

ALL INDIA NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA STAFF ASSOCIATION (AINVSA)
7TH ALL INDIA CONFERENCE
MAVALANKAR AUDITORIUM, NEW DELHI
SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dear friends

I heartily welcome CEC members, SEC members from various states and delegates who have taken a lot of pains to attend the meeting braving the growing temperatures. My warm greetings to you all on the occasion of the organisation of the 7th National Conference of AINVSA. You are aware that the National Conference is organised every three years. The 7th Conference is actually scheduled to be held in November. This time the CEC has decided to advance it and streamline it once and for all so that it is held regularly in May every three years.

This time, thanks to the efforts of some dedicated members we have successfully publicised the conference and a lot of efforts have been taken to ensure the turn out of more delegates for the conference. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those members for taken to heart my request for encouraging more delegates to attend the conference and make it truly national and successful.

Uniqueness of Navodaya Staff Problems:

Navodaya Vidyalayas are unique. So are the problems and concerns of the teaching and non-teaching staff. They were set up in remote rural areas with the noblest objective of empowering the talented rural children with education. If results are any indication of the work done by the staff, the high percentages we have been achieving speak of the mammoth work we have been doing for decades. The picture appears rosier but it hardly reflects the ground realities. JNVs are segregated. As a result, the conditions and problems of the staff have not seen enough light of the day. **Some of our problems and duties like MoD may even appear bizarre to our brethren in KVS and state schools.** No employees in any organization live such secluded life as we do. No civil servants are expected to be present round the clock at the work places just as we do. What is worse, there is no organisation in the Central Government where rules are framed at will and fancy and thrust upon the employees. **Rules are interpreted as per convenience.** Quite often new rules are framed at vidyalaya level. Instructions to staff often sound like warnings. **The vast number of duties assigned to Housemasters and Associate Housemaster and MoDs have no statutory sanction.** Still we are forced to follow them. We are even served memos and face departmental actions on the pretext of not following the duties. All these elaborations are only to emphasize that the teaching and non-teaching staff work under conditions that are out of ordinary. They are undemocratic to say the least.

Colonial British better than NVS:

Even the colonial British entertained representation of different sections of Indian while making laws towards the end of their rule. They knew that they would not be able to rule India unless some sort of representation was allowed. Unfortunately an organization set up to with a unique welfare motive of serving the rural deprived sections of the population in free India has turned out to be a worse administrator than the British. The Indian National Congress was set up in 1885. By 1915 it was in a position to demand the government to listen to its voice and get invitations from the British to represent public sentiments. NVS was set up in 1986. We are in 2017. Almost 30 years passed. **Till date we have not witnessed a single occasion wherein NVS has asked the Association to attend a meeting to formulate a policy. It has not recognised us as stakeholders.** There has been no great insult inflicted on the staff than this. Our Association must survive and fight for recognition just for the simple reason of representing the concerns of the staff in decision making. **Let us carry out this fight for internal democracy. It's foolish to boast of excellence when you are denied your basic right to represent your collective voice and concerns and, thus, robbed of your self-respect.**

Recognition of the Association:

Recognition of the Association has been one of our main demands. But we have not succeeded in achieving this. We have showed our membership strength to the Management. **While we secured the support of a near 70% of the total number of employees in the organization, the other organizations have not secured even 2% membership.** I want all the members to think over why we have not been given recognition till date. It is not because there existed another association with the same name. The simple reason are (i) **some of our high profile officers don't want the Association to be recognised because they believe that their hegemony will be questioned.** They want us to be at their mercy and wait endlessly for the trickling out of benefits. (i) **The membership on paper has not got translated into active membership.** Having joined the association, the members should work harder to show the management that they are truly united under its banner and will no more remain passive stakeholders but will fight tooth and nail to achieve their demands. We cannot make any progress in the direction of getting recognition for the Association if we are not ready to fight and make sacrifices.

Strengthening of the Association:

Time and again I have insisted on building the Association and strengthening it from grassroot level. **The Association's true strength lies in the strength of the vidyalaya units. The true revival of the Association should be from the vidyalaya level.** Thanks to the efforts of the some of the Association members many vidyalayas have now formed local units and conveyed this information to the CEC, SEC and other vidyalayas through what's up. We all know forming the vidyalaya unit is not enough. It has to play a **constructive role in the strengthening of the Association by frequently organizing meetings, debating the issues in a democratic manner.** It should also lend its support to the Central Executive Committee by **giving it feedback and responding to its calls unitedly.** Till we build up such strong vidyalaya units we will not be able to make any progress.

