

AN AIFUCTO MONTHLY

Teachers' Movement

Vol. 13

Issue : 12

December 2011

Serial No. 33/12

Rs. 10/-

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EDITORIAL

GIVE THE CHILDREN BACK THEIR CHILDHOOD

It is an extremely sad commentary that the children stand robbed of their childhood. This is truer especially in urban India where the family that can afford, sends the child to school, and thus robs it of the pleasure of childhood. Even a child of two years old is sent to pre-primary stage school to start rigorous academic activities. Still given to holding things with all its five fingers - in the pincer grip - the tender thing is coerced into writing the letters of the alphabet. Apart from the fact that such schools lack proper teaching staff, pedagogical equipment and support staff, there is no play ground either or other sources of pleasure essential for physical and mental growth of a child. Rural India presents a scenario no different in nature. The child here is either goaded to be a part of the same education ethos or remain outside the ambit of educational empowerment. It is the lack of opportunity or the financial capability that mercifully prevents the child from becoming a prisoner of the urban model. However when these constraints are removed the urban experience will replicate. Most unfortunately, we have twin problems of no education worth naming for millions and over-education for other school going children.

As back as in 1993 reports filed by the Prof. Yash Pal Committee and the MHRD Group as well as the CAGE talked about generating a country wide debate in composite teams of teachers, parents and other interested groups and measures to take off the child's back the load of the school bag and free him from the process of joyless learning. Children ask questions, Simple or profound: the one thing that is common to all questions is that they are all born out of curiosity. Often, children's questions are met with impatience.

The former nominated member of Rajya Sabha, who always wielded only the pen to castigate the ills of our system, R.K Narayan spoke only once during his entire tenure in the Upper House, in a telling manner and appealed to the conscience of the nation and do something about Herculean burden our school children shouldered. The whole focus, during those years was on the absence of academic ethos in our school education system. But alas, the problem instead of being resolved has taken a more seriously regressive turn in last two decades. New insight leading to the amelioration of the problems was the need of the hour then; but what actually transpired were half-hearted measures which remained confined to the pages of reports and recommendations. As a result, the long tradition of robbing the children of their childhood still continues unabated.

It is indeed a great concern that we emphasize piling up heaps of information in the minds of children and want them to memorize all these, purposefully oblivious to highlighting assimilation after proper understanding of what they are exposed to. Teaching, testing and ranking combine to reduce all learning to a burdensome and mechanical exercise, totally joyless and wholly devoid of life. We are not willing to answer the questions of children though they have great inquisitiveness; nor have we taught them to ask questions. They are always afraid of endless tests and suffer from fear psychosis-often leading to utter frustrations.

The recent experience of AIFUCTO in this regard amply proves that such exercises as noted above by concerned people have very little impact on the attitude of guardians, syllabus makers, many teachers and policy makers. The biggest tragedy is that all of them neglect the children's desire and aptitude. A child has hardly any time to understand the environment in which he lives: very little time left to study story books and participate in sport of his/her likings. It is extremely shocking that even where a child is allowed to play some games the guardian has in his or her mind the ambition to turn the child into a champion and so the pleasure of play is replaced by a struggling career even in sports and games as envisaged by the guardian.

Some children across the globe in general and in developing countries particular have been forced to become labourers. Not only are they exploited physically and mentally, but also denied access to education. In rural India many children are compelled to become labourers to earn a living for themselves or even for the family. Of the millions of child labour in India a large proportion are girl children. Many of them are abused and know no facilities of civilized life. There are many instances where the income of a girl child is used to support the family and fund the study of the sons. Such child labourers have no joy of life or joy of learning. All these are a stark violation of our constitution. The urgent call of the hour is to bring about major shifts in the vision of all stake holders and to understand that education without enjoyment is not only dangerous for the learner but also counterproductive of the social progress. We call upon all our members to participate in the campaigns to 'Give the children back their childhood'. We also acknowledge the valuable services rendered by some of our past and present members in this great cause.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE TO PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY

Prof. Mrinmoy Bhattacharyya

Ex. General Secretary, AIFUCTO

At the fag end of his tenure as the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Sri Buddhadeb Bhattacharya took a personal initiative and in great haste rushed through the state assembly the required legislation to create a new university out of what was till then a government college. Election for the state assembly was imminent at that time and a very long stay in power and united opposition created a strong premonition for a change in power at the state level. The opposition, especially the Trinamul Congress was out to denounce whatever was being done or said by the Left Front or its government. However the elevation of Presidency College to an unitary university was not opposed by them. It may seem strange, but the only opposition came from West Bengal Government College Teachers' Association. Significantly enough, in the highly charged political atmosphere that prevailed in West Bengal during that time, members of the WBGCTA, many of them with sympathies for the Left, were forced to take to the streets. When the Presidency University Bill was passed, the incumbent General Secretary who was a teacher of Presidency College resigned from his organizational position in protest. The Joint Secretary of the organization assumed charge and immediately plunged the Association into battle gear opposing the government's unilateral move. This set members of the academia thinking with bouts of skepticism doing the rounds, but few fraternal unions came out openly in support of WBGCTA. At a convention organized by the WBGCTA in Sanskrit College compound, Prof. Asok Barman, General Secretary of AIFUCTO came and extended unstinted fraternal support but strangely, the principal functionaries of WBCUTA were absent. I was present and gave my opinion frankly. But I was only a former leader. The past leaders of WBGCTA were present in large numbers and it was a reunion for many of us. The convention was well-attended. The WBGCTA members were by and large all opposed to this decision.

