne by the management.

5) M.T.W. Act should be amended to ensure that the management should give an appointment order along with an identity card to the workers.

6) M.T.W. Act applies only to the management which engage five or more workers. The Act should be amended for the applicability even when engagement of workers less than 5.

7) Section 2(h) of M.T W. Act should be made applicable to all the workers, exempting the workers who are covered by factories Act.

CENTRAL ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS WELFARE ACT

Majority of workers in this field are employed with the petty owners who have one or two vehicles. These workers fate is fully depended on the mercy and benevolence of their owners. The V.V Giri National Labour Institute has opined that a "FUND" on the lines of welfare fund scheme of the Beedi workers needs to be created for the welfare of these workers in order to uplift their living standards and therefore recommended to the Government for action. It is also suggested that an amount of Rs 3/ or Rs 10/ or Rs 20/ shall be collected from each of the motor vehicle owner and remitted to the "Fund" which should be kept with the ministry of Labour & Employment Department, Govt. of India. Through such enactment the Committee proposed to extend the following facilities to the workers.

On the routes where heavy vehicle traffic is on high side, Hospital facility to be provided at every 75kms of distance.

Workers suffering from Tuberculosis should be paid Rs 50/ per day towards medical expenses, and Rs 1000/ to Rs 1500/ pm. Up to period of 9 months towards maintenance allowance as the worker can not attend to duty during the treatment period.

Workers suffering from Cancer should be paid total actual expenditure and Rs 1,000/ to Rs 1,500/- pm up to a period of 9 months towards maintains allowance during the treatment period.

In case of "Surgeries" conducted for the treatment of Appendicitis or kidney stone problems an amount of Rs 40,000/ should be paid.

In case of surgery conducted for Hernia for Rs30,000 should be paid.

For the purchase of Spectacle Rs 500/ should be paid.

For the treatment of Heart related ailment an amount of Rs1,50,000/ should be paid and an amount of Rs 1,000/- to Rs1,500/-pm shall be paid up to a period of 9 months towards maintenance allowance as the worker cannot attend to duties during that period.

For the replacement of kidney an amount of Rs2,00,000/ should be paid and a maintenance allowance of Rs 1000/- to Rs1500/-pm, Up to a period of 9 months also to be paid.

In case of normal death an amount of Rs50,000/ and in case of accidental death Rs 70,000 should be paid to the deceased worker's family.

For the housing of workers, an amount of Rs50,000/ shall be paid as subsidy in case of an integrated housing scheme, or in other case 50% of the cost of the house shall be paid.

Educational Grant for the children's Education Amount

Should be paid as following.

Children studying from 5th to 8th class Rs 540/ to Rs 940/-PA

Children studying from 9th class Rs 700 to 1,140/-PA

Children studying 10th class Rs 1,400 to 1,840/-PA

Children studying 11th &12th Classes Rs2,000/ to 2,460/-PA.

Children studying Graduation/Diploma courses Rs 4,000/-PA

Children studying Engineering/Medical courses Rs 8,000/-PA

STRUGGLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION: As a result of many years of protests and struggles launched by the AIRTWF, the report of the study conducted by the V.V.Giri National Labour Institute on the conditions of the Road Transport Workers, with the recommendations throwing light on the plight of the workers, is at present lying before the Government. Though this report was submitted years back, the Union Govt. did not find time to consider the report. The fate of the Study Report submitted to the Govt. by the Committee is lying with the Govt. in such a manner that a person having eyes, ears and hands but they will not see, hear and do the work respectively and as blowing bugles sounds before a deaf person.

As aforesaid, the Govt. is lethargic and declined in opening the V.V Giri institute Report and act positively on the recommendations. Hence there is no other go for the Road Transport workers than to agitate vigorously in a roaring voice to get the recommendations implemented by the Govt. Keeping aside all the affiliations, the Road Transport Workers now should come together unitedly throughout the country and to build up a nationwide struggle, for which the AIRTWF is calling for. Working class should desist from the despondency attitude towards the basic problems of their own and should rise to the occasion by joining hand to hand to fight against the ruling classes thus building up revolutionary struggle in order to achieve their fundamental rights and to get better conditions of their living.

