

**ORGANISATION AN ART
AS WELL AS A SCIENCE**

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FOREWORD

Student movement in our country inherits a glorious legacy. Taking its birth in the first half of the twentieth century, it was steeled in the anti-colonial struggle against the British. The role played by students in the freedom struggle is not only heroic but also awe inspiring. It is this heritage that the Students' Federation of India (SFI) inherits.

SFI was born from an intense ideological churning in the student movement. The stance it took on the education system and the role of the government proved to be correct with the passage of time. Nothing more is illustrative than the fact that the organisation grew by leaps and bounds since its formation in 1970. The successful translation of its ideological understanding into practice through a correct application to the concrete conditions resulted in this tremendous growth. From an organisation of 1,26,731 membership in 1970, SFI became the largest student organisation in the world with a membership of 43,25,152 at the time of its 13th Conference. SFI has its presence in almost all the states and union territories of the country. It is consistently championing the cause of students in many schools, colleges and universities. SFI does not limit itself to just criticism of the educational policies of the government but also comes out with a suggestion for the alternatives. The document adopted on mass education, various resolutions on education and the Model Act to control the unaided private education institutes are all testimonies to this fact.

The very concept of welfare state is under severe attack in these days of blind adherence to the neo-liberal philosophy. The government is increasingly bowing to the imperialist pressures and even education sector too is being placed on a platter to serve imperialist interests. Never before was our sovereignty and intellectual self-reliance under great threat. The enormous potential of our youth consisting of more than 54% of our population is laid to waste because of the policies of the government.

On the other hand, the communal, divisive and all sorts of reactionary forces are rearing their heads. Their only agenda is to keep the country divided for the unchallenged loot of its resources. The six-year stint in power by the communal forces had shown what havoc they can play with the education system and the secular fabric of our country.

To affectively thwart all the challenges posed to the people our

organisation has to expand to every nook and corner of our country. The growing discontent among the students and their yearning for a better future is bringing an increasing number of students into struggles. These sections have to be properly guided. The gap between our growing influence, the struggles we conduct and our organisational strength has to be bridged.

We have adopted a series of documents for the strengthening of our organisation at various points of time since our formation. We are happy to reprint some of them along with the recent document adopted in the Organisational Convention held in Shimla. We are extremely confident that these documents would be of immense value.

With revolutionary greetings,

**Central Executive Committee
Students' Federation of India**

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Introduction

1. SFI, since its formation in 1970 has believed that theory without practice is lame and practice without theory is blind, which is reflected in our slogan 'study and struggle'. The growth registered by our organisation during the last 37 years has been made possible by our correct understanding and timely interventions in the changes taking place in our education system, in the evolving national and international situation, and adopting our work to the transformed challenges and circumstances. Our concept of mass education, scientific education and critique of the New Education Policy, updation of the Programme and Constitution and various resolutions and documents adopted in successive conferences stand testimony to this fact. Our timely slogans have struck a chord with the student community and brought them increasingly into the fold of our movement.

2. In July 1994, the then Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the SFI decided to organise a Special Convention on organisation and adopted a document detailing the need to strengthen and expand our organisation. This was done in the backdrop of several developments both within and

outside our country. The New Education Policy of 1986 gave a fillip to privatisation of education in our country. The collapse of socialism in USSR and East European countries also increased the onslaught of imperialism manifold. Globalization, liberalization and privatization became the new mantras of the ruling classes. The same years witnessed an alarming growth in the activities and influence of communal organisations.

3. However, by now, the initial euphoria surrounding the introduction of the neo-liberal economic policies is slowly losing its steam. A decade and a half of neo-liberalism have confirmed our worst apprehensions. Crass commercialisation and abdication of the responsibility of the state towards education has thoroughly changed the face of our education system. Growing inequalities in education and rising unemployment are the order of the day. Students and youth are beginning to feel the brunt of these policies. Many spontaneous protests have been organized in different parts of the country to express this discontent. People from different walks of life, be it workers, peasants, dalits, women, tribals or minorities are also feeling the heat of neo-liberal policies.

4. A deep schism has been created between haves and have not's in our country. The gap between 'shining India' and 'suffering India' is increasing. The select few who have benefited from neo-liberal policies want to continue accelerating the pace of reforms, while the vast multitude who are losing out want the Indian state to safeguard and uphold their rights. Communal, casteist, divisive and sectarian forces are also trying to divert this brewing discontent to serve their vested interests. In this context, it is the duty of SFI, a democratic and progressive student organisation, to channelise this discontent in the correct direction to bring about a radical change in the education system and the society.

5. The present note on organisation should be located in this background. This note is intended to gear up our organisation for this task. This note is neither intended to supplant earlier documents on organisation nor is it meant to be a comprehensive critique of the current education system. It is basically to complement various documents on these issues produced earlier by taking into cognisance the recent developments and possibilities.

Present Scenario

1. The nineties witnessed an expansion in the education sector of our country. However, this expansion took place mainly in the private sector. In fifteen years between 1990-91 and 2005-06, 12,316 new colleges were started. (See Annexure for details) The number of universities increased from 185 in 1990-91 to 369 by 2005. This increase was made possible not by starting new state universities, but by establishing private 'deemed universities'. Their number increased from 29 to 109 in this period, an increase by an astonishing 276%!