Unionisation of teachers in higher education in our country began in the early 20th century and the oldest among our unions started after the First World War. These unions were mostly those of school teachers. Some teachers from higher edu-

cation joined them. These unions were mostly academic and professional organizations and were not concerned with trade union activities. Teachers of government colleges were perhaps the last professional group to form their unions. Almost all government college teachers were gazetted officers. In West Bengal they were WBES officers. Similarly, in other states they were state level education service officers. It is well-known that gazetted officers are bound by restrictive service conduct rules. But all these started crumbling with change in the political scenario. In 1967, for the first time, Congress lost power in a number of states including West Bengal. Except for a short break from 1972-77, the state government were run by left political parties. Leftist parties favoured union-formation of all working people including police - personnel, not to speak of gazetted officers. Whether the removal of all kind restrictions in forming unions, the movement programmes and agitations conducted by them have been beneficial for the people at large, is another matter. But once the Pandora's Box was opened, it spread all over and very fast. The West Bengal Government College Teachers' Association (WBGCTA) was formed on 20th August, 1967, in such an atmosphere. Government officials are not permitted to join a political party. This formal restriction is still there. But many members of the WBGCTA subscribed to left democratic principles as individuals.

By convention, the principal office bearers were allowed to stay in or around the capital to facilitate their running the organization. This is common practice for all Government College Teachers' Associations at the state level. Since West Bengal is a highly politicized state, it is little wonder that most of its unions are known by political standing of the leadership. Teachers' Unions are also politically fractured. However university and college teachers have traditionally maintained organizational unity in spite of acrimony and bickering form time to time. The WBGCTA is no exception, although there is a miniscule breakaway union. Importantly, this small rival union enjoyed official recognition of the government during the Left Front regime. Leaders of this union made contact with

me during my long tenure as the general secretary of AIFUCTO, seeking recognition and eventual affiliation of AIFUCTO. My standard reply used to be that while affiliation was dictated by the constitution, they were welcome to attend AIFUCTO conferences and they would be heard if they had something useful to communicate. They were also welcome to pay money to AIFUCTO in any form. However, they neither paid any money nor attended any conference of the AIFUCTO. Now with a political change of the state government, it is possible that this union with gather new strength.

Let us now go into the heart of the controversy. Presidency College, Kolkata was the institution created by the British colonialists for academic improvement of the newly recruited civil servants. It continued to receive immense state support even after transfer of the capital from Kolkata to Delhi and even after the country gained independence.

Establishment of new universities such as Jadavpur University, Burdwan University, North Bengal University, Rabindra Bharati University, reduced pressure on Presidency College, especially at PG level. Presidency College continued to be an excel as an undergraduate college. Before introduction of the three-year degree course, university education was for two years after the Intermediate course following 10 years of matriculation examination. Even the matriculation in the past was conducted by universities. In the 50's a new college Ram Krishna Vidyamandir, Belurmath, came into limelight by occupying most of the places of the first ten in IA Examination. Incidentally this is the college where I served as a teacher for about 35 years. Admittedly, Presidency college was one of the best colleges of the country, but let me repeat, only at the undergraduate level. All brilliant students got themselves admitted in the universities and some of them sought additional admission to Presidency College, to attend a few classes and utilize its rich library. Some brilliant scholars like Sushobhan Sarkar, Tarak Sen, Bhabatosh Dutta, Bishnu Dey, were teachers of Presidency College. Traditionally, many senior teachers with scholastic renown enjoyed an almost uninterrupted tenure at Presidency College. During the long Left Front Government rule, some of these features started changing. Ostensibly, there were no objective criteria to measure scholastic achievement and excellence of teaching. So organizational leaders and old and experi-

enced teachers in their last days of service started being transferred to Presidency College. On the other hand some 'renowned' teachers who thought that they would be able to spend their entire tenure at Presidency College were transferred. Thus began a spate of allegations and counter allegations about political interference, political favour or vendetta, which allegedly lowered quality and excellence.

WBGCTA had a scheme or proposal to meet these allegations. They admitted Presidency College as their prima donna. They suggested the creation of a new University comprising of all the government Colleges of Arts, Science, Commerce and Technology of where Presidency College would take a leading role. The very best teachers from the entire service could have a chance to serve Presidency College. The UGC meanwhile was propagating the idea of creating autonomous colleges. Presidency College, Calcutta, was an automatic choice. AIFUCTO was by and large opposed to this scheme. Especially for government colleges this appellation 'autonomous' was meaningless.

With such a background came the election of West Bengal Legislative Assembly. With an all out offensive of opposition parties, the question of the lack of autonomy, a fall in excellence and political interference in Presidency College, also became an issue. Buddhadeb Bhattacharya announced creation of Presidency College University to take wind out of the sail on this issue. The media felt happy. The Chief Minister designate, Mamata Banerjee fell silent, with the sole opposition coming from WBGCTA.

Three months have passed after installation of Congress - Trinamul coalition. The state government has formed a mentor group roping in Amartya Sen and other stalwarts. This group now has submitted its recommendation to the government. The status of the mentor group vis-à-vis the University Council was mired in controversy. The authentic recommendation of mentor group is also not known except for what came out in the press. The mentor group seems to be in favour of creating Presidency College as a super university. All its teachers may be given scales one stage higher than those in other universities. There may be contract appointment for a period of not exceeding 5 years. Targeted teachers are all those who are already serving in famous foreign universities. Other universities especially

Calcutta University are being requested to extend co-operation.