ROAD TRANSPORT AND SAFETY BILL - 2015 (Minus Safety)

[NEFARIOUS PLOT TO SAFETY – A ROPE TO HANG THE DRIVER]

When at a time the entire Road Transport Workers are agitating for improvement of their working conditions and for the betterment of the industry, the Govt of India released the Draft Road Transport And Safety Bill in 2014. The Road accidents and the fatalities is a serious concern and immediate attention should be paid to minimize. Any step towards this direction really aimed at reducing the accidents should be supported by one and all. A detailed study of the Bill raises doubt whether the bill is really intended to arrest the rate of the accidents and provide safety or is it a nefarious plot in the guise of safety? These points have to be understood carefully.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:- There is not even a single word on how the accidents are taking place and what are the remedial measures proposed. One of the aspects of the bill is to make drivers as scapegoats by way of imposing heavy penalties & huge punishments. If the bill is enacted by the Parliament and comes into effect, all the present license holders shall have a statutory responsibility to surrender their licenses to the Govt within two years. Then they have to undergo a Critical, Computerized test and pass to obtain a new license. The episode does not end in itself. But in case of offences like signal jump, Overload, if the light of the vehicle do not function and emit black smoke from the silencer, the minimum penalty of Rs.1, 000/- to 10,000/- will be imposed and in addition to that there will be entries of points in the license. If 12 points are accumulated within a year the license will automatically get suspended. Apart from this the seizure of the vehicle and Community Penalty will also will be there.

Soon after the Act comes into force, none of the existing vehicles will be allowed to ply on the roads. In the name of safety, sophisticated machinery and equipment, shall have to be added to the vehicles the cost of which will be unbearable. Each vehicle should be equipped with GPS system. Including the driver every passenger travelling in the vehicle should be provided with seat belt. Spare parts should be

purchased from branded company only and the use of other company parts is prohibited. The bill envisages that conversion and alteration in any form of petrol, Diesel, Gas and other vehicles is strictly prohibited.

All these proposals in the bill go to prove that in the guise of “safety” the Govt. declared a war on the road transport workers, drivers and petty owners having one or two vehicles. Now the time has come that crores of transport workers get united and enter into an indefatigable battle against the retrograde policy of Govt. so that the bill is thrown into a dustbin. For that every worker should know the basic problems erupted in the bill, the Govt. attitude and use visavis the realities.

CAUSES FOR ACCIDENTS:- The number of vehicles that ply on the roads has grown enormously. During the years 2003-13, the growth rate of vehicles put on the road increased by 10.5% annually. In this, the share of Cars, Taxis and Jeeps is the highest. On the other hand during the same period the growth rate of the width of the road is 4% only. Apart from this, vehicles with modern technology, fitted with much more bright focusing headlights, have flooded the roads. On such models of vehicles the Govt. has no control. The drivers are put to much stress and strain under subjected to eye and other diseases. Since the roads are not built as segregated, there is no other go for all the types of vehicles viz. 2 wheelers, 3 wheelers, cars, Heavy vehicles etc than to pass through the same road. The construction of national highways and express highways have been planned to pass through the villages in certain places. At L turns, U turns, Junction and crossing there are no sign boards to alert the drivers. In the day time animals of all the types come on to the roads. All these factors together are the causes for the road accidents. Further the defective construction of the roads is also leading to occurrence of accidents and this is proved by some studies.

There is no awareness among the public towards the observation of regulations and rules of the road, while using it day to day. In the regime of implementation of reforms, the propaganda that “You think of yourself and donotborther for others” has taken momentum. As a result everybody is in a hurry to reach the destination early which is leading to accidents.