2. This huge expansion in the education sector did not bring about any substantial change in the number of youth in higher education in the age group of 17-23 years. It still remains at an abysmal level of 9%. This ratio is less than the average of various lower middle-income countries in the world. With the increasing privatisation of education the profile of students studying in the education institutions too is seeing a drastic change. Only 10.7% of Scheduled Caste and 3.68% of Scheduled Tribe students are in higher education and this is far below their per cent of population and also the seats reserved for them under the scheme of reservations. The number of students studying from the rural areas is also seeing a fall.

3. The reasons for this are not far to fathom. As a percentage of the GDP, the government expenditure on higher education was 0.46 in 1990-91 which decreased to 0.37 in 2003-04. (See Annexure for details) The gravity of the situation can be better understood when we take into consideration the fact that our country was spending about 1% of GDP on higher education at the beginning of the 1980s. It is shocking to note that expenditure per student has declined from Rs. 7,676 (in 1993-94 prices) in 1990-91 to Rs. 5,522 in 2002-03. This amounted to a decline by about 28 percent in just twelve years. This means that there were steep cuts in budget for libraries, laboratories, faculty improvement programmes and scholarships etc., adversely affecting the quality of education.

4. Public expenditure on scholarships in higher education decreased from Rs.15.35 crores (in 1993-94 prices) in 1990-91 to Rs.13.49 crores in 2003-04. This expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure on higher education was just 0.49 in 1990-91 and 0.32 in 2003-04. Similarly, public expenditure on scholarships in technical education decreased from Rs.2.72 crores (in 1993-94 prices) in 1990-91 to Rs.2.13 crores in 2003-04. This expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure on technical education was just 0.45 in 1990-91 and 0.23 in 2003-04. We should note here that the steep decline in the budgets for scholarships in higher education meant for weaker sections in the society adversely affects their access to higher education and erodes the concept of equity in education. This explains the reasons for the low enrolment ratios among the SCs and STs in spite of the reservations.

5. The government initiated a series of financial reforms along with the cut in the budgetary allocations. A series of committees were appointed to suggest these reforms. Some of the major recommendations that have emanated from these committees that proved detrimental to the interests of the students are (i) raising fee levels (ii) introduction of self-financing courses (iii) introduction of student loans and (iv) raising of resources by the institutions through collection of user charges, consultancy and sale of other services.

6. Another important committee set-up by the NDA government for the first time in the history of independent India headed by no experts in

education but by industrialists is the Birla-Ambani Committee. This committee has strongly recommended the state to leave higher education altogether to the private sector-lock, stock and barrel and asked it to confine its responsibility to just school education. It asked the government to introduce legislation for the establishment of private universities and also suggested that the user-pay principle be strictly implemented in higher education.

7. The tendency towards privatisation has been justified by building a case for a greater role for private players, including private foreign players, in the higher education area. The principal justification provided for a reconsideration of the role for private players in the higher education area is the inadequacy of resources, which is considered all the greater because of the unsatisfied demand for universalising school education. Privatisation has not been restricted to professional education alone, as is often implicitly suggested. This is illustrated by the recent spurt in private "universities" in India. The proposal of private universities was severely resisted by the entire academic community and forced the government to halt its plan of implementing this decision. It was even forced to stop the implementation of The Model Act of the UGC in its entirety and thus it is now trying to do it through back doors. Many state governments have already enacted legislations allowing the establishment of private universities.

8. The imperialist pressures on the government to adhere to the WTO commitments and GATS negotiations, which the government too was eager to oblige further threw our education system into crisis. The commerce department is not only eager to allow private participation in higher education but also foreign participation. It was for 'adequate flexibility to such (foreign) universities in setting syllabus, hiring teachers, screening students and setting the fee levels'. It is really unfortunate that the commerce ministry offered trade in higher education services in its revised offer in August 2005 negotiations ignoring the dissent of the people of our country. The Indian government already allows 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in education. Foreign institutions have been allowed to exist under 'recognized by AICTE and UGC' category of institutions. Currently, the government allows these institutions to be established under the provision of 5 years contract, which also provides for the termination of the same contract using the clause of a review after three years, if adversely affected. It is the big business and not the scientific and teaching communities that has a stake in the trade in educational services. The foreign education providers that have come to our country are not top-graded institutes but second or third grade institutes and their motive is purely commercial. They have not established any campuses of their own in this country. These institutions have only tied up with private Indian institutions for commercial motives and, that too, not with the best institutions in this country. The government is doing whatever it can to facilitate their entry into our country despite the all round opposition from

various sections of the academic community. The recent decisions of the UGC to increase the fees in government institutes and universities, promoting private participation in education, reducing state subsidy to education, reducing the scholarships and encouraging student loans instead are all efforts to satisfy the GATS conditions and facilitate the foreign education providers (FEP) as the GATS conditionalities state that FEPs should not be discriminated in the education market. Providing state subsidies to government institutions and also free-ships and scholarships to students are all looked at as signs of discrimination and thus imperialist agencies are exerting pressure on the government to do away with them and enable a level playing field.