It is too early to conclude about the merit or demerit of this venture though my gut feeling is that it would be a misadventure. I would like to conclude this article by posing a number of questions. Why this primarily Undergraduate College should be promoted to a Super University being located just beside the best Universities of our Country? Designating Presidency College as a super university and offering its teachers a salary structure higher than those given to all other universities evidently mean downgrading them. What crime has been committed by all universities of the state, once like Calcutta and Jadavpur University which only recently have been awarded AAA by the National Accreditation Council? The Presidency University is as yet a non-starter. The essential functions of a university lie in teaching and research at the highest level; the "high-

est" level is obviously PG level. But it means many things more. It means branching off from the basic disciplines or super-specialization. It also means inter-disciplinary studies. That could entail creation of new subjects. It is because of this that physics including Pure Physics, Applied Physics, Radio Physics and Bio Physics has nearly 150 full time teachers in University of Calcutta whereas Presidency College functions with 20 faculty members. It is not implied, given the attitude of the State, that erstwhile Presidency College cannot outperform Calcutta University at some point of time in future. The question is rather why the state should be so bountiful with this institution whose excellence was all along at the UG level. Besides, any magnanimity reserved for Presidency University in terms of outlay if meted out to Calcutta or Jadavpur University, could have produced far better results.

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TEACHERS' MOVEMENT

(A Monthly Journal of AIFUCTO)

Subscription Rates

LIFE: Rs. 300 (Individual) Rs. 600 (Institutional)

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General Secretary, AIFUCTO

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ALL INDIA FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

General Secretary's Report for the year 2011-12

(Contd. from last issue)

The lack of good governance

Along with our countrymen we are extremely worried over the poor and deteriorating governance in India. Many concerned persons have pointed out the mounting problems of credibility of government official and all round disappointment at the worsening of the situation. Recently the Comptroller and Auditor General noted that the quality of governance is below par and subject to severe criticism. The morale of civil servants is low, and badly affecting the decision making. We demand the government should take immediate steps to restore the moral of civil servants and confidence of people in the efficacy of administration. A good governance is a sine qua non for the quality of public services affecting each and everybody.

It is important to note that a group of eminent citizens have recently expressed deep concern at the issue of corruption and interest of the nation. The group includes noted economists, industrialists, Members of Rajya Sabha not attached to political parties, and social workers. The group lamented that common man's life was vitiated by corruption at every turn. The group strongly advocated for speedier environmental clearances, online auction of natural resources and so on. They emphasized such corrective actions to prevent discretionary and irregular practices. They also suggested appointment of more judges for an effective redress mechanism.

The group pointed out that the historic debate in our Parliament on Lokpal reinforced the inviolable primacy of the constitution and was an event of relief and reassurance to the vast and silent majority who constitute India's core civil society.

The ongoing movements against the rampant corruption and the undisclosed amount of black money have certainly gathered momentum and our members have duty and responsibility to join the movement and campaign for the supremacy of the democratic norms having full faith on the Parliament. The real strength of our society is enshrined in our Constitution.

Anna Hazare's movement

The All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organizations expressed its solidarity with the nationwide movement against corruption in the country. The AIFUCTO condemned the attitude of the Govt. of India in trying to muffle democratic rights of organizations to protest for genuine demands by arresting veteran Gandhi an Anna Hazare and his team. The widespread support Anna's movement has received in the aftermath of his arrest showed 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 appealed to the Govt. of India to unconditionally release Mr. Anna Hazare and permit him to stage peaceful protests without placing unnecessary hurdles. AIFUCTO also highlighted the view that any move to bypass the Parliament and the parties in the opposition in bringing in a suitable legislation for a strong Lokpal would not augur well for the future of democracy in the country. The massive support to Sri Hazare at the Ramlila Ground was a strong signal to the Govt. and the political parties that the issue of corruption would not be tolerated any more. The AIFUCTO congratulates Sri Hazare and demands strong Lokpal Bill in the winter session of the Parliament. We appeal to all political parties to put the interest of the nation above all parochial political or personal gain. India is certainly passing through a transitional phase and we believe our democratic principle will be held high.

However, the Anna Hazare movement has not pointed out that the root of the corruption lies in the neo-liberal economic policies. We believe that unless the economic policies are set in right mode it will be impossible to root out corruption.

As adopted at 26th Statutory Conference held at Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, 20-22 October 2011

Earthquake in NE, East India and Nepal

We are deeply shocked at the loss of life and property in the recent earth quake in North East and East India and Nepal We urge the Central and state govts. to take all steps to help the affected people and restore the normalcy as early as possible. There should be repair of roads and buildings on war footing. The situation is still unsatisfactory. The calamity once again proves the lack of preparedness to negotiate such disaster. The govt. must prepare a disaster management blueprint to help people in such events.

National educational scenario and AIFUCTO actions

In the higher education sector, over the years, there have been appointments of teachers outside the domain of UGC/AICTE pay scales, variously known as contractual teachers, part timers, guest lecturers, state scale teachers and so on. It is a pity that they are Working for a pittance, that too with no security of service and retirement benefits. Many of them are forced to agree to the regular breaks so that they cannot claim any pay scale or go to the court of law. The AIFUCTO has repeatedly drawn attention of state and central governments to this grave issue. The problem has been compounded as in many states, mostly in private run institutions, teachers are being appointed in who do not have requisite qualification only to pay them unbelievably poor pay and make profit. The AIFUCTO hails the stand taken by the UGC that the payment to the qualified teachers should be guided by the accepted pay scales. There must be more funds for state funded institutions and rigorous regulatory measures for the private ones. We are committed to take up the issue not only for the sake of the exploited teachers but also for ensuring quality of education and well being of our nation, which are our cardinal principles. This year we instructed our affiliates to take actions so that the payment to the teachers of the categories must be equitable and the security of service is ensured.

We have been pointing out for some years that a large number of posts are vacant and there are embargo in some states on new appointment. This is a very serious issue and on our insistence the HRD issued letter to the state governments to take urgent steps to fill such posts. We are very unhappy that there is very little actions on the part of the govts.

