

ALL INDIA NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA STAFF ASSOCIATION (AINVSA)

(Regd No:K. 492/94)

President: Jagdish Rai 9415656993

Working President: J.K. Singh 9801444901

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SMT K MANJULA

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``Formation of Working Women Forum of AINVSA``

The Association has long been contemplating of conducting a special Convention of woman staff working in NVS and form a strong woman forum within the AINVSA as it has been observed that their participation in Association activities is not very encouraging. Besides, the woman employees face certain problems that are different from their male counterparts and it is very important for them to have a special platform so that they can discuss their issues with more autonomy and execute a plan of action to resolve them. It is disturbing to note that despite almost three decades of the formation of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and two decades of the setting up of the organisation, the concerns of the lady staff have not been properly addressed. It is high time that they grab every opportunity to expose their problems and air their views frankly and fearlessly.

Working women in NVS are a meager 15% of the total employees which itself is a great injustice meted out to them while it will be interesting to note that in many notable private and corporate schools the number of female teachers and non-teaching staff usually outweighs the strength of male employees. The answer to this question exposes many problems that the working women in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas face. The Navodaya Vidyalayas are mostly located in remote pockets of our country as their prime objective is to empower the rural talented children through education. This itself discourages many talented female teachers from joining our organisation. Secondly, women employees are posted in nooks and corners of the country as the NVS has failed to draw a sound transfer policy since its inception. A lot of male as well as female teachers continue to work in the same station for years and years, making it impossible for others especially women to move closer to either to their home stations or their husband's place of work. The mobility within the organisation has reached a stagnation level so much so that even male employees are scared of transfers once they fortunately find themselves in favourable places. As the Samiti has done little to transfer long standing employees, at the time of promotion some of the female teachers are given postings in other regions and sometimes even in hard stations, thus, discouraging them from availing promotion chances. Even the married couple within the organization are seen working in different states for years. The committee appointed to study the working condition of the staff suggests transferring couples to the same station. But the Samiti has not given any attention to this most important recommendation. Justice delayed is justice denied. As the strength of the female staff is far less than their counterparts the posting and transfer issues of the female employees have never been adequately addressed. It is not far from truth if we say that they have been ignored to the convenience of the male staff.

The working hours are another serious problem that discourages talented women staff from joining the organization. The recent committee that the NVS has set up after their 10-day long strike to look into the work load of the staff has failed to understand the concerns of its women work force. It has largely tried to pooh-pooh the criticism of growing workload with monotonous statements like teachers are expected to work more in residential schools and they are paid for it. Women employees bear the burden of their families as well as their jobs. The sensitiveness of women's working conditions have not been adequately studied by the committee. The male counterparts themselves rarely show any sympathy for their female counterparts as the special problems women only face are beyond their comprehension.

Women employees have been granted Child Care Leave, following the recommendation of the 6th CPC. But they are facing problems as the sanctioning of the leave has never been smooth. Though sanctioning of leave is within their powers, many heads of institutions refer the matter to their higher authorities which results in embarrassing inconvenience and delay. Benefits to women employees like the Child Care Leave is a result of their prolonged struggles and movements. It is not favour but a right. The male teachers complain of heavy load of work and argue that it has deprived them of their valuable family time. Women are looked at mockingly when they apply for the CCL for the same reason.

The term 'flexible working hours' for women employees needs to be addressed by the Samiti. Due consideration must be given to pregnant and baby feeding employees. **The female teaching staff should be totally exempted from early morning and late night study hours.** They should not be given MOD duties. They should be given adequate time to make reservation to attend inservice programmes as well as escorting duties. Non-teaching female staff should not be retained in the office beyond the stipulated hours. Meetings involving female teaching staff should not be conducted at odd hours and holidays or stretched beyond the stipulated school hours by the heads or the visiting officers to avoid causing inconvenience to them. In many schools there are no special toilets for lady staff. They are forced to share the girls' toilets. Hence, there should be separate toilets for female staff in the academic block. While allotting quarters the female employees staying outside the school campus should be given top priority. The Association's suggestions to the Samiti in this regard have fallen on deaf years. Complaints of harassment by the female staff should be resolved in a time-bound manner. The honour of the complainant should be guarded.

Dear friends, the Association feels the need to address many other concerns of the women employees besides the ones mentioned above in the women special forum being held on 27-05-2014, a day after the annual CEC meeting at STFI, office, shadikam pur New Delhi,. You are humbly requested to give your feed back to this letter and make your reservation to attend the meeting without fail. The Association will make arrangements for your comfortable stay if you intimate your participation well in advance.

Seeking your cooperation

Yours sincerely

JAGDISH RAI
PRESIDENT

JK SINGH
WORKING PRESIDEN

LB REDDY
GENERAL SECRETARY