

**TV CHANNELS CANT
BROADCAST EVERYTHING -
MADRAS HIGH COURT**

Madurai: The Madras High Court has expressed dissatisfaction with various issues being aired on News Channel. Channels need to be more responsible. The court ruled that they should think twice before broadcasting any content of their choice. Judges of the division bench, Justice N. N. Kirubakaran and Justice B. Pugalendi, said it was imperative that arrangements be made in the country to control TV channels. After hearing two petitions filed in the High Court, the bench of the Madras High Court said that the Center and the state governments need to take steps to stop the pornographic advertisements and programs broadcast on pornographic channels. The court also ruled in favor of a petition filed against the TV channel and cable operator, which broadcasts such advertisements and programs.

ROAD LIFE

6,559 HOMELESS PEOPLE!

‘Janabadi’ Bureau Review



According to the 2011 census, there are 1,245 homeless people in Bhubaneswar. According to a joint survey in 2017 by Action 4, People's Vision of the City and CCWD, 6,559 homeless people are living on the roads in Bhubaneswar. Meanwhile, the number of homeless people is said to have increased. The Delhi High Court on January 20, 2010, February 10, 2010 and May 5, 2010 ordered the Supreme Court of the country to build shelters for these homeless people and ensure that they live in dignity. Eight years have passed since then, but these homeless people still spend nights on streets. Homeless people are scattered all across the city at the railway station, master canteen square, Nuapalli and are spending nights on the side of the road

under the open sky near the Bermunda bus stand. Shelters have been set up by the government. But there is no shelter for these homeless people. The government has not yet commented on the situation.

According to a survey of the homeless, conducted by Action Aid and People's Vision of The City and CCWD Bhubaneswar, 70 percent of the 6,559 homeless people living in Bhubaneswar are male and 21 per cent are female. 41 percent are from backward classes, 97 percent are Hindus, 93 per cent are from different districts of Odisha, while 7 percent of the destitute are from Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Blankets are being distributed in the winter by some benevolent organizations and individuals in view of the

plight of these homeless people. Some people have also distributed food to the hunger stricken street-residers?

According to the survey, 1,203 homeless people have opined that 66 percent of them live under the open sky. And the rest are living in abandoned and smelly environments. Thirty-three percent of shopkeepers live on porches, temples and in public places. Only 0.58 percent of the homeless live in shelters. Forty-seven percent of them defecate in the open. 87 percent do not know what a smart city is. This is the plight of the homeless living in the state capital Bhubaneswar. For them, human rights are far fetched dreams. The government's welfare schemes and social justice systems are inaccessible.

THE PICTURE OF ODISHA'S DEVELOPMENT?

A LOG OF WOOD IS THE BRIDGE FOR MANY

‘Janabadi’ Bureau Review

The West Odisha Development Council was formed on the 1998 to resolve regional disputes and inconsistencies. In March 1918, Chief Minister Sri Naveen Patnaik announced special development councils for nine tribal-dominated districts. The development council included eight districts, including Mayurbhanj, Kendujhar, Sundergarh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur. The Chief

Minister also announced a total of Rs 1.5 crore per block. After the announcement of allocation of funds, it was expected that the development of these underdeveloped districts would be ensured. But two years have passed since the announcement, no developmental activities has been seen in the districts. The government spends billions of dollars every year on infrastructure development. But there are still more than 100 villages without

roads. There are also villages where people are traveling at risk.

An example of this is Penala village in Gadaguda panchayat under Tikabali block of Kandhamal district. Their only means of crossing a river is on a log of wood. Since there is no bridge over the river, everyone, from children to adults and to senior citizens, is forced to cross the river on the log of wood. People have to cross this danger link many a times a day for their daily menial

business. The villagers have prayed before everyone starting from the BDO to the Collector but all in vain. The prayers have only fallen into the deaf ears of these government officials. Many a times, villagers have proposed the road and bridge issues in the village meetings but all have ended in big promises. Funds have been allocated, engineers have paid visit to the site, but neither the road nor the bridge work has ever been resolved.