Appointment of teachers outside UGC & AICTE pay scales

In the higher education sector, over the years,

there have been appointments of teachers outside the domain of UGC/AICTE pay scales, variously known as contractual teachers, part timers, guest lecturers, state scale teachers and so on. It is a pity that they are working for a pittance, that too with no security of service and retirement benefits. Many of them are forced to agree to the regular breaks so that they cannot claim any pay scale or go to the court of law. The AIFUCTO has repeatedly drawn attention of state and central governments to this grave issue. The problem has been compounded in many states, quite routinely in most private run institutions, teachers are being appointed who do not have requisite qualification only to pay them unbelievably poor pay and make profit. It is a sad fact that some State governments too are guilty of this practice, no matter how strongly the higher judiciary had tried to dissuade them. The AIFUCTO hails the stand taken by the UGC that the payment to the qualified teachers should be guided by the accepted pay scales, and demands of all state Governments that they abandon backdoor appointments under the guise of 'Guest Lecturer' 'Contractual teacher' and so on and that hereafter all teacher appointments in our colleges and universities be made only on regular basis. There must be more funds for state funded institutions and rigorous regulatory measures for the private ones. We are committed to take up the issue not only for the sake of the exploited teachers but also for ensuring quality of education and well being of our nation, which are our cardinal principles.

National Forum In Defence Of Education

March to Parliament on December 2, 2010

Thousands of people comprising of students, teachers, non-teaching employees and officers of schools, colleges & universities, youths, parents and activists of people's science movements marched from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament Street in a rally raising issues related to education.

This rally was held after a national convention held on 13th August which formed a National Forum in Defence of Education in Delhi.

The rally raised slogans criticizing the anti-people policies of UPA II Government and its neo-liberal 'reform' agenda in the field of education and resolved to force the Central Government to accept the demands.

The rally was addressed by a large number of leaders of the participating organizations and leaders and MPs.

Prof. James Williams, the President of the

AIFUCTO was the president of the Presidium.

Prof. Asok Barman, General Secretary AIFUCTO was the inaugural speaker. He criticised the recent initiatives to bring basic changes in our educational structure and stressed the need for a united movement. The rally was addressed by a number of Members Of Parliament including; Basudev Acharya, M. Abani Roy; D Raja, I; Barun Mukherjee. Sri Rajendran, General Secretary STF I pledged support to the initiative.

The speakers focused on the policies of the central government aimed at pushing centralization, privatisation and commercialisation of the education sector in the country which would undermine the goal of expansion, excellence and equity in education. They said the goal of expansion, excellence and equity can only be achieved through increased public spending based on a democratic education policy.

The speakers also criticised the government over the issue of corruption and said the amount of money involved is much more than what was required to meet the needs of providing equitable and quality education in the country. They warned the government against ignoring the demands being made failing which the struggle would be intensified in the coming days.

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY SUB COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN UNIVERSITY BILL

On behalf of the AIFUCTO the President & General Secretary made a Submissions to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Bill regarding the Entry and operation of Foreign Educational institutions in India

Our leaders pointed out that the outlines of the social philosophy which should govern all our institutions educational as well as economic and political is indicated in the preamble of our Constitution'. Our constitution envisages an engagement in a quest for democracy through the realization of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Any educational policy should be based on the principles enshrined in our constitution. The aim of education is not only the provision of knowledge and skills but also the inculcation of social and constitutional values in the younger generation.

Any discussion of the policies in education should take note of the ground realities in the Indian society. India is one country in which historically a large section of the people have been denied any form of formal education or rather religiously prohibited from acquiring any form of edu-

cation not only on the basis of their inability to pay but also on the basis of their birth. Hence the Constitution makers were right in providing for instruments for social justice in the Constitution itself. Hence the core principles which should guide the educational policies must be access, quality and equity.

The entry of foreign institutions into India has aggravated the commercialisation of higher education. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill correctly echoes this situation and says that the FEIs 'may be resorting to various malpractices to allure and attract students' and there are 'chances of adoption of various unfair practices besides commercialisation'. The statement could be more accurate if 'are' is used instead of 'may be'.

Even if the institutions are going to be regulated when the Bill becomes an Act, there is no guarantee that commercialisation by the FEIs will be curbed because the Bill doesn't provide for the regulation of the fees charged by the FEPs. The FEPs will be free to charge any fee. It has to only declare the fees and other charges to be payable by the students in their prospectus and their websites.

The proposed Bill doesn't provide for reservation for SC, ST and other deprived sections. So our slogan of inclusive education and inclusive society would be only a mirage.

The AIFUCTO contradicted the argument that the entry of FEIs will enhance the access rate. Statistics on admission of students in private professional colleges in various states reveal the fact that thousands of seats in self-financing engineering colleges and polytechnics remain vacant every year because there are no takers. The youth outside the system do not have the capacity to pay the fees in these colleges and hence the vacancies.

The FEIs which wish to come to India do so only to make profit. The educational institutions in the developed countries including the prestigious Oxbridge are facing a crisis because of the continued economic recession and the resultant cut in the budgetary allocations to these institutions by their countries. So these institutions have started laying off teachers, increased the workload, increased the class strength of the students, cut down the expenditure on books, journals and other infrastructure and increased the fees manifold. This has led to bitter and violent protests by students in many developed countries including the US and the UK.

So the institutions face an urgent need for find-

ing new avenues for resource generation. Only against this background these institutions turn to countries like India for greener pastures. So quite naturally they would charge very high fees so that they could get profits which could be repatriated.