9. Among the influential sections of middle classes a loss of confidence pervades in respect of the quality of higher education being imparted in the state universities and other professional institutions. In such a situation, the emerging force of big business-both private and foreign-has entered Indian higher education. The state is thus paving way for the private and foreign institutes to open their shops and earn profits. The whimsical reasons given for that is the paucity of resources and the need to concentrate on the universalisation of elementary education. The falsity of these two notions is discussed time and again it needs no mention here. The real reason behind the limited resources allocated to education is the adherence to the neo-liberal economic policies that not only directs the state to cut its social expenditure but also to 'increase the avenues for maximisation of profits to both foreign and domestic capital'.

10. The policies of the government are adversely affecting even school education and leading to the reduction in the government and aided primary schools and a steady increase in the number of private unaided schools. The same is the true for upper primary, secondary, higher secondary and senior secondary (pre-degree) institutions. The teacher-pupil ratio too has seen an increase in the period between 1990-91 and 2004-05. (See Annexure for details) The expenditure on elementary education was 1.78% of GDP in 1990-91. The percentage expenditure on elementary education to GDP after a gradual rise and fall has remained almost same i.e. 1.89% in 2004-05. The percentage expenditure to GDP on secondary/higher secondary shows a fall from 1.24 to 1.11 percent during 1990-91 to 2004-2005. The overall education expenditure as per cent of GDP has declined from 3.84% in 1990-91 to 3.68% in 2004-05.

11. All this naturally has an adverse affect on the education imparted in the schools in the government sector. Schools without a building make up 6.3 per cent of the total. As much as 30 per cent of the schools have no proper permanent buildings. Those without a classroom make up 12 per cent while those with less than three classrooms add up to two-thirds of the total. Nearly 9.5% of the schools do not have a blackboard. Just about 42 per cent of the schools have a playground. Less than 16 per cent have

proper sanitation facilities. Close to 9 per cent of the primary schools have more than 100 students per teacher. Only 36 per cent of the schools have more than three teachers. Less than half the teachers in the country are trained teachers. A little more than half of the regular teachers have only higher secondary or lower qualifications. These facts are enough to drive away students from government run educational institution.

12. All the above-mentioned facts not only prove that the government is not allocating sufficient resources to education but also show the resultant decay in the quality of education. The 1999 PROBE report points to the existence of "multi tracks" - different types of schooling for different sections. The poor and the disadvantaged go to public schools; the middle-class and those in the lower socio-economic ladder to private schools that are either aided, unaided, recognised or unrecognised; the rich to the high-fee-charging private schools; the elite to schools offering international certifications; and some to informal or non-formal schools. This is a response not merely to the differentiated market demand, but to government policy.

13. This should in no way drive us to the conclusion that all private institutions provide quality education. Many studies have debunked this theory. In their quest for maximum profits they have compromised on the quality of education. Absence of requisite infrastructure, qualified personnel is the offshoot of this policy. To stay in the education market and survive competition these institutions are forced to show results and this led to an increase in the cases of malpractices in the field of education. This unhealthy competition unleashed by the private institutions to market themselves showing their results brought corruption into education system. The system of teaching too underwent a thorough churning with the emphasis shifting to ensure a better pass percentage to the wards. The ends became more important than the means and rote learning and memorizing theories took precedence over the development of analytical skills. Thus the private education mills are churning out professionals in the thousands without any creative or analytical skills. In the classic case of kettle calling the pot black the private entrepreneurs criticise the present education system for the absence of quality. This is often getting reflected in the statement of private industrialists who criticise the state for not providing them with quality manpower to suit their requirements, in spite of bulging unemployment figures. Instead of owning up at least part of the blame they are trying to shift the entire onus on the state. This is extremely ironical because on one hand they are unwilling to submit to any form of state regulation and on the other they demand the state to be responsible to them. The courts are also eagerly supporting this stand of theirs. The private education institutions that have built-up the dreams of students are thus playing with their futures. They want to enjoy status and profit without any sort of responsibility to the people and the society.

14. On the other hand using this drive towards privatisation as an

opportunity the communal forces have entered the world of education in a big way. They have all sorts of education institutions starting from the primary to the university level including professional institutions. The syllabus that is followed in these institutes is against the principles of Indian Constitution. They have used the period when BJP was in power to strengthen and further widen their network. Apart from these institutes the BJP ruled state governments are doing all that they can do to communalise the mindset of the students and make them irrational.

15. Unfortunately, the world of education, which was thought upon to wipe out inequities prevalent in society in fact is getting divided into two worlds-one for the haves and the other for the have-nots. Education system as it exists today is used to perpetuate even social inequalities. Caste discrimination is a menace haunting the education system starting from the primary to the higher education levels. There are many schools in our country where caste discrimination is practised corrupting the young minds. Teachers, who have got a major role to play in wiping out caste-based discrimination, are practicing it in some places. The refusal of upper caste teachers to take classes in schools consisting of majority SC students too is documented, so are the instances where the upper caste children are not allowed to eat the mid-day meals cooked by dalits; neither are they allowed to sit together with them. This malice is more prominently visible in higher education where ragging, fresher parties are organised on caste lines and hostels allocated according to the caste of the students. The recent movements against reservations brought to the fore once again how deep-rooted are the casteist bias.

