

NISA

NATIONAL MEETING REPORT

18-19 APRIL 2015



NISA held its first National Meeting for the year 2015 on 18-19 April at YMCA in New Delhi. Representatives from 14 states were in attendance. The broad agenda of the meeting was to:

- Update NISA members on work done over the last six months
- Understand state specific issues concerning BPS
- Strategize on tackling the issues

SPEAKER:

Mr R. C. Jain (President, Advocacy, NISA)



Mr R. C. Jain welcomed representatives of all state Associations to 1st National Meeting 2015. He hailed NISA as an effective platform where school associations get to voice the challenges they face and to learn from other states. He said he met Hon'ble HRD minister Mrs Smriti Irani and discussed with her the problems flowing from Right to Education Act.

SPEAKER:

Mr Rohan Joshi (Associate Director, Advocacy)



Mr Rohan Joshi gave an overview of NISA work in the last six months. An overview of the updates:

1. High Court judgment in the case of Jhilmil Phulwaari versus State of Haryana should serve as a positive precedent for NISA.
2. The judgment came in the wake of closure of 1300 schools in Haryana. It directed against closure of schools in bulk without following a due process.
3. State level meetings were organised in Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Punjab.
4. Two policy roundtables on 'Right to Education Act' and 'Education Budget' were held with Members of Parliament prior to Parliament's winter session.
5. Mrs Kiran Kher, Member of Parliament from Chandigarh flagged the issue of rampant closure of Budget Private Schools in the Parliament.
6. NISA secretariat had a meeting with Mrs Meenakshi Lekhi, Member of Parliament from Delhi to discuss the challenges being faced by Budget Private Schools and submitted a brief note. Mrs Lekhi agreed to flag the issue in the Parliament.
7. Assam State Association met with Mr Gaurav Gogoi, Member of Parliament from Assam. Its advocacy efforts have prevented closure of Budget Private Schools in Assam.
8. Punjab Private Schools Organisation has completed 1 year of quality improvement program with STiR education.
9. Haryana State Association is putting in money to start a similar program.

10. NISA lesson plans are ready and have been rolled out to two Delhi schools.
11. An initiative similar to NISA has been started in Pakistan which is named Pakistan Association of Independent Schools (PAIS). It has enrolled 300-400 members. NISA assisted them to develop the model.
12. NISA secretariat had a consultation with government of Nepal regarding regulatory mechanism for Budget Private Schools in Nepal. Government of Nepal ensured of BPS friendly regulations in consultation with NISA.
13. The name NISA has been rejected by the registrar office on the ground of using 'National' word in the name. A re-application with the name 'NISA Education' will be filed. Registration is expected to come through in one month. Registration will be followed by opening of a bank account.

STATEMENTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Mr Kulbhushan Sharma, Federation of Private Schools and Welfare Association, Haryana:

Mr Sharma represented Federation of Private Schools and Welfare Association, Haryana in the meeting. Addressing the delegation he said:

1. A common minimum programme should be drafted to include state-specific challenges faced by Budget Private Schools.
2. Students from Economically Weaker Section (EWS) should be given educational allowance which should be directly transferred into their bank accounts.
3. Schools should be free to choose any board and maximum schools should be recognized under minimal and uniform norms.
4. He acknowledged the High Court order against bulk closure in the case of Jhilmil Phulwaari versus State of Haryana as a positive precedent for NISA members. In the wake of the judgment, 1372 schools averted closure.
5. Unrecognised schools applied for recognition online and were temporarily recognized. It has also filed a case for compulsory reimbursement by government.



Mr Sharma also requested NISA to invite its members to attend policy roundtable etc. He also emphasized on the need to strengthen media coverage.

Mr R. C. Jain, Delhi State Private Schools Management Association:

Mr Jain represented the association from Delhi. Addressing the meet, he said:

1. The association has filed a petition against 25 % reservation under RTE and consequent burden on the remainder 75%.

2. The association's efforts have led to suspension of re-recognition under RTE and relaxation in land norms.



3. The association had demanded for schools to be categorized before teachers' salaries are brought on par with those under 6th Central Pay Commission. Consequently, five categories have been formed.

4. NISA should be serving as a self regulatory body like Bar Council etc.

Mr Sashi Kumar, Karnataka Associated Management of English Medium Schools (KAMS):



Mr Kumar represented Karnataka association. Addressing the meet, he said:

1. Association has challenged recognition of schools on the basis of language policy. These schools are in fact recognized under State Education Act as Kannada medium schools but are providing English medium education which violates

the rule.