There is another argument that the entry of FEIs will stop the foreign exchange outflow into the developed countries arising out of a large number of students going abroad to study. The argument goes on to say that when these foreign institutions come to India and provide quality education, the Indian students may not go out as they can get in India the quality education offered by the institutions in the developed countries.

A large number of students go abroad not just to have quality education. They wish to use their study abroad as a spring board to get lucrative jobs in those countries and settle there.

This leads to another argument that the education provided by the FEIs would be of very high quality and they would contribute to enhancing the quality of higher education directly by providing quality education in their institutions and indirectly by inducing a competition between the native institutions. In their necessity to compete with the FEIs, the native institutions also will enhance their quality.

This argument arises out of the misunderstanding and disinformation campaign that the Indian higher education system is very sub-standard. But the fact is that the products of Indian higher education system is welcome in any part of the world, be those the higher education institutions in the developed countries or the leading multi national companies in any part of the world

What will be the quality of the education provided by the FEIs. Teachers of very high quality working in these institutions in their countries will not come to India to teach here. Only second grade or third grade teachers would come here. They would rather wean away the excellent teachers in our local institutions, offering them a very high salary and deprive our institutions the service of excellent teachers. So it will not lead to quality enhancement of the local institutions but rather the impoverishment of our institutions.

Moreover it will lead to distortions of quality. The FEIs with their money power will unleash an advertisement and public relations blitz that our students will be confused about the quality of these institutions which will result in distortions.

Inculcation of values is an essential objective

of higher education. What type of values will be inculcated by the FEIs will also be a question. Will the FEIs accept our constitutional values?

What type of courses will be run by the foreign institutions? A study of the courses run by the foreign institutions which are operating in India reveals the fact that they run only marketable courses like management courses and other hospitality management courses. The Foreign institutions which will operate also run only such courses which are in demand and which could fetch a lot of profit. This will create a mismatch between what we need and what is offered.

Further the experience of other countries in which FEIs had been operating also has to be taken into account. Israel, which was the first to welcome the FEIs, we understand, has ordered such institutions to quit as the quality of the education they provided was very sub-standard. The 'knowledge cities' and the 'Academic Zones' in Gulf countries have been very expensive even by international standards. Even the experience of Singapore is bitter. Chicago- Booth School, John Hopkins Centre, Warwick University etc., in spite of getting substantial cash subsidies, land, soft loans housing access, are packing up that a leading journal termed it 'a divorce in Singapore'.

At the same time, the experience of China also has to be taken note of. In China, the FEIs cannot operate independently. They have to tie up with recognized public institutions only. The Chairman of the Governing Body of the new entity would be a Chinese citizen. Not less than 50% of the members of the Governing body will have to be from the local institution. The fees to be collected will have to be approved by the Govt. The new institution will have to abide by the rules and regulations in force. So in the case of China, the Chinese are in an advantageous position.

Taking into consideration all these, the All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organizations strongly feel that the FEIs with unfettered freedom as envisaged in the Bill would be disastrous for our country. AIFUCTO is for collaborative links with leading foreign institutions in the area of research, curriculum development, teacher and student exchange etc. But any attempt to commercialise and exploit the higher education system should not be accepted.

On the basis of above arguments the AIFUCTO suggested amendments to the Bill to protect the interest of Indian students and society.

Problem of women teachers

There are large and growing numbers of lady teachers in the higher education sector. They have some specific problems which we tried to address. In order to prepare comprehensive report on the issue we have decided to have a committee. We call upon all members to discuss the matter at the unit level and submit the report to the leadership.

DELHI PROGRAM

Since the last academic conference at Jalgaon, we had been working on our representations to the Anomaly Committee to change some of the unhelpful and unrealistic recommendations, as elaborated in our earlier submissions. We were also in constant touch with the MHRD for the payments of arrears to be made by the centre to the States. During this period, a series of meetings with all concerned had been held, and we were continually monitoring the situation.

General Secretary's discussions with Sri Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary, MHRD

General Secretary held a number of discussions with Sri Sunil Kumar in January and February, 2011 to discuss all pending issues including the moves by some states to introduce clauses detrimental to the teachers' interests. Regarding the payment of central govt. share of arrears, Mr. Kumar informed the Gen. Secretary that the MHRD sought the permission of cabinet to de-link the payment of arrears and the age of superannuation. The Gen Sec expressed concern about the continued stalemate over the Net/SLET issue of teachers of Maharashtra and sought the intervention of MHRD without further delay.

General Secretary's discussion with the members of anomaly committee

General Secretary maintained regular contact with all members of the Anomaly Committee and apprised them of the stand of AIFUCTO on various clauses of the Regulation. They were requested to ensure necessary changes in tune with the AIFUCTO suggestions.

Secretariat Meeting

A secretariat meeting was held in New Delhi on 16th February, 2011. The meeting reviewed the current situation and discussed the actions to be taken. The Secretariat members prepared documents for meeting with the Anomaly committee and Additional Secretary, MHRD. The latest developments with regard to the NET/SLET problem of Maharashtra teachers was discussed, The secretariat decided to hold the next NEC meeting in Kolkata on 27th, March 2011. Prof. James William

President, Prof Asok Barman, GS, Prof. V.P. Singh, Prof. Jaya Gandhi, Prof. Rabi Roy, Prof. Madhu Paranjpe, all national Secretaries participated.

Meeting with Prof. Ravi Srivastava on 16th February, 2011

The Secretariat members met Prof. Srivastava for a detailed study of the Regulation.

It was a very effective discussion as all important points were covered and AIFUCTO views were presented in proper perspective before the UGC.