16. It is in this world of reality that we have to build our student organisation. On one hand the policies of globalisation are erasing the boundaries for earning profits but are confining people to individual cocoons. This affectively means that the policies affecting him/her might be having international ramifications but the ideology of the ruling classes is trying to make the affected individual unconcerned and ensure that he/she thinks just about the self. Aversion towards politics is encouraged. Politicians and all political parties are branded as one category and the ideological differences between various parties are either trivialised or brushed off as nonsense. All the deficiencies of the state in the education sector are used by these very elements to show that to depend on state is useless and link this up with the failure of the entire political class and the political process itself. Instead of suggesting to reform the loopholes in the system one is encouraged to care for self and remain independent of the system. Castigating the 'public or government' 'private' is projected as an efficient system, which is totally false. All these efforts to cocoon individuals do not always work because of the social nature of human beings, the social nature of existence and production. The inherent contradictions of the market and their failure to benefit from it will slowly lead to the realisation that completely doing away with 'public or

government' is not the panacea for all their problems. On the other hand due to the inequities that these very policies are creating one is forced to ponder for answers. This opens us avenues for communication of our ideas. Thus the expansion and strengthening of the organisation naturally depends on how best we communicate our ideas to the students, whom do we communicate them to and at what opportune time do we communicate them.

Re-orienting our organisation

1. There is a famous Chinese axiom that says "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat". Till now we have discussed the objective conditions existing in the education system, but we must also know the subjective factors about our organization in order to increase our spread and intervention so that we can win the 'battle' and bring about effective changes in our education system.

Unevenness in membership: The total number of students eligible for membership in our organisation is 10 crores 98 thousand 108 and our membership for the year 2005-06 is 36 lakhs 40 thousand 136 from 23 states. This means that only 3.63% of the total students in our country above class 6 are in our organisation. Over the years our organisation has been witnessing a steady growth in membership in the absolute terms. In strong states like West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura the increase in membership is considerable. The ratio of total students to SFI members is also good. In states like Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka we are witnessing a positive trend of growth in the membership. This is an outcome of both the positive impact of our organisation among students as well as the organisational efforts of our committees in those states. Lately, weak states like Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh too have been trying to put an effort to overcome their weaknesses. If we analyse our membership only West Bengal and Kerala account for 64.98% of our total membership. If the membership of Tripura (including TSU), Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu is added, the membership of these five states accounts for 92.09% of our total membership. This shows that in the remaining 18 states our membership is only a paltry 7.91%.

To understand exactly where we stand we must make a comparative analysis of the present situation with that existing during the last organisational convention held in 1994. At that time our activities were spread in 21 states and we had 19 state committees. The states were divided into three categories:

- 8 Hindi speaking states - Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir;
- 7 non-Hindi speaking states where we were weak - Punjab, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Manipur, Assam and Orissa; and

- 6 strong states - West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

As far as the number of states is concerned, we have only expanded in Lakswadeep, that too recently. Following the same classification if we analyse our membership we will get an idea about the distributive character and spread of our movement. The membership in the Hindi speaking states, in the non-Hindi speaking states where we were weak is witnessing a steady fall. (See Annexure for details) Though our membership has witnessed a big growth in absolute terms, there is unevenness in the growth and distribution of our membership.

Does this in any way mean that our organisation is losing its appeal among the students? No. Even in 1994 our organization discussed this problem and noted that during the adverse years of Mandal agitation and the demolition of Babri Masjid our membership did not witness a fall. Thus, even in politically surcharged atmosphere students have been receptive to us. However, the problem lies not in the objective factors but in the subjective factors i.e. with our way of functioning. This shows that we should not be content by just drawing a correct political line but put in all our efforts and work towards the realisation of our goals.

It is primarily our organisational weakness that has hampered our growth. There is also a tendency among the organisation in some states to carry out membership campaign throughout the entire academic year. Technically, we can enrol students throughout an academic year. But, if we keep on enrolling members throughout the year when will we get time for our other activities? That is why we have to plan our membership campaign in such a manner that we set apart certain days exclusively for membership campaign and concentrate all our energies on those days for this work. Our positive experience in strong states like West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura vindicates this fact. We have to plan in such a way that during those days we reach to the maximum number of students, involve our entire cadre, put in all our efforts and reach our targets.

Our main weakness is also that we are unable to reach out to the vast masses of the students and communicate our ideas to them. This in no way should lead us to the wrong conclusion that our comrades are not working and sitting idle. It is true that many of our comrades are working for the growth and strengthening of our organisation braving immense hardships-at times even resorting to the supreme sacrifice-laying down their lives for the cause. This should be one reason sufficient for us to collectively ponder about the reasons for failure to grow uniformly across the country in spite of all our efforts and conclude that there is an urgent need to reorient our work.