No driver will commit an accident intentionally. Instead most of the drivers prior to moving the vehicle, immediately sitting on the driver’s seat, bows his head towards steering and prays his favourite god to make the entire trip accident free and safe. Accident is an accident, which cannot be assumed and happens unexpectedly. Though the driver takes as many precautions as he can, Still when an accident occurs, immediately the driver is made “scapegoat “ irrespective of the reasons and who is at fault. Whenever an accident occurs, the heavy vehicles (lorry) drivers are being subjected to assault and harassment, has become common nowadays. The penal provisions are so blind that if anybody says that” a bull delivered a calf. Immediately the master orders for tying the calf with a rope to a pillar “and in that way the drivers are punished. In some cases driving licenses are suspended. A criminal who commits a murder will be punished only after a thorough inquiry which lasts years together. But in case of drivers rigorous punishment is awarded arbitrarily.

REMEDIES TO AVERT THE ACCIDENTS

1)Segregation of Roads in accordance to the speed of the vehicle shall be implemented(Separate lanes for two wheeler, three wheeler, Light Motor Vehicle, Heavy Motor Vehicle). To start with, this

system should be implemented in the new Road Projects and gradually extended to all the National Highway and State Highway Roads. At least, if Heavy Vehicles are provided with a separate lane in the existing National Highway and State Highways, then accidents can be averted to some extent. (Most of the accidents are taking place between the Heavy Vehicles and the Light Vehicles)

Accident prone areas should be identified. Sign boards and other alert posts to be installed

The defects in construction of Roads to be rectified and stringent action should be taken against such defaulters. It should be planned and ensured in the Road Projects that National Highways and Express Highways should not pass through the villages/Towns. At the entry and exit of all the Existing By Pass Roads, Caution Sign Boards, Speed Breakers shall be provided with immediate effect.

Public Transport should be strengthened and it should be made affordable.

Traffic Rules – Accidents – Preventive steps should be introduced as a subject in education right from 5th class.

A big campaign should be organized in order to bring awareness among the people on the “Traffic rules”.

Rest rooms with all amenities should be provided enroute and the stress on the heavy vehicle drivers should be reduced .

The duty hours and provision of double drivers on National Permit Trucks(Long distance trips) should be enforced strictly.

Stress and Strain on the drivers be reduced. (The Trucks which carry Vegetables and other perishable items are loaded late in the Night and the drivers will be forced to reach the City destination by 4am or 5 am as, such vehicles will not be allowed by the traffic Police after that. Due to this the drivers are compelled to drive at a maximum speed which causes accidents)

The profession of Driving be given a respectful status and an environment to that extent should be created.

AUTO RICKSHAW SEGMENT CRISIS WILL DEEPEN :- Ours is a country having the biggest youth force in the world. All these youth should be provided with employment to play their role in the development of the Nation. The responsibility of providing employment to all the unemployed youth lies with the Govt. But due to failure of the Govt. in this sphere, a sizable force of the youth thus turned towards the Auto field. Self Employed, purchasing Autos by obtaining loans privately or by hiring them from private parties, in order to earn their livelihood for their families. On the other hand, as the Public Transport has been grossly neglected, Autos have become the only mode of Transport available to connect the nearest Towns and Cities.

Due to heavy competition in the field, the earnings of Auto drivers have come down. On the other hand the harassment by police & other officials and levy of penalties have further burdened the Auto drivers. The RTS bill is putting chilli powder on the wounds of drivers and depriving the livelihood of the Auto drivers and as “Sprinkling chilli powder on the wounds of burns”. In order to eliminate Autos from the field, posh variety cars like OLA & UBER companies with lesser fares are coming on the roads. The RTS bill is intended to wipe out Autos and introduce such cars, laying red carpet to big companies.

Driving Schools: There will be no driving schools and lacks of workers will lose the employment if the Bill is implemented.

Trucks(LORRIES): 95% of Lorries belongs to the owners having one or two vehicles. Some of them are Owner cum drivers. Levy of tollgate and other taxes have been abnormally increased. The small owners are unable to pay the monthly instalment amount to the financiers are subjected to seizure of their vehicles. A large number of Lorries seized and are lying with the financiers in the Country. The new Act, if it comes into force, the situation will become more worse. Thus lakhs of families depending on the trucks will be thrown on to the roads.

