

Jute Mill Workers in A.P. in Distress

The managements of jute mills in A.P., having been playing havoc with the lives of their workers, through various foul means with impunity. Neither the state government nor the central government nor even the prevailing system of justice are coming to the rescue of workers and the workers of this industry are left defenseless being rendered jobless due to the wiles of the managements. Under the false pretext of losses, unable to compete in liberalised global conditions.

Illegal lockout of Aruna Jute Mills in Vizianagaram

ARUNA JUTE MILLS of Vizianagaram is one of the units in the management of Sri Lakshmi Srinivasa (ARUNA) Jute Mills in the district.

The management has been systematically playing with the lives of the workers by imposing illegal lock-out of its factories, rendering jobless its workers. Moreover it has been acting as a willful defaulter by not paying the subscriptions to the P.F., gratuity and insurance companies; though it has been deducting the due subscription amounts of workers from their wages. Added to this the management has been willfully defaulting by not paying its electricity bills. Thus the management of Aruna Jute Mill intends only to impress and to establish that they are in losses.

The administration which often shows its might against common petty man for failing to pay electricity bills and other failures in payment of other bills or instalments of loans by implicating in various cases and prosecutions, is willfully and conspicuously closing its eyes against the willful defaults of the jute mills in their statutory responsibilities, without taking any action what so ever.

18 months back the management of Sri Lakshmi Srinivasa Jute mills has illegally closed its East Coast Jute unit, again in January 2015 it closed its Bobbili unit and presently in November, it has illegally locked-out the Aruna Jute mills in Vizianagaram, leaving 2,600 workers jobless.

This lock-out (illegal) imposed by the management is not due to the losses it is incurring as being claimed by it. In fact from July 2015 onwards the jute mills have plenty of indents from government and there are more than enough orders up to March 2016. But it is apparent that with an ulterior motive, the management of Aruna Jute mills has resorted to illegal lock-out. It has been cunningly provoking the workers by not remitting the P.F. amounts of 11 months from Nov 2014 to Sept 2015, and L.I.C. premium amounts to concerned companies though those amounts were deducted from workers' wages. It has been not paying the due gratuity amounts payable to concerned workers. Even it had announced lay-offs by willfully not procuring the required raw Jute for production. Despite all these provocations, workers remained peaceful without falling prey to these unfair labour practices and tactics of the management and maintained industrial peace with utmost hope that the management would run the mills and keep them in their jobs to earn their lawful lively-hood.

One of the main reasons for the illegal lock-out of Aruna Jute Mills is the management's real estate considerations in view of the surging real estate demands since the mill is located in the heart of Vizianagaram town promising more profits. Another important reason for the illegal lock-out appears to be, to discourage the recently recognised union in the mills-the A.I.F.T.U., and to unpopularise it among the workers. In fact the mill management has been deliberately announcing time and again from the inception of the elections of union recognition, that it would close the unit if the A.I.F.T.U union is elected in to recognition. Thus it has been playing with the workers by inciting trade union rivalry and trade union banner sentiments among them that are prejudicial to the interests of the A.I.F.T.U.

However the leader-ship of A.I.F.T.U, has been dispassionately conducting its activities and protest agitation against the illegal lock-out, demanding the lifting of illegal lock-out with unity and amity with the leader-ships and the members of other unions present in the unit. It is continuing its agitation in various forms in front of the jute mills as well in the town and surroundings villages from which the workers hail. It had already complained against the illegal lock-out with the Joint Commissioner of labour and to the District Collector, demanding them to intervene in the dispute and arrange to lift-out the illegal lock-out.

But till date neither from the state government nor other concerned departments of administration there is no decisive positive action to lift-out, the illegal lock-out of Aruna Jute Mills of Vizianagaram which jeopardized the lives of 2,600 workers; who are rendered jobless.

Illegal Closure of Bhajarang Jute Mills in Guntur

The management of Bhajarang Jute Mills in Guntur of A.P., employing 3,000 workers, closed the mills in July, 2015 on the pretext of mounting losses which was not at all a fact. This Jute mill was started in 1935 and its owner-ship is changed to other owners in 1994. From its inception the mill has been earning profits and the owners are thriving on it.

Now with the mega new capital of A.P. being constructed nearer to Guntur city and the mill lands being in the heart of the city, the surging demand of real-estate has been the real reason behind the closing of Bhajrang Jute mills. Already the management had sold 5.28 acres of mill land housing the residential quarters of its managers to Hyderabad - based real estate firm Aditya Construction Company. Recently the management entered with the same real estate firm in to a development agreement, to develop 7.79 acres on land housing its factory. But the management falsely claims that it closed the mill due to mounting losses.

Now the workers formed a Jute mill protection Committee unitedly and are agitating to protect their interests by way of making the mill re-opened.

However the state government and the leader-ship of the ruling TDP party are making vague and hollow promises doing nothing to re-open the Bhajarang Jute mills.

The state which is empowered with the P.D.Act, which with an utmost zeal uses this against the people who conduct struggles, to realize their just demands, conspicuously keeps quiet without using this act against the defaulted managements that play havoc with the lives of the workers with criminal culpability and deceit.

Again this distressed condition of jute mill workers in A.P., warns the working class of this country, the immediate need of class unity and organization to conduct necessary struggles in the protection of its interests- as the only dependable defense from the attacks of big capital.