2. Concrete Study and Objective Assessment: One of the important drawbacks in our movement today is the lack of affective study and grasp

over issues. Any affective means of communication presupposes a thorough study of the subject. Unless we investigate a problem thoroughly we will be unable to speak on it. This is all the more important in today's context because of the umpteen questions that are posed to people working for social change as all the questions have to be answered convincingly. For this very reason we have to give priority to study. Study here does not just mean the study of our academic books. It means study of progressive literature that develops our understanding of the society and much more. As activists working in the SFI we should be thorough with all the details concerned with our sector: the policies of the central and respective state governments, their effect on the student community, the extent of their impact etc. We should also be aware of the number of students, educational institutions, type of management, the attitude of various sections of students towards different issues, the political situation at the given time etc. We should gather as many statistics as we can and putting them to a proper analysis we can come to a correct conclusion about the concrete situation and this will help us in formulating a correct plan of action. Otherwise there is every possibility of committing mistakes in our reading of the situation and this will in turn adversely affect our movement. Only thorough study will help us in identifying issues correctly that will attract the attention of students and move them into action.

Without maintaining live contacts with the students we would become out of sync with the reality and become subjective in our assessment and will fail to attract student masses. Subjectivism harms our movement in many ways. If we are not ready to interact and learn from the general students, we will lose the opportunity to feel the pulse of the students and this would result in our incorrect assessment of the objective conditions and thus come to wrong conclusions. This creates a gap between the students and the organisation. Students will feel that the organisation is insensitive towards their issues and will keep away. On the other hand our cadre will lose faith on the students as they feel that students are totally unconcerned and individualistic. Both these tendencies are severe impediments to the growth of our organisation and should be avoided at all costs. To avoid subjectivism we have to determine the tactics of struggle and methods of work through a thorough investigation of actual conditions. The methods followed by the Andhra Pradesh state committee before organising their sustained struggle for the betterment of conditions of hostel students is good example on how to concretely study an issue, form a correct assessment and then conduct our activities with good results. Some other state committees like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Himachal and Haryana etc are also making efforts to study the situation before plunging into action. But this is not sufficient. The history of all our strong states shows that they have reached their position of strength because of a thorough study of the conditions in their respective states, coming to a correct assessment, planning their activities accordingly and unflinchingly implementing the decisions taken to achieve the targets. The only way to

ensure objectivity in our assessment is by maintaining organic relationship with the students.

3. Primary Units: As many of our earlier documents have stated a student leader should be like a fish in the water. One important way to maintain organic contact with the general students is through primary units. There are at present 10,345 primary units in our country of which 9,544 are in only four states - West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh. This leaves just 811 primary units in the entire rest of the country. The importance of primary units has been discussed time and again and they are identified as the flesh and blood of our organisation. The note on organisation adopted by the CEC in 1987 extensively dealt with the question and commented: "those students who emerge in the course of the struggle can be organised into the primary unit committees. Such a background will ensure that our units are natural leaders of the students of the institution. Unfortunately, at present our major weakness is that we are not being able to conduct struggles and establish linkages in such a manner. This should be the number one task that we should undertake." This weakness continues to plague our organisation even now. Continuing its stress on the importance of units the Note states "Consolidating our membership into units on the basis of local struggles is the foundation on which the growing edifice of the organisation has to be erected. To start with at least in every institution we should try to develop two effective activists who can function as the secretary and president of the unit. Such an attempt would also lead to the emergence of effective functionaries at the local and district levels. This will help our expansion in new institutions along with the consolidation and expansion of the organisation where the unit exists". It then goes on to spell the guidelines for the effective functioning of the unit committees - regular functioning, meeting every fifteen days, holding annual unit conference, regular general body meetings involving general members of the organisation etc.

The absence of units means the absence of live contacts with the students and losing an opportunity to politicise them and develop their consciousness. Units not only act as a means for the democratic functioning of our organisation but also play a big role in the identification and development of cadre. The presence of units in such little numbers outside the four strong states itself points to the fact why we are unable to translate our possibilities of growth into a reality. The repeated success of our comrades in winning the student union elections in West Bengal despite sustained and severe adverse campaign carried out by our adversaries is apart from many other things a result of unit functioning. The same is the case in Kerala where behind the success of all our programmes lies the efficient functioning of our units.

The failure to implement the resolutions that we have been passing over the last thirty years on unit functioning lies in our failure to properly

understand the importance of the concept. This is also in a way related to the way in which our higher committees function and highlights the need to rectify and regularise the functioning of the higher committees too. A cadre in the higher committee is a leader at the lower committee and thus what all he/she learns in the higher committee gets reflected in the work. If the functioning of the higher committee is irregular, undemocratic and uninspiring the cadres attending the meetings lose their interest in the committee meetings. This does immense harm to the democratic functioning of our organisation not only at that level but also percolates to the lower levels. Thus it is imperative for leaders to be exemplary in their conduct-thorough in their understanding of the issues, patient in hearing to others views, democratic in functioning, first in the implementation of decisions taken, self-criticism and criticism. One who is not ready to listen to his comrades in a committee meeting cannot be expected to listen to the ordinary students and this shows that the comrade is uninterested to learn from the students and masses.

4. Struggle on Local Issues: We have to lend our voice to the local grievances faced by students. Exposure of problems like the condition of their institute, the prevailing academic atmosphere, the role of the administration, officials at the local level and linking them with the policies that have caused them hardship, has to be a continuous process. Through our exposures and struggles the students should get the necessary confidence that they are not alone in suffering from that problem and that solutions can be found.