Need for intensive and united struggle:

On our part we have been representing the staff issues regularly. We have **submitted nearly a one thousand representations to the NVS.** We met the Commissioner nearly 10 times in the last two years. But I would like to remind all the members from this platform that **we cannot achieve our demands through representations and lobbying alone.** We must rally to Delhi and show the management that we can longer be kept waiting for the resolution of even the simplest of our demands. **Without an intensive agitation and show of strength and solidarity we will not achieve our demands.**

The plight of autonomous organizations:

At the time our Association was set up, the Govt of India was introducing **reforms on a huge scale in the name of liberalization of economy.** The reforms initiated in those days have been continued despite the change in the political leadership of the government. The liberal pension policy was withdrawn and along with it many other employee friendly measures. **The process of withdrawing benefits is still going on.** In the recent years the speed has increased. The non-extension of VII Pay Commission benefits to the employees of the autonomous organizations is a wonderful example. The finance ministry has recently made a categorical announcement saying that **the autonomous organizations are not going to get the financial benefits given to the central government employees automatically.** It has directed the autonomous organizations to find ways for generation of funds to become self-dependent, suggesting that it is not going to fund the autonomous organizations fully. The government now considers the autonomous organizations a huge burden on its coffers. **The objective behind setting up the autonomous organisation is to help them work more efficiently without government and its' beurocratic interference in their day to day administration and policies.** Now the prestigious IITs, research educational organizations like NCERT, KVS, NVS and many other educational organizations have been instructed to look for resources to meet **their expenses 30:70.** The finance ministry has also given instructions to NVS to recover the bonus paid the employees for the financial year 2015-16. Do we need more evidence to prove that in the coming years the government is going to be tougher in financial matters? **The government's delay in sanctioning the allowances recommended by the pay commission, its refusal to continue some of the allowances sanctioned earlier and the delay in the grant of allowances must serve us as an eye-opener to all of us.** The future is not

bright for us. The revival of the old pension scheme, the grant of MACPS benefits to the teaching staff, 10% Special Allowance to the non-teaching staff, increase in the allowances, etc. will require unusual magnanimity on the part of the government and we all know that the policy decisions of the governments and court judgement do not and will not entertain public sentiments. If you trust that change of political leadership will usher in employee-friendly measures, you are seriously mistaken.

Need to join and support the agitations of the Central Government employees:

For a long time the autonomous organizations have remained aloof from the mainstream agitations, the reason was they were sanctioned the recommendations of the pay commissions and other service benefits automatically on a par with the central government employees. They have organizations and they have been fighting for some of their rights and benefits but they did not take part in the nation-wide agitations of the workers and other central government employees. We have a lesson to learn from all this. When we remain aloof from the mainstream agitations, we are doing no good to ourselves. We cannot expect the central government associations, which we need very badly, to support us when we do not sympathise and join their struggles. **We cannot wage an isolated agitation and succeed.** We must join the larger agitations of the other central government employees. There is also an urgent need for the formation of a federation of employees of autonomous organizations to fight for the common demands and against the erosion of the employees' rights.

State Conferences:

Mammoth efforts were made this time to organise State Conferences. Barring Gujarat, Uttarakhand and some states in the North-East India, we formed State Executive Committees. The new SECs are working vigorously and they have played a commendable role in the organisation of this all India Conference. I strongly believe that they will shoulder the responsibility of fighting for the demands of the staff and safeguarding the Association from self-interested elements in the days to come.

Regular Meetings of the CECs and SECs:

I would like to urge the Central Executive Committee and State Executive Committee members to prepare a plan of action for the next 3 years. The CEC should meet 2 times in a year and the SECs should have their meetings 3 times in a year. All SEC office bearers should have a rapport with the vidyalaya office bearers and association members. After every meeting the minutes should be circulated through e-mail, social websites or the Association's website.

Fund mobilization:

The Association cannot be run with poor bank balances. The return of subscriptions to the members by the Drawing and Disbursing Officers after a near 2-year indecisive period regarding association recognition has badly affected the Association and its functioning as not even a single rupee was credited to the Association's account for over two years. During this crisis also the Association was able to function thanks to the financial support of the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana State contributions. I thank the Telangana and AP SECs for their invaluable support to the CEC during this crunch period.

The women's Forum:

It is sad to observe that women employees are still facing harassment in some of our schools. The Women's Forum of the Association aims to represent the problems of the women before the higher officers for a suitable remedial action. It is meant to help the women staff facing victimization. It fights against discrimination at work places. It was formed three years ago. Unfortunately, it still facing teething troubles. I request the Women's Forum members to meet frequently and plan for activation of the forum. It should be a true forum for the women in distress in our organization. I also request the Forum members to mobilize funds for rendering help to their members legally and also meet the expenses for their programmes. I sincerely believe that the Forum will receive a big support from their members encouragement this time and the new Women's Forum's members will activate it with their agitations and awareness programmes.

