

Now, AP and TS Spar Over Allocation of PSU Staff

By G S Vasu, Published: 24th December 2014 06:03 AM

HYDERABAD: A fresh row is brewing between the sibling states — this time over division of employees of state public sector undertakings (PSUs). And, unless amicably settled, this could further delay the division of these 89 PSUs, all of them commercial in nature and listed under Schedule IX of the AP Reorganisation Act.

The tough play by both the Telangana and Andhra governments is understandable — close to `65,000 crore had been invested in the PSUs by the erstwhile united AP and many of them have huge cash reserves with a combined manpower of over 2.5 lakh. What triggered the fresh battle is a suggestion by the AP government that the expert committee, constituted to look into the division of assets and liabilities of the PSUs, should also finalise the bifurcation of the staff. While the division of All India Service officers between the two states is being handled by the Pratyush Sinha committee, the process in respect of state cadre employees is dealt with by the Kamalanathan committee.

In a letter to Sheela Bhide, chairperson of the expert panel on PSUs, on November 18, AP Chief Secretary IYR Krishna Rao suggested that the guidelines being followed by the Kamalanathan committee in respect of state cadre staff “may be considered for allocation of employees of institutions listed under Schedule IX” as well.

Sheela Bhide, who arrived in Hyderabad on Tuesday as part of the continuing consultations, is understood to have responded positively. This, however, runs somewhat contrary to the letter she had addressed to the senior officials of both the state governments in August this year, in which the retired IAS officer referred to Section 82 of the Reorganisation Act which says — “On and from the appointed day, employees of state PSUs, corporations and other autonomous bodies shall continue to function there for a period of one year and during this period, the corporate body concerned shall determine the modalities for distributing the personnel between the two successor states.”

A senior official of Telangana, involved in the division of PSUs, argued that the Sheela Bhide committee is only empowered to deal with the question of “assets and liabilities” of the PSUs but not the employees. “Take any precedent, whether it be division of Madhya Pradesh, UP or Bihar, it was the corporate body (the board of the PSU concerned) that took the decision on splitting of employees. If they did not have any problem in following this method, why should we have a problem here?” he reasoned, unwilling to go on record.

The best course is always to leave it to the corporate to decide on division of staff in such a manner that it doesn't affect its functioning in the future, he maintained. A high-ranking official of AP, contacted by Express, however, justified the suggestion made by them on the ground that corporate bodies of these PSUs have themselves lost their relevance once the division took place. “For that matter, there was no need to even set up the committee. If that was done to divide the assets/liabilities, why not the employees?” he questioned.

The official further pointed out that there have to be parameters based on which employees should be divided. “Since the Kamalanathan committee has already come up with guidelines accepted by both the states, our stand is that the same principles could be followed.

And, since Sheela Bhide is a neutral authority, neither state should have any reason to complain.”