Editorial

NEW THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

The year 2020 was a year of global pandemic. The entire world reeled under the epidemic of corona infections. The novel COVID-19 suddenly started spreading from China to other countries and in no time spread to the world. And India became infected in this order. The infection was initially ignored, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 people. Today, there are more than 1 crore patients in the country. Even after more than 10 months, the corona infection did not end. India is the most infected country after the United States. Last week, the number of corona infected patients was 17 percent. This indicates that the rate of infection has decreased. Currently, 24,000 to 25,000 patients are diagnosed in one day. Though the research on vaccine development is on its way, there's no guarantee on when the same will be available for people in general. Vaccine development has been the talk of the town, people and experts talk about the status of vaccine almost in all forums including election campaigns to budget sessions. In countries like the UK, the outbreak of the corona epidemic is on the rise again. As a result, air services in the country have been suspended. Night curfews will be imposed to restrict and control infections. The whole year of 2020 remained a year of sorrow and pain, even at this time when people are bidding farewell to 2020 and welcoming 2021, the fear of the deadly infection has not spared anyone. It is believed that the New Year will help move everyone's life forward. All people will live a safe life. The picture of financial misery will go away. Small and medium-sized investors who have lost Rs 7 lakh crore will be reimbursed and the government will change its fiscal policy to implement pro-people policies.

By the end of the year 2020, it is still unknown how many labourers lost their lives due to sudden lockdown and immobility. As a result of the government's short-sighted decision, everyone from workers to farmers went hungry and hundreds of thousands of people from Odisha to Delhi bore the brunt. The government has not yet acknowledged its wrong decisions. The government has not yet reviewed, demonetisation, GST implementation, and Lockdown and Shutdown and now the Farmers' Bill. Government is yet to realise the impact of its wrong and whimsical decisions on ordinary citizens, workers, and farmers. The new year may bring some change in the outlook of the government towards the common citizens of the country. Today, at the Sindh border in Delhi, farmers are protesting against the government's passing of Farmers Bill where the farmers are clearly seeing their fundamental rights been shattered and handed over to the corporate houses. The peasant movement has taken the form of a historic mass movement for the repeal of the anti-agricultural law. However, the government has repeatedly spoken out and written letters reassuring farmers that the law is beneficial to them. But the peasantry is adamant. The movement is going on. The government is spreading lies against the farmers to create a rift in the unity of the peasants to break this democratic movement. Some farmers are also said to be in favor of the law. The year of false propaganda, false promises, and persecution was 2020. Not only were people being held captive during the bereaved years, but the country's growth rate was declining. Unemployment is on the rise, and the government is trying to pass anti-labor laws. Surprisingly, the property of corporate houses like that of Gautam Adani has doubled during the corona epidemic, while Mukesh Ambani's wealth increased by 25 per cent. At a time when the country's GDP growth rate has fallen by 20 per cent, the rise in the wealth of these corporate houses has sent a negative message to the country's economy. Gautam Adani has a net worth of \$ 3 billion, while Mukesh Ambani has a net worth of \$ 75 billion. More than half of the population is currently at risk of food insecurity. The policies of the central government and the state government have not been able to move forward in line with the proportional development of corporate governance. Education and health are deteriorating. The country's government has 20/25 crore in favor of anti-farmer bill, while only 70-80 people have voted against three farmers' laws. This was a difficult year for the government. The government has failed to fulfil its responsibilities to protect the livelihoods, constitutional rights, democratic rights and human rights of the people. In states like Odisha, there has been a wave of agitation over incidents of child abductions. The number of unemployed has risen sharply, with the number of unemployed workers being abused in addition to corona pandemic. The New Year-2021 will surely bring new hopes and new thinking. It will be a year of responsibility for the government. Citizens' rights will not be violated. All citizens will be happy and prosperous. This is a new thought for the New Year.

DIGITAL EDUCATION POLICY

Suryamani Mishra

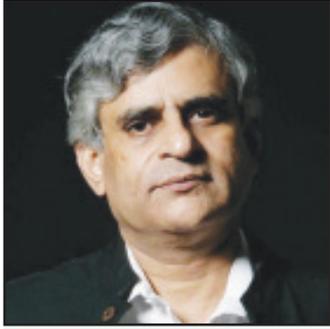
It is indeed a matter of great concern to know and understand the need and necessity of digital education policy in the changing times now. It looked like schools and colleges will remain shut indefinitely for corona outbreak. People will have to stay indoors for a long time to avoid the deadly infections. The entire education system will be disrupted.

