

State Road Transport Corporations are made to sink Defeat BJP led NDA and Vote for Left, Democratic & Secular Parties

There are 53 State Road Transport Corporations in the country. 24 STUs were formed under the Road Transport Corporations Act 1950. 7 STUs are Municipal Undertakings, 9 are Government Departments and 13 are registered under Companies Act.

After independence, a prolonged discussion took place on passenger transport. Alternative arrangements and efforts to provide proper transport to the people have failed and the then Government of India has decided to bring the Passenger Transport under the responsibility and control of the State Government and enacted the RTC Act 1950. Thereafter several State Governments have established the State Road Transport Corporations. STUs were provided special protections in the M.V.Act. When it was challenged by the Private operators in different courts, the Constitution of India was amended in the year 1975 to protect the STUs. This is history.

It was stipulated in the RTC Act that the State and Central Governments have to extend capital contribution to the STUs. Later the 2:1 ratio was finalized (State Governments 2 and Central Government 1). This was implemented till 1988. After that with the introduction of the liberalized economic policies (withdrawing the Governments from its responsibility and leaving it to the market forces) the Capital contribution to the STUs have been stopped. From then the stagnation and slow decline of the STUs have started. The share of the STU buses in the total buses in the country in the year 1961 was 31.7% and has come down to 7.4% in 2019. The STUs are neither able to increase the buses to meet the growing traffic needs nor even to replace the old buses.

The Madhya Pradesh state RTC was closed down by the then BJP Government in the year 2004. There are no STUs in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. In the states like Bihar, Odisha, J&K etc the STUs are on the death bed. Many STUs are facing serious financial crisis. Some STUs are unable to pay even salaries to its employees in time. The managements of the STUs were directed to reduce their personal cost. Almost all the STUs in the country have implemented the directions and the workers are made scapegoats.

The Modi led NDA Government has further ruined the situation and decided to close down all the existing STUs in the country. The M.V. Amendment Act 2019 is aimed in that direction. The Vehicle permit, route permit clauses are amended to clear the way for private operators. The stage carrier and Contract carriage permits have been clubbed into one permit as Transport Permit to legalize the illegal operations by the Private operators who are looting the legitimate revenues of the RTCs by operating the contract carriage permit buses as stage carriage permit buses. Further the National Permit Scheme has opened the gates for the Private Operators. Adding fuel to this the Modi Government has

unethically enhanced the prices of Petrol and Diesel more particularly when the crude oil prices in the international market are shrinking. When the crude oil prices in the international market was 109 US Dollars in May 2014, then the Diesel price was Rs.58. The crude Oil prices have fallen to the lowest of 20 USD in May 2020 and even now the Crude Oil Price is 80 USD and the Diesel price is around Rs. 90 today. All these 10 years the Diesel and petrol prices have been enhanced abnormally.

The Central Institute of Road Transport has so far released the performance of the STUs up to 2019-20. After that it has not published the data till date. According to the data available, the reported 35 STUs have together consumed 2718584300 litres of Diesel. **The crude oil price in the year 2019-20 was 60.47 USD. Accordingly, the diesel price should be Rs. 29.83 Per litre. But the actual price collected was Rs.73.28. Thus, the Modi Government has additionally squeezed the revenues of the STUs to a tune of Rs. 11812.24 crores** for that one year only. The total deficit between revenue and the expenditure of all the STUs for that year was Rs. 19726.26 Crores. If this huge amount of 11812.24 crores loot was not there the deficit would have been 7914.02 crores only. This clearly proves how the Modi Government has made the STUs to sink.

The STUs have played a commendable role in the development of the nation. Transportation is provided to the interior villages, hilly regions etc. They have provided employment to a large number of unemployed youths. The SC, ST, BC and Women are employed by implementing the Rule of reservation. Travel concessions are provided to various sections of the passengers. The accident ratio is the lowest in the STUs. The fuel performance is also very high. It was established in some surveys that agriculture, industrial and education sectors have benefited a lot with the RTC.

The BJP in its election Manifesto-2014, has stated that “BJP will create a public transport system which can reduce the dependence on personal vehicles for transport thereby reducing cost, time to travel as well as ecological cost”. But what is the reality? the share of Buses (RTC, Private, Omni Buses together) in the total motor vehicles has come down from 1% in 2014 to 0.07 by 2020. Two wheelers rose to 74.70 in 2020 from 73.10 in 2014. This itself is clear how the BJP has cheated the people of India.

Strengthening and expanding the STUs is the need of the hour. This is the time to rise to the occasion to protect the STUs and the welfare of the Workers. The only way to achieve this goal is to defeat the BJP led NDA and elect an alternative Government with pro people policies. AIRTFW appeals to all the workers of the STUs to vote for the Left, Democratic and Secular Parties in the coming Parliament elections and defeat the BJP led NDA.

R.Lakshmaiah
General Secretary,
All India Road Transport Workers' Federation

