

**FES/UNITES workshop on “Organizing Strategies for ITES Workers”  
April 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2006, Hotel Golconda Hyderabad, AP.**

Please find enclosed brief proceedings of the seminar:

**Friday, April 14, 2006**

Welcome to the participants by PP Naidu President, Unites Professionals. Under the chairmanship of Brother J.S.R Prasad. Brother Pravin Sinha gave initial inputs & details about the seminar. This was followed by an self introduction of participant & ice breaking session. Thank you note to all by Brother Karthik Shekhar, Sec General, Unites Professionals

**Saturday, April 15, 2006**

Welcome to the First session by Pravin Sinha

**PP Naidu about Call Center with in**

What can be done about organizing, what could be done to protect employees, what is call center with in? Lot of security from out side, inside it looks like a fortress, it looks very good. Looks life is cooling swanky, health insurance is paid by the employer. It is like a patient wearing beautiful suit, if the jobs have come to us simply because we work for lesser money. In my company the two collection center one in America & India, there is always a difference in collection between us & US center, there are handicap of getting into alien culture. We are competing with and beaten the collection US center, all this b'coz of our patience, there is no differentiation in getting abuse. But the collector withstood the abusive & still collects the money is appreciated. These inputs are brought about b'coz it is employees take sick leave; the management tries to appreciate 100% attendance. Mandatory to council for anything & everything. For us to function more safer acceptable atmosphere we should try to create. Cost saving like putting the AC off. Hidden white ants like marriage proposal do not happen, cultural transformation is quiet drastic. There was the economic of saving now it is economic spending. Attitude is do or die you have to achieve the numbers. This is not possible due to varied situation. Improper blend of heart & mind. Detach the attitude from work place to home, which can be a challenge. Very fast advancement is technology, voice based is paid highest but it will take back seat in the time to come. If technology is going to displace to human it is going to be challenge. Element of fatigue is not taken in consideration. Biggest disease is the HR department it is very cost effective, judicious. We can expect call center syndrome. Artificial way of socializing, which will make them more Americans. Hopefully we are able to reduce the negative impact.

**Q & A**

**Govindraj :**

SME don't fall standard salary, they are paid very less. They have incentives which is attached to salary, third party is very minimal salary. No safety precautions are followed. No provision for food, increments are not regular.

**Shilpa :**

Will you continue to work here?

Answer: I am not qualified engineer technically not competent, so I opted out from the software, no knowledge everything was rosy, and I could read between the lines.

**Ratnam :**

There are two sides of a coin, I know what I am getting in. Issue can be stretched only to a point not much can be done, it is not necessary to generalize, discrimination needs to be looked. Brand equity all plays part. Machines if strikes it calls for more down time, employers still feel comfort-using machine. Canada is planning to subsidize wage differential; Whatever UNITEs has to be done moderately.

**Dr. Pravin What is union?**

Gave an in-depth capsule of trade union history, starting from the need, how it was in the pre independence & the form that it took after the independence, ILO's role & what FES is doing globally in general & India in particular.

**Call Center Employee spoke about their work**

**Talat Fatima ICICI One source**

**Long hours** from Dec almost 11:00 hours shift

By choice or by force.  
IJP is not followed –

**Shilpa, AXA**

At AXA she was disillusioned to not the hard work never got recognized

**Bhargav, Amaya Integrated**

The Profit making by employer forces for stiffer target levels

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### **Sudarshan, HP**

They are not fair in promotions give a slip to merit; new joiners are given a preference

### **Paul, Medical Transcript.**

Pay promised & take home do not match

### **Jadeja, HSBC**

Going is good, but an employee orientation is missing

### **Chirag, HSBC**

Focus is only on work completion & not much on agents health

### **Nalini :**

Bias in Gender while promoting

### **CNBC Movie (need for unionism poll)**

This was an opener for heated deliberation & set the ball rolling for Group Discussion & Role Play. Here the whole GD's need & what & how it should be done was set. The Role-play was done so that participants get into the mood & take stances in the GD.

### **Role Play**

All the participants were divided into three groups they were

1. Employee
2. Employers
3. Government

This was the highlight of the programme as it was great to see what a role would make the person to change his/her stance, how people went to great extents to convince one another what they were doing correct, we could also see some transformation such as one of the participants calling himself Finance minister to break the dead lock, another person acting as a noted Industrialist persuading Government give the permission etc.

Group Discussion was started & the groups worked in their respective rooms to present the paper next day

Sunday 16 April, 2006

**Group discussion on unionization.**

Following two questions were put to four groups Group 1 & 3 got one question & Group 2 & 4 got the other question. Idea was to bridge the gap, it was intended to bring in more numbers into the organization & kill any doubts.