The practice that was in place for the children to complete the course with the closure of the school will go backwards. It will have an impact on education administration. At this point, the National Education Policy-2020 Document came to the fore. Changes in school and college curricula, starting with school education, have been included in the new education policy. The new education policy document emphasises the use of mobile apps in digital learning, the use of more and more electronic tools in assessment. But the harsh reality is that our children do not have this digital reading material. The teacher has not been trained in this regard either. Not all children have this device. Children are being addressed on digital platforms. Pre-made videos are being shown that are not subject to digital education. According to a survey by Asar, 30 percent of children who go to school do not have a smartphone. Poor network connectivity is another issue. More than half of the children have been out of school for the past 10 months. It's not just a matter of concern for education, the financial system has been very badly affected during the epidemic. A large number of children are deprived of education for their livelihood and other problems. According to official records, there are still 60 Lakh children in our country who have not stepped onto a school porch. It is true that in the ongoing competition for literacy, the children of the rich and the wealthy who live in the city are at the forefront of education. These children go to private schools. It is evident from this, that how the state of public schools has been weakened for the future generations. Closing public schools for student enrolment and attendance issues and promoting

private schools poses threat to the economically backward classes and deprives them their fundamental right to education and makes them stay back in race.

The government says the teacher's presence will be assured on a regular basis. Necessary facilities are being provided to the school. But the shortage of teachers in government schools cannot be ruled out. The government has announced that the number of mobile connections is reaching the same level as the population. For 12-year-olds, mobile school is as essential as a garden. Where children's digital literacy, curiosity, creativity and social skills are strengthened, more than 80 percent of the country's population is unable to meet their daily needs for food, clothing, housing, medical care and services, as they are financially weak. At the same time, the government's digital education system is being reviewed to make it easier for the children of these economically disadvantaged children. Mobile use is a barrier to education, according to a survey. This is because removing the baby from the book does not help the child's mental well-being. The Right to Education Act has been implemented in India, but not all children have this right. However, the increase in literacy rates must be encouraging. But 80 percent of children are far away from quality education. Today, there is a shortage of one million teachers in the country. Business is going digital, transportation is going on, but wouldn't educating a child through digital platform have a negative effect on him or her? This is because of the fact that children are more likely to be interested in watching porn. YouTube is releasing pornographic videos that could adversely affect the child's mentality. Many children are being abused by these mobile phones. This digital medium can have a detrimental effect on children as much as it does not help in imparting value-based quality education. The time has come to ensure regular schooling with the best digital media education and the development of textbooks and science-based education based on the child's mentality.

DID YOU THINK THE NEW LAWS WERE ONLY ABOUT THE FARMERS ?



P. Sainath

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against the Central Government or the State Government, or any officer of the Central Government or the State Government or any other person in respect of anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or of any rules or orders made thereunder."

Welcome to Section 13 of The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (the one aimed at gutting the APMCs).

And you thought the new laws were only about farmers? Sure, there are other laws that also exclude prosecution of civil servants for carrying out their legal duties. But this one goes way over the top. The immunity given to all those in respect of anything, acting 'in good faith,' whatever they do, is sweeping. Not only can they not be taken to the courts for a crime they may have committed 'in good faith' - they're protected against legal action for crimes they are yet to commit ('in good faith' of course).

Just in case, you missed the point - that you have no legal recourse in the courts - S. 15 rubs it in.

"No civil court shall have jurisdiction to entertain any suit or proceedings in respect of any matter, the cognisance of which can be taken and disposed of by any authority empowered by or under this Act or the rules made thereunder."

Who is the 'any other person' doing things 'in good faith' who cannot be legally challenged? Hint: try listening to the names of corporate giants that protesting farmers are chanting. This is about the ease of business - of very, very Big Business.

"No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie...." It's not just farmers who cannot sue. Nobody else can, either. It applies to public interest litigation too. Nor can non-profit groups, or farm unions, or any citizen (driven by faith good or bad) intervene.

These are surely among the most sweeping exclusions of a citizen's right to legal recourse in any law outside of the Emergency of 1975-77 (when we simply suspended all fundamental rights).

Every Indian is affected. Translated into English, the legal lingo of these laws also convert the (low-level) executive into a judiciary. Into, in fact, judge, jury and executioner. It also magnifies the already most unjust imbalance of power between farmers and the giant corporations they will be dealing with.

An alarmed Delhi Bar council asks this in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi: "How can any litigation having civil consequences be given for adjudication to structures involving administrative agencies, controlled and run by executive authorities?"

(Among executive authorities, read sub-divisional



magistrates and additional district magistrates - all famed for their independence and bursting with good faith and good intent, as every Indian knows). The Bar Council of Delhi goes on to term the transfer of judicial powers to the executive as "dangerous and a blunder." And notes its impact on the legal profession: "It will substantially damage district courts in particular and uproot the lawyers."

Still think the laws are only about farmers?

More such transfer of judicial power to the executive lies in the law about contracts - The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020.

