

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE OF SERVICE ASSOCIATIONS OF NVS

Lr. No: JAC/2012-13/15

Date: 18-02-2013

Dear friends,

The call for the nation-wide Indefinite Strike and the response:

The ten-day long strike is truly historic as it witnessed a near 100% participation of JNVs across the country for the first time. The JAC was compelled to go ahead with its Indefinite Strike call as the Mass Casual Leave agitation on 24-01-13 and the talks with the management on 22-01-13 failed to get an amicable solution for the long-pending demands. The Indefinite Strike that started on 06-02-13 spread like wild fire as it witnessed 70% participation in the first three days itself. It took no time for the staff to shed their fears and suspicions, and joined the struggle as they found a vent to express their rage against the anti-staff policies of the Samiti. The two-decade long dissatisfaction now broke out. The teaching and non-teaching staff joined together and supported each other. The JNVs have never seen such a mass expression of protest against the Samiti.

The talks with officials by others and JAC representatives during the strike:

On 08-02-13 the Samiti sent a letter to the JAC representatives and others for talks on 09-02-13. But the JAC members expressed their difficulty in attending the talks as the invitation did not give them sufficient time to make preparations for their journey. It was asked to put off the talks to 11-02-13. But, most unfortunately, that did not happen. The three JAC members (**L.B.Reddy, Jagdish Rai & J.K.Singh**) could attend talks only on 11-02-13 but instead of starting fresh talks with them, the Management apprised them of the talks held on 09-02-13 and requested the JAC to call off the indefinite strike.

The oppression unleashed:

Since then the Samiti left no stone unturned to harass and threaten the staff. The striking staff was threatened with punishments of transfer, suspension and other severe disciplinary actions. They even threatened to employ contract teachers in their places and the striking regular staff would have to vacate their quarters immediately to accommodate them. One circular from the Hon'ble Commissioner was enough for the Deputy Commissioners to press the panic button. They even went for press advertisements for the recruitment of contract teachers and notices ordering the staff to call off the strike by 15-02-13. Thus, the management showed its ugly face as it tried to use all possible measures to repress the agitation. The services of the staff that they had mercilessly extracted to satisfy their superior officers year after year were now hardly remembered.

The historic struggle:

Amidst such opposition the staff agitated demanding the resolution of their age-old demands. All the vidyalayas went all out to expose their tales of suffering to the public, leaders of the people and like-minded people. They staged public demonstrations in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Dharwad, Bhubaneshwar, Raipur and Patna and undertook rallies and what not. Kudos to them for their brave heart and valiant efforts. The myth that everything was well in the NVS was shattered once for all. The false face of the NVS was exposed. The age-long CCS Pension received huge public attention and support for the first time. A number of supporting letters from the MPs and other representatives were obtained and sent to the NVS and the MHRD. Never before such

mobilization for Pension and other demands was made. Never before the teaching and non-teaching fought in unison for the resolution of each others demands so long in the history of the Samiti.

FLASH DHARNA ON 14-02-2013

The Flash Dharna staged on 14-02-13 was a stupendous success. Over 4000 Navodaya fraternity gathered with their families in the capital of our country and attracted the whole country's attention. The intensity of the agitation was reflected in the telecast of the Dharna news on the DD news channel. During this dharna Shri Tapan Sen, Rajya Sabha member and General Secretary, CITU assured us to raise our issues in the coming Parliament session.

The talks with the Minister of State for HRD and the calling off the Indefinite Strike:

While making efforts to intensify the agitation, we were able pressurize the HRD Ministry to arrange for a meeting with the Hon'ble Minister of State, Shri Sashi Tharoor on the evening of 15-02-13.

The deliberations lasted for one and half an hours. It was also attended by the Hon'ble Commissioner, NVS, Shri Nagesh Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, and the following representatives of JAC

1. Sh. Jagdish Rai,
2. Sh. L.B. Reddy,
3. Sh. J.K. Singh ,
4. Sh. S.S. Dora,
5. Sh. R.S. Tomar,
6. Sh. P. Rajesh,

Shri A.K.Gaur, sh.Yogendra Sharma,Smt.Raj Bala & G.S.Baghel also participated in the meeting.

