



संख्या- 847

There is an increased encroachment on State's autonomy

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against the spirit of the constitution and National Development Council .

-Shri Nitish Kr.

New Delhi: 24th July: Bihar Chief Minister, Shri Nitish Kr. has resented an increased encroachment on the autonomy of States contrary to the spirit and intent enshrined in the constitution and in the setting up of the National Development Council. There is growing tendency in Central Govt. to start many ambitious schemes for which they wish to take credit at the expense of the States by lowering the allocations to the sector. The Gross Budgetary Support, during 11th Plan, to the states has come down from 34 percent to 23 percent, while that of the Central Sector has gone up from 66 percent to 77 percent. However, NDC had earlier favored reduction both in the number and the allocation of resources for centrally sponsored schemes. Bihar Chief Minister opposed this tendency of the center at the expense of the States. Even the 13th Finance Commission recommended to reduce the centrally sponsored schemes, to restore formula based transfers.

Sri Nitish Kr. favored formula based devolution rather than by discretion. Schemes which have far reaching impact for the State Govt. are very often announced without any prior meaningful consultations. Moreover, these schemes often have no provision for the implementation machinery and the State's existing staff has to execute these programs, in addition to their already heavy work load.

He explained that 11th Plan aimed at an average growth rate of 9 percent in a more inclusive context. Despite global recession and natural calamities, Bihar was able to achieve growth (at constant prices) of 8.77 percent in 2007-08 and 16.59 percent in 2008-09, when we had envisaged 8.5% growth per year for the 11th Plan period. He hoped to achieve a growth rate of more than 13 percent in the remaining two years of 11th F.Y. Plan period.

While endorsing the targets and strategy of the Mid Term Appraisal of 11th Plan, Sri Kumar wished to highlight several areas of the Bihar state. He mentioned that Bihar has prepared a State

specific Agricultural Road Map in order to improve supply of good quality seeds, replenishment of soil nutrients and improvement in agricultural marketing. He informed that food grain production has consistently increased and reached to 122.20 lakh MT during 2008-09 from a modest level of 85.49 lakh MT during 2005-06. During last Kharif 2009 as many as 26 out of 38 districts were draught affected, yet food grain production showed only a marginal decline at 120.86 lakh MT showing good resilience of agriculture in the State.

Sri Kumar further informed that the Plan outlay for agriculture development has increased from Rs. 20.43 crore in 2005-06 to Rs. 734.42 crore during 2010-11. Recounting the thrust areas, he said “Subject Matter Specialists” have been appointed for every 2 Panchayats and appointment of Kissan Salahkars at Panchayat level is under process. Agricultural research and education is strengthened with creation of new agriculture university at Sabour, Bhagalpur and 3 new agriculture colleges and one Horticulture college. Sri Kumar lauded the effort to convert Rajendra Agriculture University into a Central University. The draft bill and DPR for it have been sent to the concerned department. He requested for its early implementation. He further requested for the establishment of “Borlaug Institute for South Asia” an international institute in Bihar.

For increasing growth in crop sector, Sri Kumar suggested that diesel subsidy for irrigation should be made a regular program particularly for irrigation of Rabi crops and sugarcane, hybrid seed availability for paddy and maize should increase, genetically modified crops should be subjected to rigorous evaluation and consultation with states before its approval, adequate subsidy for farm machines and investment in agricultural research and education must be substantially increased.

Regarding centrally sponsored agricultural development schemes like ‘National Food Security Mission’ and ‘Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana’ launched in 2007-08, Sri Kumar asked for more freedom in the selection of any intervention, its costs and subsidy levels. As for every centrally sponsored program, a separate work plan is prepared by the states and approved by Govt. of India, takes much valuable time in completing the administrative formalities.

With regards to the BPL families, Bihar CM said that at present BPL numbers are determined by the Planning Commission and the state govt. is expected to only identify the families. This identification process is quite cumbersome and leads to litigation. Thus, there should be an independent commission to identify BPL families, based on criteria decided by the Govt. of India.