Secretariat meet with Dr. Kazmi, Secretary, and UGC on 17th February, 2011

The Secretariat met Dr. Kazmi and requested her to take action on pending issues including the anomalies in pay scales issues relating to Regulations. The leaders invited her attention to the UGC and MHRD stand regarding the pre-Regulations PhD holders. It was pointed out that the discriminatory stand regarding the PhDs of the old regulation was unjustified and unacceptable to AIFUCTO.

Meeting with Prof. Ved Prakash, Acting Chairman, UGC on 17th February, 2011

AIFUCTO President and GS met Prof. Ved Prakash the Acting Chairman, UGC and congratulated him on his assuming the office. The leaders assured Prof. Ved Prakash of all support for UGC initiatives in the interest of higher education in India. Prof. Ved Prakash expressed the hope that the UGC and AIFUCTO will continue to work together.

Meeting with the Anomaly committee on 17th February, 2011

While an AIFUCTO delegation comprising of Prof. James William President, Prof. Jaya Gandhi, National Secretary and Prof. Jagwant Singh, Vice President met with the Anomaly Committee, Gen. Secretary and other Secretariat members went over to MHRD for another meeting with Shri Sunil Kumar.

Discussion with the Anomaly Committee was held on the following issues:

1. API during FIP/long Leave period:-

Agreed to work out a mechanism without insisting on Teaching & Extension work

2. Effective date of Regulation, 2010

Agreed to fix the date as 18-9-2010 (Gazette Notification). To find a transitional promotion mechanism for those who become due for promotion between 31-12-2008 and 18-9-2011.

3. Ph.D. in Concerned/Allied and relevant discipline

Agreed to recommend to consider incentive and equivalence to NET/SLET

4. Anomaly due to PhD incentive

Agreed to study the illustrations and recommend suitable remedy. AIFUCTO insisted that three increments should be sanctioned (similar to two increments) granted during Reader promotion in 1996 pay revision) for pre-2006 Ph.D. holders.

5. Ph.D. awarded prior to 2009.

Mechanism for treating old Ph.D. holders at par with the new regulations.

6. 1-1-1996 anomaly:

Agreed to study the sanction of Rs.14,940/- for those who became Reader between 1-1-96 & 27-7-98.

7. Discrimination between Lecturers and DPE/Librarians.

Agreed to rectify the differences pointed in various tables and Para 8.2 & disparity shown in Promotion from stage 4 to 5 and grant of study leave. to college librarians

8. Selection Committee for Associate Professor.

AIFUCTO insisted that there should not be selection. Experts can screen the data.

Management role should not be there in promotion.

Agreed to study but was also told of MHRD insistence that there could not be difference between direct recruitment & CAS for Associate Professorship.

Meeting with Sri Uma Shankar, Private Secretary to the Hon'le Minister, MHRD

President, GS and Prof. Madhu Paranjpe met Sri Uma Shankar and discussed issues including the Maharashtra Net/SIET issue. He also confirmed that the issue of the increment to the existing PhD holders in the revised pay as raised by AIFUCTO was with the MHRD. The AIFUCTO leaders requested him to take up the matter at the earliest.

Meeting with Sri. Sunil Kumar

AIFUCTO delegation comprised the General Secretary, Prof, V.P.Singh and Prof.Madhu Paranjpe.Natinal Secretaries.

The delegation had threadbare discussion on the following issues:

a. Increment to existing Ph.D. holders in the revised pay scales.

b.Treating all PhD holders as per the old regulation at par with the PhDs in the new regulation for new appointment and CAS.

c.Suitable pay scales for Demonstrators and Tutors.

d.Payment of arrears to the States by the Central Govt.

E.Net/SLET exemption to the Maharashtra teachers appointed between 1991 and 2000.

AIFUCTO leaders explained the rationale of the above demands and sought early solutions.

Meeting with Sri Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister

General Secretary and Prof V.S.Nehera ,Vice President met Sri Pranab Mukherjee,the Finance Minister and explained to him the impasse over the payment of Central Government share of the enhanced pay due to the 6th pay revision. General Secretary drew his attention to the MHRD note to facilitate the payment. He expressed gratitude for the help received in the pay revision process and made an appeal to Sri.Mukherjee to resolve the arrears problem so that the teachers can get the same as early as possible.Sri Mukherjee gave a patient hearing and promised to look into the matter.

We are grateful to Sri Mukherjee for taking active interest in the matter and his follow up action. He wrote to Sri Kapil Sibal,Hon'le Minister,HRD referring to the representation of AIFUCTO to him so that the problem is resolved.Sri Kapil Sibal has been taking appropriate measures in association with the Finance Ministry towards the payment of arrears.as early as possible.

General Secretary's activities in DELHI

In the second half of the period under consideration the General Secretary had been maintaining a camp office in New Delhi for regular contact with UGC, MHRD, Members of Parliament and other eminent personalities for highlighting various demands of AIFUCTO.

Extension of date of Refresher & Orientation Courses

In the past we had written a number of times to the UGC requesting to extend the dates of refresher & orientation courses and UGC accepted our demand. But in view of the fact that many teachers across the country could not attend such courses for various reasons, the General Secretary again wrote a letter to the UGC to further extend the date of Refresher & orientation Courses for the purpose of CAS and met the UGC officials to place the demand.

Payments by the state govts.

We are happy that most state govts. paid full amount of their share of payments while some states like Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa, Goa, Rajasthan etc paid even the central govt. share from their own funds. But there are states like Bihar

Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh Manipur and others who have not paid their share. We demand all states should immediately pay the due amount to the teachers as early as possible. The General Secretary geared up the affiliates by asking them to lobby with their State Ministers and M Ps.