1. What form of organization do we need?
2. How would the call center organization?

**Group 1**

***What form of organization do we need?***

We need association as the word Union, in many instance it has been misused, call it association, all the problems are addressed & should have power of negotiations, we need to collect lot of information, we need to know the cyber law, Labour law. Organisation should work on the problem

Who all:

1. PP Naidu
2. VN Rao
3. Archana
4. Rajat
5. Ramchandran
6. Jacob

**Group 2**

**How would the call center organization?**

Paucity of time is main reason, resistance employers

Website online propagation & registration

One to one campaign/contact

Organizing meeting near the gate

Audio Video measure

Cabs to carry messages

Placements cell to

Training to employee

Occupational stress to be taken care

Create welfare fund

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Utilise Drivers, caters to help propagation  
Awareness program  
Formation housing co-operative movement  
Consumer co-operative  
Help line for distress  
Future pension, insurance for members  
Bring affiliates to organize  
We should come forward for AIDS, Gender Discrimination, Child Labour,  
Women's forum

Who all :

1. Ernesto Nronha
2. Nalini
3. Balsubramaniam
4. Paul Morais

### **Group3**

**What form of organization do we need?**

#### **Organisation consideration**

Non-conventional trade union  
Strictly does not associate with political, religious  
Only from ITES  
Management problem should  
Organization financial sound

#### **Worker**

ILO standard implementation  
Ergonomics implementation  
Workers get insurance, transport  
Organisation control iteration  
Financial responsibility

Who all:

1. Sudarshan
2. Bhargav
3. Gopakumar
4. JSR. Prasad

**Group 4**

**How do the call center employees be organized?**

- ⇒ Identify geographical locations, potential, like-minded people.
- ⇒ Collecting database through sources such as:
- ⇒ Placement agencies
- ⇒ Campus interviews
- ⇒ Word of mouth
- ⇒ Cyberspace
- ⇒ Circulating newsletters
- ⇒ Networking

After which create awareness among the employees and remove misconception about the union.

After awareness we need to do membership campaign. Benefits the members will get.

- ⇒ Be a grievance cell to position us in the right manner.
  - ⇒ Role of the member.
  - ⇒ Identify leaders
  - ⇒ Start networking and start a support sys to the members helping them to network big time.
1. Get the union registered.
  2. Support group meets – seminars, monthly meeting.
  3. Create good website – keep a open forum and blogs where people can voice their opinions and pull out like minded people to be members.

Take up real cases and represent the employees of a organization.

To be financially sustainable and independent device tools and mechanisms to collect affordable membership fees.

To develop good relationship amongst other trade union nationally and internationally, Ngo's, community organizations and employers.[ILO] and media.

Org should function democratically by way of conducting free and fair elections to find enterprising leaders.

Good women representation, women comities.

Image building activities like adoption of villages, blood donation

Set yourself short term, mid-term and long term goals, the ideologies.

Identify hidden talents and give them responsibilities where their interest lies.

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Maintain financial discipline.

Aims and objectives... goals.

Objective of a TU is to safeguard the employees and work against the exploitation from the employers.

Who All:

1. Govindrajan
2. Shilpa
3. Chirag
4. Karthik Shekhar
5. N.R Hegde

### **How to Organise**

#### **Jadeja**

Start by reaching out to more people

#### **Ramchandran :**

Welfare at a later stage, organizing is important, intention can be fishy.

#### **Sudharshan :**

Advertisements through email websites, flash it for a month or two, we will be able to get more membership

#### **Bhargav :**

Share the same idea as above, prorogate the union. Email ID's propogation.

#### **Talat :**

Pamphlets at the gate to collect the opinion. Personal emails can't be accessed so how to go about.

#### **Nalini :**

Existence of organization is not known, much activity needs to be done.

#### **Archana :**

Posters, banners in public places.

**Chirag :**

Database from existing clubs.

Road shows

Walkathons.

**Ranjit:**

Emphasizing what we can do

Job counseling

**Paul :**

Individual Chapter should have interaction.

**General:**

Tie-ups with companies.

**Govindraj:**

**Membership campaign**

1. Use existing resources
2. Get Activist in state, companies
3. Get them trained & it should be ongoing
4. We should have rapport with HR department
5. Good Image to be made
6. Management association should be reached.
7. Job mela's we should participate
8. Meeting of office bearers is a must
9. Proper reporting from other chapters

**Ratnam's Observation**

HR people do not listen u can approach the CEO's specific instance can be achieved.

We should still try & approach.

Free membership to be started. Online membership & this is start

Business Plan to be evolved

**Hegde:**

Advice is cheapest commodity, practical possible advice.

## Minutes of FES Programme

Loosing people is not good sign  
Commitment & belief should be used.  
Volume of success to be recorded.

### **Balu :**

Priortise & get focused.  
Somebody, anybody & nobody should be dropped.

### **Karthik :**

Sexual Harassment committee is not present we should use this to get into companies.

### **Closing Remarks & observation**

#### **Venkat Ratnam**

Workers did nothing but followed managers, nature of union also change, union means collective, how do you make independent collect. They would like customization, everything upfront cash, benefits of group insurance. Cyber Unionism is it the need, new innovative method & uses it to mechanism; this will attract & ensure maximum retention. A goal of the union is remain the same. Focus differ from SME to MNC, it is sufficiently diverse situation. Capacity to get employer to work on safety. Unless this is proved. Annually submitted for the submission, lack of justice to be highlighted in a non confrontation, nuclear family needs support. Counseling with help of phsycatriac help. Sexual harassment to be taken up. Save money & learn wile the earn. Measure for work study, balance the pay & work. Objectives & goals will be based on membership expectation. Ask what the members want & bring their expectation. It should be demand driven.

This was followed by Photo session

Dr. Pravin Sinha offered concluding observation & thanks to the participants. On Behalf of Unites Professionals & Unidoc Brother Karthik Shekhar thanked FES for having giving the handholding & guidance session when it was needed most.

All the participants took a pledge to work with new vigor on membership drive.