The salient points of the talks with the Hon'ble Minister are as follows:

The Hon'ble Minister of State for HRD was apprised of the staff's long-pending demand for the CCS Pension. He was explained how the Samiti preferred the CPF benefits to CCS Pension 1972 and the sanctioning of the same benefits to KV schools, Konkan Railways, etc. Shri Sashi Tharoor gave a patient hearing to us and agreed that the NVS staff deserved to be granted the old pension benefits. He assured that he would help remove the hurdles in the way of securing the pension benefits. He assured that he would request the Finance Ministry to approve the sanctioning of CCS pension even if the Ministry is not in favour of it. He said that the Cabinet can go ahead even if the Finance Ministry is not favour of certain matters. Let us hope that the pressure we have built up through this strike will make the Government change its stubborn stance and initiate a necessary action. The difference this time is we were able to take the issue directly to the Ministry and involve a MOS for HRD and a Joint Secretary in our deliberations. If we can sustain this pressure through struggles we will definitely be not far away from achieving our demands. Shri Sashi Tharoor also made positive assurances about the resolution of other demands. The JAC was assured the problems would be solved within a time-frame.

The Hon'ble Commissioner was also reminded of the suspensions and transfer of many striking employees in all regions. The Commissioner categorically assured that he would not like to put any staff in trouble and all such orders from the Samiti would be attended to and revocation orders would be issued.

The consideration of the striking period positively was put forward before the Hon'ble Commissioner. The Commissioner assured the JAC that the strike period will be considered positively. He assured that he would see that the staff suffered no damage as a consequence of participating in the struggle.

The Hon'ble Commissioner also listened to our other demands and agreed to resolve them amicably. The JAC was asked to nominate its representatives to various committees set up to study and resolve issues like defining duty hours, MACPS benefits, etc.

Following these talks, the JAC has decided to call off the 10-day long nation-wide Indefinite strike.

The disturbing factors:

Dear friends, the historic strike now comes to a close. We have seen how the management is ruthless against its own staff when they agitate for their demands. Just as we left no stone unturned for the success of the Indefinite Strike, they also did everything they could to weaken our morale. Instead of aiming at the top leaders, they tried to intimidate the Group D staff and teachers who backed the strike strongly. While the talks were going on with Shri Sashi Tharoor, Minister of State for HRD, suspension orders were being sent to schools in some regions. What is more disgusting is the Principals were asked to go ahead with serving the suspension orders even though the strike was called off the previous days. Such was the gratitude of the officers for the staff who served the organization for decades obediently. Another disturbing thing was non-participation of some staff during the agitation. It was sad to see these brethren stubbornly taking shelter in their cocoons of fears, doubts and false obedience to authorities. Many privileges that we enjoy today are the result of the agitations that countless others waged. Struggles and agitations for genuine demands do not always meet with immediate success. The working class and the advocates of democracy all over the world fought for their rights for centuries. Sometimes even the bitterest of their agitations failed to bring about the desired changes and results instantly. It was disturbing to note that the striking staff had to face these internal weakening forces in addition to the external pressures. Another thing is our slow progress in building the associations on a strong foundation of trust; loyalty and a will to fight till the end come what may. Had we succeeded in tackling these impediments, our agitation would have been more intensive.

The greatest outcome of the struggle:

Dear friends, this agitation has taught many positive lessons. The first of them is even the most genuine demands of such exploited staff like us cannot win easy sympathetic hearing but meet with severe repression if the path of agitation is followed. Garnering the support of the vidyalayas which are scattered all over the country was earlier considered a huge block. This Indefinite Strike has taught us that we can overcome this barrier provided we are ready for sacrifices. We have also set aside the

differences of teaching and non-teaching staff. We have learnt that by supporting each other we can build up more pressure. The strike could last for 10 days just because we supported each other strongly. But, dear friends, we have to keep this flame of agitation for our right demands burning. Let us strengthen our unity and continue building pressure on the management for our just demands. Hats off to those staff in particular who did not panic at receiving suspension and transfer orders, and continued to support and fight for their brethren. Such disciplinary actions usually follow a prolonged agitation. We appreciate the exemplary bravery shown by all those who withstood threats and suspension orders. The striking staff will ever remain grateful to their services during the strike. The greatest merit of the Indefinite Strike is it has generated innumerable number of leaders who are ready to fight for a right cause braving all adversities. The JAC is proud of them and hopes that they will continue strengthen future agitations. The JAC also acknowledges the efforts of each and everybody for holding their heads high and for putting their heart and soul in the struggle. A prolonged struggle like never succeeds without their valiant support.

Summing up:

Before summing up the JAC profusely thanks all the teaching and non-teaching for their unnerving support to the nation-wide indefinite strike call and its success.

“I knew that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man’s freedom is a prisoner of hatred; he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.” - Nelson Mandela in his autobiography, “Long Walk to Freedom”.

Yours in struggle.

JAC CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

L.B. Reddy

Jagdish Rai

J.K.Singh