

## The AAP Party In Government

■ Dr. M.N. Buch

Arvind Kejriwal swept to power partly on its promise to give corruption free government to the national capital and partly on his promising to give free power and water to the citizens. He has announced that from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 every household will get 20,000 litres per month of water free and 400 units of electricity per month at 50% of the present cost, with the balance being given as a subsidy. It is not clear whether the subsidy will be given to the citizens or to the distribution company, but one assumes that the latter will be the case because the Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, has said that this arrangement will be there till the audit of the distribution company is completed and if it is found that they are making undue profit, then the subsidy will have to be borne by the distribution companies themselves. If the metered supply indicates use of more than 400 units of power per month then the consumer will have to pay for the entire power consumed from point zero onwards. Similar will be the case with water supply.

A party which has come to power on a promise of a corruption free government has just created an avenue of corruption with almost unlimited scope and with very little chance of detection. People who want free power and water cannot be considered exactly above corruption themselves because they want a benefit without paying for it. How much power and water is consumed is a question of what the meter reading shows and meters are read by low paid meter readers in large numbers. One can foresee consumers bribing the meter readers to deliberately show a lesser power consumer than 400 units per month or a water consumption of less than 20,000 litres per month. The employee gets a modest but regular bribe from each household and the householders save a great deal of money by not having to pay any electricity or water bill. Because both benefit at a scale which is almost universal, neither will report the deviations and, therefore, corruption would be wholesale in which there will be eager citizens' participation. This nexus cannot be broken. Congratulations, Kejriwal for setting in place such a foolproof arrangement.

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