The growing suicidal cases:

The number of students committing suicides is, unfortunately, not abating. It is noteworthy that the students who is planning suicide is psychologically ill. In most cases the teachers fail to foresee the tragedies. But being tied up with the responsibility of safety and security of the student, we are bearing the brunt of action and being implicated by the police department, NVS and the parents. **We must tell the NVS that it cannot implicate us as we have not been trained to deal with children facing serious psychological problem.** The inaction or negligence of a teacher, even if it is proved that the concerned teacher is indifferent and careless in his duties, a teacher is still not the sole reason for the suicide of a student. NVS and society should share more responsibility more the unfortunate episodes.

The Examination Reforms:

The examination reforms will benefit our students very little as long as we teachers remain traditional in our approach. NVS has done very little to change the traditional methodology of the teachers. The teachers have been deprived of their freedom. Most principals hardly discuss the changes in the evaluation system with the staff and get their feed back or give their feed back to the organization. They have taken leave of their teaching duties. Even NVS officers are not in a position to offer guidance to the teachers as they also have abandoned teaching and do not involve themselves in any educational research and academic discussions. **The schools have not been given any freedom to deal with the examination reforms with NVS dictating them what to do through its manual – Perspective Academic Planning which has acquired the status of constitution for Navodaya Vidyalayas instead of a guidance book.** NVS probably knows that most principals are not good enough to do anything on their own unless they are given guidelines in all matters. It seemed to tell them to follow its instructions without a debate and discussions. The old pattern of evaluation system and the new pattern that NVS has recently circulated show that it still believes in Pen and Paper examinations fundamentally. It is sad to see that reforms have little effect on our mindsets and classroom transactions. In the name of uniformity NVS still keeps deviating from the CBSEs guidelines regarding exams and the concept of stress-free examination system has been no attention. Thus, little has changed for the students.

Shortcomings:

One of the shortcoming that we have encountered in the last five to six years is the Association's failure to have a back up team. We would visit MPs of different political parties with representations. We have now developed some good rapport with some of the MPs and it is possible that we can exercise some pressure on NVS and HRD through the MPs. But once we leave Delhi, there is no second team here to pursue the matters by re-establishing contacts with the MPs and Ministers. We have been coming to Delhi from far off places, travelling for almost a day. Some of the members take even longer time. But the schools in the vicinity of Delhi and Noida are not active. In the absence of a follow-up team, the Association has not been able to mobilize political support to our genuine issues.

Communication in Hindi:

Another drawback of the Association is the medium of communication. The association representations are always in English. This has not gone well with our North Indian brothers whose medium of communication is Hindi. I request the next CEC to find out suitable and committed team of workers to prepare representations in Hindi and also translate the English circulars into Hindi. The communication gap does not augur well for the association in the long run.

Using social media:

The Association has been using the social media websites like *what's up* for nearly 2 years. Through it the Association has reached thousand of members across the country. But I advise my friends to be very cautious about social media. Time and again a few of the CEC members and I were persuading the members to use *what's up* strictly for associational correspondence. It shouldn't be used for posting irrelevant messages, which is unfortunately the case. We should show more maturity by avoiding posting

and forwarding irrelevant messages. I want you to seriously think over the ill-consequences if any employee posts or forwards some derogatory and obscene messages. That will defame our community, association and may also invite legal action. I warn my friends to be cautious and discretion by discouraging the forwarding of irrelevant and trash messages.

Fund mobilisation:

The SEC office bearers should and Vidyalaya unit office bearers may prepare a plan of action for generating funds. Two years ago, the Central Executive Committee put a proposal for purchasing a flat for running the office with New Delhi as its headquarters. It is a difficult proposition but the Association needs one. I request the next office bearers to seriously consider this proposition and prepare a plan of action.

Conclusion:

In the years to come the CEC and SECs should play a huge role to safeguard the Association. If Association weeks, we will drop into the darker days of earlier years. We will lose our self-esteem. We will lose even the minimum privileges we are enjoying now. I request the members of the association to be patient. We cannot immediately reap the fruits of our harvest. Our sole agenda is to fight for our place in decision-making. We must fight to proclaim our self-respect. When self-respect is lost, we cannot claim to belong to the noble calling – teaching! So, friends, fight for honour.

Long live AINVSA!!

With warm greetings

Yours in service

(L.B.REDDY)