Students are getting more and more concerned about their own future, issues and problems that arise in their quest to achieve their targets. Many of their problems and issues might be just local in nature and appear trivial to us. To bring such students into our organisation we too have to start from the individual to the collective. Priority has to be given to build struggles on the local issues that immediately concern the majority of the students. There are a considerable section of students who are unmoved by all our struggles against privatisation and commercialisation of education but might be immensely grateful and acknowledge us when we solve their problem of drinking water or toilets.

One of the important weaknesses that are noticed in our weak states is that our comrades do not go to the students for a second time after the enrolment of membership. This can be overcome only by maintaining live relations with the students, identifying their issues at the institution level and building struggles on them.

5. Militant and sustained struggles: When we have identified that there is discontent brewing among students we have to rally these discontented students into our organisation and conduct militant struggles. We have to identify issues consciously and should not wait for spontaneity to throw up some issue for us to organise a struggle. The issue or problem that we

identify should catch the imagination of the student masses and rally the maximum numbers to our side. If the struggles conducted by us do not match to the consciousness of the students there is a twin danger. If we underestimate the consciousness level of the students we would be left behind the students. On the other hand, an overestimation of the consciousness and readiness of the students would lead us to waging struggles which the students might not be prepared for. This too will not attract students towards our organisation, as they are not yet ready. Thus before every struggle we have to properly assess the issue, the consciousness levels of the students, the political situation and decide on the form of struggle.

Another important aspect is that we have to conduct sustained struggles on issues. For this an intense agitational campaign needs to be organised before any struggle in order to prepare the students for the struggle that may involve many phases and forms. This means that we cannot take up an issue, organise a struggle against it and leave it without further follow-up. We have to ensure that struggles reach their logical end - either in the solution of the problem or in exposing the government's arrogant and indifferent attitude towards students' problems. Many a times it so happens that we take up issues and do not carry them to their logical conclusion. This is detrimental to our organisational interests because, one, the student loses confidence on our organisation and two there is a danger that the student might altogether lose faith in the political system and turn cynical. Both these trends are dangerous.

The struggle waged by our Kerala state committee against the self-financing professional colleges, the struggle of Haryana state committee against privatisation of ITIs the struggle against fee hike in Rajasthan are good examples on the way one should conduct sustained and militant struggles. Every struggle has to be followed with immediate activities for the consolidation of the new contacts that we have developed during the course of struggle into our organisation. Only by organising militant and sustained struggles we can give confidence to the students and make them believe in the strength of organised movements. It is basically our task to politicalise this section of students who are earlier unconcerned about the policy implications of the government through our agitation. Every struggle has to be followed with immediate activities for the consolidation of the new contacts that we have developed during the course of struggle into our organisation.

6. Performing multiple tasks at a time: In the present situation the crisis in education sector has reached a situation where we cannot say that we will address one problem after the other. The note on organisation adopted by the CEC in 1987 points out to this feature in the following manner and suggests changing our style of functioning. It states "The present stage of development of the policy battle also demands a growth in the all round

initiative of the SFI. Therefore, the sort of seasonal functioning that we used to have has to be completely done away with. Our organisational activities should be spread over the entire year and not just limited to the academic session. In order to cover a lot of area of work, it is also important to develop the capacity to undertake many faceted organisational activities simultaneously. Given the complicated nature of the situation, the organisation should also develop the capacity for displaying immediate reaction." Many problems and issues are cropping up by the day. All issues demand our intervention. We have to come out with a position on the various policy measures initiated by the government and organise sustained agitation and struggles against them among the student community. At the same time there might be many issues at the local and institutional level that too warrant our attention. We also need to react to some of the important political developments at the national and international level, express our solidarity with the toiling sections of the society in their struggles and at times even stand by them. Above all, we already have our organisational activity-enrolment of membership, formation of units and committees, organising conferences at various levels, organising political schools, mobilising funds to conduct our activities etc. We cannot ignore any one of the above-mentioned activities. Our organisation does not advance unless we conduct all these activities. But the big question is do we have the necessary strength to perform all these activities at the same time? In some strong states, regions and institutions this might be possible. But how to overcome this problem in the areas and regions where we are weak and where there is an urgent necessity to grow? Only a proper planning and prioritisation of our work can achieve this.

7. Prioritisation of work: In any given place, there cannot be a number of central tasks at the same time. At any one time there can be only one central task, supplemented by other tasks of a second or third order of importance. It is upon us to take into account the history and circumstances of the struggle and put the different tasks in proper order. We should act upon all programmes that are decided by the higher committees with a planning of our own. But we should not create a multitude of 'central tasks' and a state of confusion and disorder. Nor should a higher committee simultaneously assign many tasks to a lower committee without indicating their relative importance and urgency or without specifying which is central, for that will lead to confusion in the steps to be taken by the lower committees in their work and thus no definite results will be achieved. It is part of the art of leadership to take the whole situation into account and plan accordingly in the light of the historical conditions and existing circumstances, decide correctly on the priority, steadfastly carry through the decision, and make sure that definite results are achieved.