Under MGNREG states are required to discharge the statutory obligation of providing 100 days of employment. It is desirable that the amount approved in the labor budget of the state should

be released in one installment at the beginning of the year. He further explained that the working season varies from state to state and the banking infrastructure is weakest in states that need MGNREGS the most. Sri Kumar explained that if funds are made available to the PRI, in the beginning of the year, first as an experiment in focus states with high levels of poverty and migration, there will be no disruption in employment provision and creation of assets will improve dramatically. Moreover, arbitrary cap of Rs. 100 to pay minimum daily wage when inflation rise steeply is not fare.

Bihar Chief Minister enumerated various imitative for improving education in the state like, “Poshak Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Poshak Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Balika & Balak cycle Yojana, Hunar, Auzar, Mukhya Mantri Protsahan Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Akshar Anchal Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Samagra Vidyalaya Vikas Yojana, opening of new primary school, Upper primary schools, Talimi Markaz, Utthan Kendra, appointment of teachers etc. and reasoned that Bihar is already spending more than Rs 7,500 crore on education. He further explained that the requirement for implementing the Right to education Act in Bihar will be more than Rs. 25000 crore per year and thus, in this regards demanded that the Centre should fund 90 % of this expenditure and the state can contribute 10%.

With regards to skill development, Sri Kumar informed that in response to Center’s announcement of opening 1500 new Industrial Training Institutes and 50,000 Skill Development Centres in the uncovered blocks and Panchayats under PPP, the state has identified land for opening 205 such institutes and over 2,100 centres as desired by Ministry of Labour and Employment and submitted the proposal for centres’ approval. He asked to expedite it.

Landing States’ achievement in health sector, Bihar Chief Minister stated that medical education has been our concern. State has made efforts in improving infrastructure and facilities in medical colleges but lots are yet to be done and certainly requires concerted efforts of both the State and the Union Govt. State has acute shortage of doctors and paramedical and need to find out means together with the Union govt. so that quality health services can be provided right upto the last mile.

Under the “Accelerated Rural Drinking Water Supply Program” 56,465 unserved tolas have been covered with safe drinking water. In order to expeditiously cover the areas affected by Fluoride and Arsenic, it is suggested that 100% allocation of funds be made by the Central Govt. Moreover, Sri Kumar underlined that for a balanced regional development, it is necessary to strengthen Gram Panchayats. Every Gram Panchayat should be provided with a suitable office building which can be used by all Panchayat level functioning aries and also the elected representatives. It was suggested

by Sri Kumar that the BRGF allocation should be increased so that construction of such Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans can be taken up.

He further said that absence of balanced regional development and even backward areas is the main reasons for the growth of naxalism. As requested by the Planning Commission, Integrated Action Plans for the six identified left wing extremist districts in the State have been prepared by the district administration. He suggested that Govt. of India should consider establishing convergence support cells in the office of the DMs of each extremist affected districts manned by high quality professionals. He demanded that the scheme should be extended to All 33 extremist affected districts instead of only 6.

Bihar has only 90.10 km of roads per one lakh of population as compared to 256.70 as national average. Sri Nitish Kumar explained that about 2,935 km of National Highways are maintained by the state govt., but it is sanctioned by the Govt. of India. He complained that there has been insufficient release of funds for maintenance of those roads. State govt. has spent Rs. 969.76 crore for the maintenance of these roads, but has yet not received the amount.

Sri Nitish Kumar further explained that under Prime Minister Gramin Sadak Yojana, India govt. has sanctioned Rs. 8645 crore for construction of 19]000 km of roads. But, so far only Rs. 1768.56 crore have been released. This has hampered the progress of construction work. He requested that Rs. 1000 crore should be immediately be released and Rs. 500 crore per month till June 2011 to ensure timely completion of the sanctioned projects. Similarly, he asked for coal & water linkage for the power projects in Bihar.

Bihar Chief Minister emphasized at last that it does not belove will in the established federal structure like ours, for union ministers to use central resources and its forums for carrying out criticism and campaign against a duly elected state govt. The constitution provides for a supportive role and not obstructive.

Apart from Chief Minister, other functionaries who attended the meeting were Shri Sushil Kr. Modi, Deputy Chief Minister, Sri Anup Mukherjee, Chief Secretary, Shri K.C. Saha, Development Commissioner and Shri Alok Chatturvedi, Resident commissisoner.