Memorandum to Sri Kapil Sibal, Hon'le Minister, HRD and meeting with Sri R.Sisodia and Sri Uma Shankar on 8th July

The AIFUCTO President, General Secretary, Prof.V.S Nehera and Prof.Jagwant Singh Vice - Presidents and Prof.D.Kumar, NEC Member again visited HRD Ministry on 8th July. A Memorandum was submitted to Sri Kapil Sibal, Hon'le Minister, HRD (see our website for full text). A detailed discussion was held with Sri Uma Shankar, PS to the Minister. The discussion included payment of arrears, exempting Ph.Ds obtained /thesis submitted/ registered from the new Ph.D regulations, 2009 of UGC, the Maharashtra teachers without NET issue and others.

The General Secretary and Prof. D.Kumar had a meeting with Sri.R.P.Sisodia Jt. Secretary (HE).MHRD regarding the outstanding issues for an early solution.

Meetings with Sri R.P.Sisodia, Jt. Secretary & Sri Uma Shankar, PS to Minister, HRD on 21st July, 11

The General Secretary along with Prof.Jagwant Singh and prof.D.Kumar again held a meeting with Sri R.P.Sisodia, Jt. Secretary, MHRD and Sri Uma Shankar, PS to the Minister, HRD on 21st July to discuss the progress of the matters. We express our happiness for the sincere and helpful opinions and actions of the MHRD officers.

Meeting with Dr.N.A.Kazmi, Secretary, UGC on 21st July, 11

The AIFUCTO delegation comprising the General Secretary, Prof.Jagwant Singh and Prof.D.Kumar held another meeting with Dr.N.A.Kazmi, Secretary UGC. The meeting was also attended by Sri Ashok Dogra, Jt. Secretary and Srimati Rita Goel of Pay Scale Section.

The meeting was very cordial and satisfactory. The leaders placed all matters before Dr.Kazmi and she took a very helpful and constructive stand. The leaders informed Dr.Kazmi that the MHRD has clearly informed AIFUCTO leaders that the new UGC Ph.D. regulation would be only prospective. The delegation further reiterated the request to extend the date of Refresher and Orientation courses. They also requested to share with AIFUCTO the

final decisions regarding the removal of anomalies in the regulations as suggested by the Committee.

We sincerely thanked Dr.Kazmi for the meeting and expressed that the long standing practice of having meetings with AIFUCTO at regular intervals would continue.

DHARNA Program in Delhi on 26th August, 2011

A massive DHARNA program was organized on 26th August, 2011 at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi. The demands included:

1. Payment of Central and state Govts. Arrears due to the 6th pay revision.
2. Measures to stop commercialization of higher education.
- 3 Ensuring quality higher education for all.
4. Measures for complete parity of teachers, librarians and DPEs.
5. Rectification of the anomalies in the 5th and 6th pay revisions & Regulations
- 6 Strengthening of public funded education and Increase in the allocation of funds for higher education through UGC.
7. Discussion with AIFUCTO and other teachers' organizations about the proposed reforms in the higher education sector including entry of foreign universities and formation of NEHER.
- 8 Notification of regularization of Maharashtra teachers without NET appointed from 1991 to 2001
9. Withdrawal of PFRDA Bill.

It is heartening to note that all our affiliates responded very well and contributed to the great success of the Dharna and March to Parliament on 26th August, 2011 and again on the observance of the Demands Day on 5th September, 2011. We received 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 programs was to sensitize our members and the nation regarding our demands that include, besides our professional agenda, the broad national issues relating to the restructuring of higher education in India. The media in many states, both print and electronic, gave wide publicity to our program.

We are gearing up to launch a bigger struggle including Court arrest in the month of November-December when the winter session of Parliament takes place, if our demands of payment of arrears by the central and state governments are not accepted by then. You are to ensure the necessary organizational preparedness for the massive success of the proposed 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 anomalies, moves to pass PFRDA and other retrograde restructuring bills in Parliament.

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 supported the demand for 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 non-payment of arrears 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 and the Minister, HRD by the General Secretary.

Meeting with Chairman, UGC on 26th August, 2011

A delegation led by Prof. James William com-

prising 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.

National Convention against PRDA Bill & new pension scheme

The General Secretary participated and addressed a National Convention in Delhi on 22nd June, 2011 opposing the PFRDA Bill convened by the All India State Govt. Employees' Federation. He informed the well attended meeting that the AIFUCTO has already started a campaign against the Bill and hoped that a broad based platform will be created to carry on the movement to oppose the new contributory pension scheme and the Bill

Meeting with Sri R. 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 appraised the AIFUCTO leaders of the latest developments on all matters.

NEC Meetings

NEC meeting, Seminar and Felicitation Program in Kolkata on 27th March, 2011

The NEC meeting was held on 27th March 2011 at the legendary Darbhanga Hall of Calcutta University, Kolkata. The meeting was hosted by AIFUCTO affiliates -CUTA, WBCUTA, WBGCTA, RBUTA, VUTA, KUTA, JUTA, BUTA and WBCLA. This was indeed a proud moment as the meeting

showed the real strength and cohesive beauty of AIFUCTO.

Felicitations to the former office bearers

The NEC offered joyous and grateful felicitations to our former office bearers. We felicitated Prof.K.K.Thekedath, Prof.Shyamapada Pal, Prof.Anil Bhattacharyya-all former Presidents, Prof.Mrinmoy Bhattacharyya and Prof.B.Vijay Kumar, former General Secretaries, Prof.Ajay Banerjee, former Treasurer, Prof.Asis Ray and Prof.Manindra Nath Ray, both former Vice-presidents.