2. Language policy of the year 1994 which restricts the number of English medium schools recognised every year under State Education Act needs to be reconsidered.
3. Incorporation of Kannada into language policy under Section 29 (1) f of RTE is unconstitutional and in violation of fundamental rights.
4. Schools are assuming minority status to avoid following RTE norms.
5. Government has not been taking action against RTE non-compliant government schools.
6. The association has sought for categorization (four categories) of schools for payment of fees to teachers. It has challenged the new infrastructure norms in the High Court.
7. Karnataka High Court has made a positive observation that either government or parents should reimburse students from 25% reservation category.
8. Safety guideline by education department to install CCTV cameras in all classrooms would cost Rs 1.39 lakh per school. The association has asked the government to implement safety norms in their schools first.
9. Government's inability to follow the norms in their schools could buy us some relief as government is considering quashing the guidelines.
10. Norms for police verification of teachers are difficult to follow.

11. The association has launched a channel www.blossomtv.com where all educational policies are uploaded.

Mr P. R. Sathyamoorthy, Association of Private Schools Management CBSE, Tamil Nadu:



Mr Sathyamoorthy highlighted the issue of two language policy. Addressing the delegations, he said:

1. The Tamil Nadu government follows two-language formula. Tamil language has been made compulsory.
2. Provision for fee fixation is vague.
3. 99% Schools in the state have infrastructure as per CBSE norms. The state government has brought in place

another registration.

4. The issue has been taken up with the State High Court and is still pending. Cameras in classrooms are important to keep tabs on teachers.

Mr Martin Kennedy, Tamil Nadu Nursery, Primary & Matric. Higher Secondary Schools Management Association:

Mr Kennedy was another representative from second association member of the state. Addressing the delegation, he said:

1. 1000 schools have closed due to infrastructure norms.
2. The association is fighting two cases on minimum and maximum school fees.
3. The Rules mandate registration to be renewed after 2 years.
4. Dual recognition with CBSE and the State Board is mandatory.
5. There is lack of clarity on entry-level applicability of RTE.
6. School bus rules are as stringent.
7. Reimbursement is a challenge. Barely any reimbursements have flowed in during last three years.



Mr Tejpal Singh, Punjab Private Schools Organization:

Mr Tejpal said the landscape of education in Punjab is relatively favorable to Budget Private Schools. He said:

1. The government has announced no student is directly admissible under 25% quota.
2. Children can be enrolled in private schools only if seats in government schools have filled up.



Education Minister.

3. Last date for implementation of infrastructure norms was 2013 and for academic norms is 2015.
4. Infrastructural norms mandate 200 square yards for primary and secondary schools.
5. The association has had to move the court just once. 4000 schools were due for closure under stringent norms on education but the issue was resolved through a dialogue with the Chief Minister and the Education Minister.
6. Associated schools – schools which do not fulfil RTE norms - have been improving on standards and are being allowed to run.
7. Different school boards should be scrapped and there should be only one National Board of School Education.
8. A writ petition should be filed for voucher system. Children should be given vouchers and be free to opt for school of their choice.
9. Schools should be allowed to recruit voluntary teachers.

Mr Bharat Malik, Private Unaided Schools Management Association (PUSMA), Maharashtra:

Mr Malik said the association has challenged the problematic Fee Regulation Act. He said:

1. There has been no cash flow by way of reimbursements.
2. Language policies are complicated and overlook the fact that Constitution guarantees freedom to instructive language.
3. There should be choice of board for schools. CBSE should be concerned with conducting exams and setting up curriculum. CBSE should be free from evaluating infrastructure norms.



Mr Mohammad Anwar, Dynamic Federation of Private Schools Hyderabad, Telangana:

Mr Anwar represented the Dynamic Federation of Private Schools Hyderabad, Telangana. He said:

1. State rules mandate uniform school dresses and 1 square feet area per student.
2. Not having state boards can be

problematic. CBSE norms are not viable in many regions.

Ms Ekta Sodha, Jamnagar Private Schools Association, Gujarat:

Ms Sodha said the State government is giving leeway to existing schools. She said:

1. Although the state rules are outcome-centric, they are not being implemented.
2. Reimbursements are not flowing in.
3. Schools with poor infrastructure are finding it difficult to survive.
4. It is difficult to open new schools according to state rules. Nearly 60 documents are needed and corruption is rife.



Mr Vijay Shetti, All Goa Government Recognised Unaided Schools Association:



Mr Shetti said schools in Goa have not been facing challenges with reservation as there are not many people below poverty line and population has not been growing. He said:

1. State government is silent on RTE.
2. A Fee Structure Committee has been appointed to link teachers' salaries to those given in government schools. The matter has been in limbo.
3. Association with NISA helps to know

about the challenges being faced by private schools in other states.

STRATEGISING ON COMING SIX MONTHS:

The representatives of State Associations were divided into four groups to give their inputs on specific issues – Membership Data Collection, Advocacy Intervention, Image building, and Proposal of Date for State-level Meeting.