The concept of assigning priority has started at the all India level and some states are already working according to the priorities that have been decided by their respective committees. But still there is a lot of confusion/

ignorance on such a vital issue. This starts right from the question of what areas/regions/institutes need to be prioritised, what is meant by prioritisation and is prioritisation counter posed to expansion? Selection of priority areas/regions/institutions should be based on some important criterion. (i) The selected area/region/institution should be such that it has a wide political and organisational impact on the adjoining region and thus help in the expansion of our organisation in the future (ii) it should be consisting of suitably large number of students for us to conduct our agitation, struggles and propaganda and thus influence considerable section amongst them to become a part of our organisation and (iii) we should have the necessary organisational machinery to implement all the tasks that we have decided in the priority region/institute.

In the same way we have to prioritise the section of students amongst whom we have to work. School students who constitute majority of the students among those eligible for membership are usually the neglected lot. Even though they consist a substantial section among our membership their issues and problems are not getting the requisite attention. Even today in spite of umpteen resolutions there are states that do not enrol membership among the school students or forget addressing their problems. This should be immediately corrected. The fascists and the communalists have given the phrase 'catch them young' and are instilling their irrational, racial and divisive ideas among the school children through the changes in the textbooks. Above it the ruling class ideas of consumerism, individualism and apoliticalisation also do not leave the school children go untouched. It is thus our duty to counter this ideological campaign of the ruling classes by spreading the correct and rational ideas. The advantages of having our organisation among the school students is that immediately after they enter the college they can identify with us and start working with us. Their prior idea about the organisation and knowledge of the work methods make them instant cadre in the colleges. This also solves one problem that we face in college organisations - by the time we train a student into a cadre it is time for him/her to leave the educational institute.

Students, are not a homogenous group or category, they are multi-class in nature. This background is naturally reflected in the way they think and reflect on various issues. Our organisation by its character is not a class organisation but a mass organisation. We should try to bring all sections of students into our fold. This is not an easy task. A broad look at the mosaic of student community presents the inherent difficulties in achieving this target. There are students from lower and lower-middle class families predominantly studying in the government and aided educational institutions, there are middle class students studying predominantly in the second grade private unaided institutes and then there are upper-middle class and rich class students predominantly studying in private unaided institutes that boast of world-class training, international certificates and corporate culture. Educational institutions like government, aided, unaided,

private etc also have different characters. Students also differ on the basis of caste, gender, course of study, year of study, hosteller, day scholar etc. It is from these myriad social formations that we have to choose whom to prioritise and make them our core around which other sections can be organised.

The poor and the marginalised sections are the ones who are facing the brunt of neo-liberal policies like reduction in investment and state withdrawal from social welfare activities the most. They are exploring avenues to express their discontent. It is these sections that we need to prioritise - the dalits, tribals, minorities and students from socially and economically backward communities, etc. These students study predominantly in government institutions and come basically from rural areas and poor localities and suburbs clustered around cities. The issues of reservations, scholarships, hostels, rising fees, expansion of educational opportunities and social discrimination are some of the issues that need to be taken for organising these sections in our fold. Organising the students studying in government institutions should thus be our main priority. But our task does not and should not end there. Around this core we have to weave all the other sections of the students into our organisation.

Prioritisation means (i) allotting our first cadre and ensuring membership (ii) spending our first rupee there (iii) implementing all the calls of the higher committees (iv) being first in the identification of local problems and organising struggles for their solution (v) carrying out a sustained agitation and thus rousing the consciousness of the general students (vi) carrying out sustained political campaign on all important issues (vii) ensuring the democratic functioning of the organisation through regularly conducting general body meetings and conducting the meetings of the concerned committee and (viii) ensuring the development of cadre through regular political schooling and thus preparing secondary leadership who will be ready to take-over whenever the situation demands.

Universities are another area where we have to concentrate on building our organisation. University centres have considerable influence on students in their respective regions. University centres are important not only due to their academic prominence but also because of their influence on affiliated colleges. Research is another important activity for which universities are basically known for but this very basis is under severe attack. While there is all round opposition to the entry of foreign universities in our country, the government is trying to introduce Bill for the regulation of foreign universities. This has to be opposed tooth and nail.

Using active students as our core we have to build a broad based student organisation by bringing all other sections of the student community into our fold. The Free Software Movement can be cited as an example of one of the ways that shows us how to attract middle class students in our fold. The experience of the Chattisgarh state where our organisation has first

organised the 'Private University Students' Association' led by our comrades to address the problems of that section of students and slowly used it as a platform to build the SFI. Organisation of discussion forums, cinema clubs, science clubs etc can be useful. It needs to be remembered here that there cannot be 'one size fits all' solution for organising the entire student community through out the country. There are some general principles like enrolling members, organising committees, collective functioning etc that are common, which can be and should be implemented everywhere. This is the science of organisation building. But the answer to the question 'how can all these be done?' is something that depends on the particularities of space and time. This is what it makes the building of an organisation an art as well as a science.