On behalf of the leadership, Prof.Asok Barman, Gen.Secretary paid glowing tributes to the former leaders for their glorious role in building and sustaining the AIFUCTO movement. He noted the sacrifices they made for the movement and their unflinching loyalty to the continued unity of our Organisation. They placed the interest of the teachers above all differences and showed deep respect to different opinions and thus set before the nation an unparalleled example of democratic unity. The Gen. Secretary assured the former leaders that the present leaders imbibed the philosophy of united struggle and strategic actions from them. He informed the meeting that the present leaders take advice from our former leaders and derive great strength. He narrated the active role of AIFUCTO in getting the historic orders for the revision of pension to the teachers who retired from service during the 5th pay Revision period. He hoped that the bond between generations of leaders will always be maintained.

Prof.Mrinmoy Bhattacharyya, on behalf of the felicitated leaders, thanked the present leadership and expressed his conviction that the sense of working for the community, apart from the improvements in the service conditions, shall always be the defining feature of the teaching community. He said that the changes taking place in different directions and dimensions paved the way for more active and purposeful lives of teachers-both serving and retired. He cautioned the gathering that the society is passing through challenging moments and teachers have the noble duty of guiding the society for welfare of mankind.

Seminar -

A lively seminar was organised by the Library Science Department of Calcutta University on the occasion of the NEC meeting. The topic of the Seminar was 'Intrusion of Foreign Educational Institutions in India-the Challenges'.

The Seminar was presided over by Prof.Biplab Chakraborty, Prtesident, CUTA. Prof.Chakraborty, in his address outlined the ongoing debate about the entry of foreign educational institutions and drew the attention of the participants to the many lurking dangers.

Prof.Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University delivered the Key Note address.

He opposed the very idea as only third grade institutions would come forward, with an eye on the vast market, and possibility of quick profit. But the end result would be negative as could be seen from the examples of many countries whose experiments with foreign institutional players ended in disaster. He noted that this would lead to the total neo-colonialisation of our educational structure.

Prof.K.K.Thekedath strongly opposed the Bill introduced in Parliament. The move would further erode the philosophy of public funded education and the market forces would dominate neglecting the interests of millions of students having little capacity to pay. The motive of commercialisation, he observed, must be exposed and opposed by a united movement of all stakeholders.

Prof.Mrinmoy Bhattacharyya also opposed the Bill and warned that this would vitiate higher education and work against the ethos of inclusive, quality education. He cited examples of many countries where higher education draws full support from the State.

Prof.James William outlined how the Govt. of India adopted the agenda of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation to the detriment of people of our country. While the access rate is already very low, the move will further hurt our higher education. He informed the house that there is nation wide protest to the harmful govt. policies from students, teachers and concerned people. A strong, united struggle would be organised to frustrate such moves. He informed that President and Gen. Secretary of AIFUCTO would appear before the Standing Committee of MHRD to present the views of AIFUCTO.

Prof.Asok Barman felicitated Prof.Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University and thanked him for his support to hold the seminar. He thanked the Library Science Department, Calcutta University for the successful Seminar. The host department thanked all speakers and participants.

NEC Meeting

Prof.James William, President inaugurated the well attended meeting with his introductory address.

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He welcomed the members from almost all parts of the country and introduced the agenda of the meeting.

Prof. Asok Barman, Gen. Secretary presented the report on all developments after the last NEC meeting.

His comprehensive report covered every notable development, the most important of which include the non-payment of Govt. of India share of arrears to the States, UGC Regulations, Anomaly Committee Report, Implementation of pay scales including the age of superannuation, and the different Bills presented in the parliament. He informed that the cabinet was yet to de-link the age of retirement from payment of arrears. The MHRD officials informed that they had sent the request for de-linking. The UGC Regulations Anomaly Committee was still working out and would submit the report within a short period. The age of superannuation had been increased in some states though, and some had done it with riders. He requested the NEC to chalk out a program of action in support of different demands and enlist the support of political parties. He once again referred to the non payment/partial payment of struggle fund by some affiliates and drew the attention to the members to the poor financial position of AIFUCTO.

Members from all States reported the latest developments and their action program. Members from Tamilnadu informed that they would get the rest of arrears including that due from Central Govt in April.2011.

The leadership at Manipur had been trying hard to rectify some deviations from the MHRD order and sought AIFUCTO intervention. Associations of Maharashtra, UP, Bihar, MP, Tripura, and Jhrkhand were working to ensure the acceptance of their demands.

The GS and many members expressed deep anxiety at the stalemate of NET/SET problem of thousands of teachers of Maharashtra. Gen Secre-

tary reported that AIFUCTO and MFUCTO were in constant pursuit of solution to the problem.

Many office bearers sharply criticised the new pension scheme and suggested action to frustrate the Central Govt.'s anti-employee move.

The leadership suggested an action program and accordingly the following decisions were taken.

Decisions of NEC Meeting held in Kolkata on 27th March,2011 regarding action program

1) A demonstration/hall meeting at Unit level to be organised in the second or third week of April (date to be decided by the affiliating organisations) demanding

a) Withdrawal of the PFRDA Bill

b) Immediate disbursal of the Central share for the implementation of the UGC scales of pay to the state governments

c) Implementation of the UGC Ph.D Regulations prospectively not retrospectively

d) Amendment to the UGC Regulations on Pay revision as per the suggestions made by the AIFUCTO

e) Withdrawal of the neo-liberal reforms in education

2) Telegrams to be sent to the Hon. Prime-Minister by all affiliates

Hon. Prime-Minister to instruct the govt. of India to immediately release the Central share for the implementation of the pay scales to the state governments.

3) A State level Rally/ Convention / Dharna will be organised in May/ June, 2011 (date to be decided by the State Organisations)

3) National struggle programme/ Rally in July during the next Parliament session (Date to be decided by the Secretariat)

All affiliates are requested to send the news about their action programs and invite Secretariat members/Office Bearers to participate in such programs.

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