Section 18 regurgitates the "in good faith" argument. S. 19 states:

"No civil Court shall have jurisdiction to entertain any suit or proceedings in respect of any dispute which a Sub-Divisional Authority or the Appellate Authority is empowered by or under this Act to decide and no injunction shall be granted by any court or other authority in respect of any action taken or to be taken in pursuance of any power conferred by or under this Act or any rules made thereunder."

And to think that Article 19 of the Indian Constitution is about freedom of speech and expression, peaceful assembly, freedom of movement, the right to form associations or unions....

The essence of this S. 19, of this farm law, also strikes at Article 32 of the Constitution, which guarantees a right to constitutional remedies (legal action). Section 32 is considered part of the basic structure of the constitution.

Surely the 'mainstream' media (a strange term for platforms whose content excludes over 70% of the population) cannot be unaware of these implications of the new farm laws for Indian democracy. But the pursuit of profit drives them far more than any notion of public interest or democracy.

Shed any delusions about the conflicts of interests (in plural) involved. These media are also corporations. The Bigg Boss of the largest Indian corporation is also the richest and biggest media owner in the country. 'Ambani' is one of those names the farmers at Delhi's gates invoke in their slogans. At other, lower levels too, it has been a long time since we could actually distinguish between the Fourth Estate and Real Estate. The 'mainstream' media are too deeply embedded in this universe to put the interests of citizens (let alone farmers) above those of corporations.

The demonisation of the farmers in their papers and channels - rich farmers, only from Punjab, Khalistanis, hypocrites, Congressi conspirators and more - in the political reports (with some brilliant - and usual -

exceptions) has been steady and relentless.

The editorials of Big Media, though, take a different tack. Crocodile compassion. Essentially, the government should have handled it better. These are after all a bunch of ill-informed yokels who cannot see, but should be made to understand, the genius of the establishment economists and the prime minister - who have made such caring laws, so important for farmers and also the larger economy. That said, they assert: these laws are important and essential and should be implemented.

"The fault in this whole episode," says an editorial in the Indian Express, "lies not in the reforms, but in the way the farm laws were passed, and the government's strategy of communication, or lack of it." The Express is also worried that this mishandling will hurt other noble plans which, "like the three farm laws" are "reforms necessary to harvest the true potential of Indian agriculture".

The primary task before all governments, says The Times of India in its editorial is "Undoing the misconceptions among farmers of the MSP regime's impending demise..." After all, "The Centre's reform package is a sincere attempt to improve private participation in the farm trade. Hopes of doubling farm incomes rest on the success of these fledgling reforms..." And reforms like these "would also correct harmful distortions in India's food market".

"There is sound rationale for the move [the new



laws]," says an editorial in the Hindustan Times. And "Farmers will have to recognise that the reality of the laws will not change." It too, bleats about the need for being sensitive. With the very farmers it sees as "flirting with extreme-identity issues" and aligning with extremist rhetoric and action.

The government may be grappling with questions of which gaggle of conspirators the farmers unknowingly represent, at whose behest they function. The editorial writers have far greater clarity on who they represent and are in no danger of biting the corporate claws that feed them.

Even on the best-meaning, relatively least prejudiced television channels, the questions in the discussions are always within the framework of the establishment and its captive experts and intellectuals.

Never once a serious focus on questions like: why now? And what about the labour laws also pushed through in such haste. Narendra Modi won a massive majority in the last polls. A majority he will have another 2-3 years at least. Why did the BJP government feel that the height of the pandemic was a good time to push through these laws - when a thousand other things are demanding more urgent attention?

Well, the calculation was that this was a time when, cowed down by COVID-19, paralysed by the

ELECTRICITY RATES WILL GROW LIKE PETROL IN THE COUNTRY

Modi government seeks to pass amendments to Parliament on Electricity Act-2003



The Modi government is bringing in a new system. Like petrol, people will now be electrocuted. The Modi government at the Center is going to bring amendment to the Electricity Act 2003 in Parliament, which will then pass all control of electricity to private companies. If the amendment is approved and implemented, electricity prices will skyrocket and it will

be very difficult for the general public to bear the cost of electricity bills.

Efforts to benefit industrialists

The purpose of the amendment in the law is to benefit some private companies, as well as to take full control of the powers of the state governments in the field of electricity. As a result of the central government's amendment, the electricity

bill will be five times the current price. It will rise from the current rate of Rs 2 per unit to Rs 8 to Rs 10 per unit.

Private companies will determine the price of electricity

If the Modi government passes the Electricity Act-2003 Amendment in Parliament, then the full right to increase electricity prices in the country will be given to corporate giants like Adani-Ambani and they will raise the prices at their will.