Group brainstorming on advocacy interventions



Group making a presentation

Key inputs from different groups:

1. Membership Data Collection:

- NISA should ensure that data is for internal use. Associations need clarity on the process. Forms should not be very intrusive.
- A deadline should be set to submit forms. Mr Kulbhushan Sharma suggested that forms should be distributed by July end.
- NISA should have a robust structure. It should be made into a self-regulatory body. State-wise chapter should be powerful to empower NISA.

2. Advocacy Intervention:

- RTE should be challenged on non-flow of reimbursements.
- Section 29 (1) f of RTE enables local language instruction for elementary education. States make rules under this Section and mandate local language instruction up to standard 5th. This is unconstitutional and in violation of the fundamental right to freedom of instruction. Such state rules ought to be challenged.
- Infrastructure norms should be challenged in the context of being given precedence over learning outcomes.
- NISA should have on board people of consequence – bureaucrats, governors, experts, etc.
- Supreme Court and High Court should be moved on commercial electricity bills, ESI, PF, and property tax.
- Members should set up meetings with government officials at Central and State level.
- We should do a press conference in Delhi to advocate the issues of Budget Private Schools through NISA platform.
- We should have Model Schools which we can showcase to the government for pushing our case for outcome-centric rules.

3. Image Building

- Schools should set benchmarks for quality, assess themselves regularly and ensure basic quality infrastructure. Parents need to be won over. Schools should lead by example.
- NISA members should be open to inter-school inspections.
- Success stories should be compiled and shared by way of brochures, magazines, documentaries, etc.
- People need to know Budget Private Schools are for the poor and it is government which runs counter to the aspirations of the poor by eating funds earmarked for education.
- Education World survey – State Association showed keen interest to participate in the survey to list top 100 Budget Private Schools in India

4. Proposal of Dates for State-level Meeting

- Associations should conduct at least two meetings per year.
- Roles and responsibilities should be defined for state associations.

- NISA secretariat should conduct at least one conference call with state associations in three months.
- Fellow members should be invited to school festivals.

DAY 2

SESSIONS BY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

How to Run a Great School:

Mr Premchand Palety as a resource person from Core facilitated this session. Core is engaged in ranking process for Budget Private Schools in collaboration with Education World. He discussed various innovative methods of teaching practices. His presentation was focused on the following themes:

1. Importance of teachers
2. Classroom Management
3. Innovations in Pedagogy

Education for Integrating Life:

Ms. Kalpana Sampath as a resource person from Education for Integrating Lives (EFIL) helmed this session. She focused on the pedagogical practices in private schools. She discussed about the ways pedagogy can be attuned to basic principles of life.

India School Leader Institute (ISLI) - School Leader Program

Mr Sameer Sampath from ISLI conducted this session. ISLI builds capacity for school leaders. Mr Sampath talked about ISLI's school leaders' capacity building program. He gave insights into the program and also shared its impact school development.

Zaya Learning:

Mr Neil D Souza from Zaya Learning talked about Zaya's endeavour to change for better the education landscape around the world. With a view to improving quality of education, Zaya introduced technology as a basic learning tool in all schools. Zaya has developed an end-to-end, affordable Blended Learning Model for the low-income Indian market, especially Low Cost Private Schools (LCPS). The model helps to track students' performance on a day to day basis, to draw from world-class digital content through partnerships with top content creators, all tagged to micro-objectives within the Indian curriculum, and to leverage technology for enhanced student performance.

Learning Links Foundation (LLF):

Having been working in the formal and non-formal education sector, LLF has four domains of specialization - enhancing Quality of Education, Strengthening Citizenship, harnessing Technology for Educational and Social Improvement and supporting Sustainable Social Innovation. Ms Uma Balan from LLF discussed about the LLF's work on recognising Budget Private Schools through awards.

CONCLUDING SESSION:

1. No concrete decision was taken on quality norms, members' data, next election and image building of NISA schools.
2. NISA members would like to be a part of other state meetings.
3. Goa Association proposed to host the next national meeting.
4. Letterhead and visiting cards are to be made available to all the office bearers.
5. Mr R. C. Jain, President, NISA said he would contribute time to NISA secretariat every week.
6. Monthly call with executive members should be restarted.

7. NISA office bearers should be proactively involved in setting agenda for meetings etc.
8. NISA delegation should do a deliberation with the HRD ministry.
9. Provision of ESI & PF is being applied to schools. This needs to be challenged. School owners are willing to pay for medical insurance for their staff and would like to promote this idea from NISA as an alternative to ESI.
10. President of the organization shouldn't serve for more than two years.
11. Presentations/sessions by service providers added value to the program. Maharashtra representatives made on the spot deal with one of the service providers.
12. A resolution was passed by all the members to bring Mr Bibhuti Bhardwaj, former NISA Secretariat member back to NISA. Punjab representatives said they would look for possibilities of forming a separate national level association if the resolution is not implemented.