Fate of Private Mechanics: The individual Owners of Commercial or Personal Vehicles including Cars and Two Wheelers, cannot afford the bill, if given for servicing/repair of the vehicle in the Authorized Show Rooms. There are Lakhs of persons who are dependent on repairing different types of motor vehicles on the road side. The RTS Bill bans such outside repairing. Owners of all vehicles shall invariably give their vehicle in the Authorized Service Centre only. Thereby all the existing mechanics living on repairs of motor vehicles will be thrown on to the roads. The owners of the vehicles, particularly the individual vehicle owners will be burdened heavily.

The private buses and the STU buses will be vanished on implementation of the newly notified rules in the gazette called the motor vehicles (all India authorization for tourist bus permit) rules 2016.

R.T.S BILL PREPARES GRAVE YARDS FOR RTC

The R.T.S bill wraps all the RTCs in the country like a mat and throws them in the sea. The special provisions to RTCs granted through an amendment to the constitution in the year 1977, will be waived off through this bill. All the routes in the country will be auctioned. The successful bidder only shall operate buses on the routes. This means that the routes which will fetch the R.T.C s at least to some extent, will be taken over by private operators lobby and the remaining non fetching routes operated to villages shall have to be operated by R.T.C s. Thus slowly the R.T.C s will be wiped out from the list of passenger transport operators as was done in the case of Madhya Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation.

In case the R.T.C s are eliminated from the public transport field, lakhs of students who are enjoying the free / concessional bus passes will forego the facility. As of now the education for the poor and downtrodden has become a commodity which is not within their reach even to purchase by them, still become costlier. Not only the students, but some other sections who are enjoying the Free/Concessional travel in STU Buses will lose it. Further a large number of low income groups particularly the villagers who are getting affordable travel to go their work places have to lose and suffer a lot.

At present only RTCs are providing employment to a certain extent to S.C, S.T, B.C and women as per their quota of reservation. If R.T.C s are eliminated people belonging to these categories will be put to many hardships and losses.

The new act imposes fare hike on the public to the extent of 3 to 4 times. The daily commuters like Teachers and other Employees who regularly travel in R.T.C buses to attend their jobs, will be the victims of the bill.

CONDUCTORS' JOB VANISHES

In the new bill the category named "Conductor" is totally eliminated, Thus the category of conductor vanishes from the field of operations, whether it is of R.T.C or Private service. The Govt is formed is resolute in its decision to club the job of conductor with the work of driver thus over burdening the drivers category and the lives of the passengers will be at risk as the driver can not concentrate on driving.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL BE NO MORE

At present the process of Registration, Licensing and Fitness etc. is being carried out by the State Govt Transport Department. As per the new Act, all these works will be given to private agencies and there by corruption will become rampant and security will also be at stake. The employees of transport department will be the victims.

Community Penalty:- In the second revision the Govt incorporated one more new punishment called community penalty, for even minor error or small mistakes, the drivers have to admit their mistake by giving advertisements in two news papers. including the sweeping of roads, cleaning of toilets any type of punishment can be awarded. Community penalty in addition to the other penalty and punishments.

The AIRTWF has exposed the ill effects of the bill in a big way and also has taken initiative to bring all the national Federations in the Road Transport Sectors on to a common platform. For the first time in the history of Independent India, The Road Transport Workers went on for a National wide strike on 30.04.2015 at the call of the JAC, more than 2 crores Transport workers have participated in the strike. The Govt shivered with this historical strike.

Revision to Draft Bills:- Due to the vigorous campaign and struggles of the Transport Workers, the Govt revised the draft for 5 times and made some changes. But the heavy sections of the Bill are remained unchanged. The Govt is determined to go ahead with its main objective. But it is not dared to move in the right way and has chosen the back door way. It has constituted a group of ministers. After 3 meetings in different places the GOM recommended to amend the motor vehicle Act 1989 and incorporate the main sections of the RTS Bill. This has also been sent to the cabinet for its approval through a note by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways .

It is reported in the press that the Govt of India again trying to divide the Transport Workers by making a provision for the insurance scheme for the Transport Workers in case of accidents. This is nothing but a sugar coating to the poisonous tablet. We should kick back these cheap tactics.