Electricity prices will rise like petrol

Just as the price of petrol is skyrocketing in the country today, so will the price of electricity the bill is amended. Today, private oil companies have full control over the price of petrol and diesel in the country. Companies like Adani

Power and Ambani Power will set the price of electricity in the country once the new amended law comes into force.

Farmers and the general public will be affected

Currently, in each state, electricity is provided at a lower rate in the domestic category. Industrial and commercial rates are higher.

In some states, farmers are provided with free electricity, or at a rate as low as 50 paise per unit. But the changes being brought in by the Modi government will have no category and all slabs will be removed. Farmers' electricity bills, including small and medium-sized consumers across the country, will increase significantly.

THE DALIT MINOR TIED TO A TREE, BEATEN, AND STRIPPED : 16 WOMEN ARRESTED

Ganjam (Bureau): Police have arrested 14 women and sent them to court on charges of tying a Dalit minor to a tree, tearing down her dress, and thrashing her. Such an unfortunate incident has taken place in Dalit Sahi of Vikapada village under Khallikot police station in Ganjam district.

The minor's father is dead and her mother has fled away leaving her alone. She is staying with her grandmother since then. The residents of the locality

convened a meeting on Thursday evening, questioning her character. There, the girl was tied to a tree and beaten, and her dress was torn. The victim later lodged a written complaint with the Khallikot police station. Based on the allegations, the police filed a case in this regard under Section 528/20 of the Child Sexual Prevention Act. Police arrested 16 women late Saturday night. The number of arrests is likely to rise further in the case, police official Satyaranjan Pradhan said.

MOCKERY OF FOOD SAFETY LAWS

Kendrapara (Bureau): The central and state governments have implemented food security laws and provided food rations to the poor, helpless, low-income people, farmers, labourers and the needy. While there are certain criteria and rules for obtaining a ration card, the family members from Rayachandra village in the Marshaghai have four ration cards when one of the members is a pensioner, one in government service and they have a building of their own. Umesh Chandra Tripathi, a former military officer under the block and village, has lodged a written complaint regarding the partial distribution of ration cards with Malay Kumar Pradhan, Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority. After receiving the complaint, Mr Pradhan has sent a copy of the letter of complaint to the District Civil Supply Department official in letter no. 1171/22.12.2020 for proper and immediate investigation and execution of legal action against the people found guilty.

DID YOU THINK THE NEW LAWS ...

pandemic, the farmers and workers would not be able to organise and resist in any meaningful way. In short, this was the best time. In this they were egged on by their experts some of whom saw in the situation, 'a second 1991 moment', a chance to push through radical reforms, exploiting demoralisation, distress, and chaos. And by prominent editors who begged the regime to "never waste a good crisis." And by a NITI Aayog chief who has declared himself peeved by India being too "too much of a democracy".

And no more than passing references, superficial and insincere, on the extremely important question of the laws being unconstitutional. The Centre blasting through legislation on a state subject with no right to do so.

Not much discussion either, in the editorials, on why the farmers dismissed with such contempt the government's offer of Death by Committee. If there is one committee report that every farmer across the country knows of and demands implementation of, it is that of the National Commission on Farmers - which they call the 'Swaminathan Report'. The Congress and the BJP have competed in burying that report while promising to act on it.

And, oh yes, in November 2018, well over a lakh of farmers gathered near parliament in Delhi demanding implementation of key recommendations of that report. They also sought a debt waiver, guaranteed MSP, and many other demands -

including a special session of parliament to discuss the agrarian crisis. In short, many of the very things the farmers now challenging the Dilli Darbar are demanding. And they were from 22 states and four union territories, not just the Punjab.

What the farmers - who refuse to accept so much as a cup of tea from the government - have done is to show us those calculations of fear and paralysis were wrong. They were and are willing to stand up for their rights (and ours) and resist these laws at great risk to themselves.

They have also said something repeatedly that the 'mainstream' ignore. They have been warning us of what corporate control of food will mean to the country. Seen any

editorials on that lately?

More than a few of them know they are fighting for something much larger than the repeal of three laws, for themselves, or for Punjab. The repeal of those laws does no more than take us back to where we were - which was never a good place. To an awful agrarian crisis. But it would halt these new add-ons to agrarian misery or slow them down. And yes, unlike the 'mainstream media' they see the importance of these laws in dismantling the citizen's right to legal recourse and in eroding our rights. And even if they may not see or articulate it that way - theirs is also a defence of the basic structure of the Constitution and of democracy itself. (Courtesy: www.thewire.in)