Totally it is a foregone conclusion that the Govt. aims to dismantle the existing Transport System, and make it a non viable entity by surrendering the whole business of catering to both Passenger and Goods Transport into the hands of big Corporate Houses. By levy of heavy taxes, penalty point and other harsh punishments imposed on the drivers, they will be put behind bars.

Design, Construction and Maintenance of Motor Vehicles: Non motorized transport(the bullock carts , cycles hand carts)are also brought under the purview of design and construction . All such vehicles need design approval by national authority

Impact on State Govts: The Bill erodes and encroaches upon the powers of the State Govts. The National Authority is given sweeping and wide range powers for making regulations on trust hither to work being done by State Govts.

LDF Govt of Kerala on RTS Bill:- The LDF Govt in Kerala called a meeting of the unions and Operators Association on 22.06.16 to take their views on RTS Bill. All the participants have unanimously rejected the RTS Bill, and appealed to the Kerala State Govt to prepare an alternative Bill and send it to the Union Govt. The State Govt agreed for it. It is on the job and I started consultation with experts. The steps taken by the LDF Govt in Kerala is highly appreciable and it has become a model to others. The suggestions made by AIRTWF were taken into account.

Struggle is the only Way:- Unity is our strength and struggle is the weapon to fight back the draconian laws of the Govt. We should bear in mind that all these are part and parcel of the Anti People, Anti Working Class and Pro Employers and Corporates Government Policies. The Transport Workers in the Country should unitedly fight against these policies. When all the Workers and Employees both in Government Sector and in Private Sector (Organized and Unorganized) are in Struggle against the Policies of the Government, we the Transport Workers also Should join in the mainstream.

It is therefore in the interest of protection of Fundamental Right of transport workers and the industry as a whole the ALL INDIA ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION calls upon the Transport workers in the country and who ever is involved in the Transport field to come together and join hand to hand to lead an indefatigable fight against this draconian bill vigorously. Until the incongruous law is thrown into the dustbin, thus protecting their own " Right to employment and right to live"

The All India Road Transport Workers Federation calls upon the Road Transport Workers in the Country irrespective of their union Affiliations to join the 2nd September 2016. All India General Strike in a big way and send a signal to the Govt that the Transport Workers will never keep quiet.

DEMANDS:-

- 1) Scrap RTS Bill 2015. All the Stakeholders including the Trade Unions, Passengers Associations and the Experts in the field of Transport shall be consulted before arriving at a decision. Their views and suggestions should be given weightage while framing a Draft Proposal. Specific and concrete steps should be proposed which actually contribute to reduce the Accidents and Fatalities. The emphasis should be on Prevention but not on punishments.
- 2) A Social security scheme be formulated and implemented as a Statutory Right for the Transport Workers particularly to the Private Unorganized Workers.
- 3) Rs 5,00,000 accident insurance should be provided to all the transport workers including drivers and cleaners. The Insurance Premium should be borne either by the Govt or the Owner of the concerned Vehicle.
- 4) The recommendations of V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, be implemented. Various provisions of transport workers laws be amended for the benefit of workers and be implemented.
- 5) All the licences held by the Professional Drivers be considered as "Transport License" and they may be given Badges".

6) All the unorganized sector transport workers be granted "Identity cards and should be made eligible to get the Ration through PDS.

7) Harassment by Police and other Officials should not be allowed.

8) Vehicles plying on the road with various kinds of speed are allotted separate lanes on the roads. To start with this arrangement shall be made on the National Highways immediately.

The burden of heavy taxes levied on the transport sector will be reduced to minimum.

For all the owner-cum-drivers, Govt. should stand security to the loan financed through Banks and save them from the exploitation by the Private Financiers.

9) The burden of heavy taxes levied on the transport sector be reduced to minimum

10) For all the owner cum drivers ,the Govt. should stand security for the lones financed through banks and save them from exploitation by the Private Financiers.

11) Reduce and control pricess of petrol, diesel etc.

12) Withdraw the enhanced Vehicle insurencepremiem.