Prioritisation should never be looked at as something against expansion of our movement because it is precisely for the further expansion of the movement that we need prioritisation. To expand our organisation we need cadre and we get cadre only when there is concrete result from our work and by concentrating our energies on the task. This can be achieved only when we shoot our arrows at some specific targets and not randomly. Prioritisation also should not mean that we neglect our work in other regions and institutions where we have our base. Our work in those regions/institutions too should continue otherwise instead of achieving growth in our organisation we would in fact lose our base. Prioritising is like choosing your favourite dish to eat first in a vast array of dishes arranged for your meal. Eating only one dish neither satiates hunger nor is it good for health, as it does not provide a balanced diet. However, all these tasks can be performed only when we are conscious of our responsibilities and properly plan our work.

8. Planning: The note on organisation adopted by the CEC in 1987 dealt extensively with this aspect. "Proper planning is one of the most important aspects of an organisation...without planned activities, we cannot properly respond to such spontaneous developments, nor can we develop such strength, as would enable us to dictate the developments in the student movement...The maturity of our organisation will be reflected by the extent to which we can plan properly...Planning involves proper political organisational assessment of the concrete situation. So it is implied that for a certain committee to plan at its respective level, it should have feedbacks from the lower level committees. For this, to start with the higher-level committees have to physically participate in the activities and the committee meetings at the lower levels. On the other hand, when a certain higher-level committee adopts a certain plan it has to explain the considerations, assessments and objectives of such a plan to the lower level committees. Through this the lower level committees can familiarise themselves with the proper methods of planning and eventually they themselves can master the method of planning independently." The note has also pointed out our weakness that, "At the present stage, the main

weakness lies in the fact that our district committees and committees at the further lower levels are not in a position to plan independently, except for in some strong states."

This criticism is valid even for today. At the state level many states plan their activities at the start of the academic year. But some state committees do not chalk out their year plan and work without any proper direction. Some other state committees are under the wrong impression that preparing a yearlong calendar of activities is what planning is all about. Plan is not just 'what you are going to do' but also 'how you are going to do'. Many plans are mostly confined to the first part and the second part remains largely unaddressed. While preparing a concrete plan we must take into account: what to do, how to do, who will do and when to do. This should be based on an objective assessment of the political situation, the consciousness level of the students, the strengths and weakness of the opponents, the strength and weakness of our organisation and the availability of our resources-human resources included. Targets and individual responsibilities have to be fixed and specified in the plan.

One important reason for our failure to achieve the targets that we set is the absence of a correct plan since 'preparedness ensures success and unpreparedness spells failure'. All our activities should be planned for reaching the targets decided by respective committees. A plan prepared by a higher committee cannot be and should not be duplicated by the lower committee. It should be developed to suit the local peculiarities. Moreover the plan should be able to foresee at least some of the probable obstacles that might crop up in the course of its implementation and suggest the ways and means to overcome them. Regular review on the basis of 'what is intended to be achieved' and 'what was actually achieved' has to be undertaken.

A correct plan should also be flexible. If the government makes an unforeseen policy announcement on education that adversely affects the student community, we should be ready for our immediate intervention. We cannot say that we did not plan for these things so will not react or that we will wait till all our planned activities are completed. If we do not react in time on issues we would be losing the faith of the student community.

9. Democratic atmosphere: One important obstacle that impedes the growth of our organisation is the absence of democratic atmosphere in campuses. Any struggle to achieve our basic rights can be advanced only when the democratic rights and democracy in general are protected and ensured. Thus the fight for democracy becomes one of our priorities.

Student union elections are only one aspect of our understanding of democracy but nonetheless an important aspect. In most states, elections to the students' union are banned. The Lyngdoh Committee made a positive

recommendation for the conduct of student union elections in all college and university campuses. Though there are certain recommendations that are objectionable, we should demand immediate conduct of elections in all the states. This would not only help in breaking individualistic tendencies among students but also prepare them in the nuances of democratic traditions.

Most private institutes shut their doors to all kinds of democratic processes within their campuses. They do not permit student organisations to enter their campus and threaten students against any such move. This authoritarian attitude is to shield their institutes from public scrutiny as many of them fail to meet necessary academic standards. Using the recommendations of the Committee we have to pressurise respective state governments to ensure that elections are conducted even in private educational institutions. In states where elections are held, we have to use them as vehicles for the propagation of our ideas and for the expansion and strengthening of students' rights and consequently our organisation.

Our struggle for democratic rights should also include our right to a healthy academic atmosphere in campuses. Teachers should be asked to take classes and students to attend them. Restoring academic activity in such campuses should form one of our priorities. This will not only endear the students interested in studies to our organisation but also relieves them from the financial burden they incur due to tutorials and coaching classes in order to make up the loss of academics in schools and colleges.

Apart from these, we have to address other important aspects concerned with the democratisation of society like caste and gender discrimination. Discrimination based on caste is prevalent in many educational institutions, in varying degrees and forms. In some institutes it is subtle while in others it is crude. The recent movement against reservations for the OBCs exposed the extent of caste bias existing in our society. In this scenario it should become one of our priorities to address the issue of caste discrimination. We should remember that these are the same section of students who are already burdened with economic oppression. On top of it they are oppressed socially too. It is our duty to address both these concerns in the right earnest. Most students from these sections are studying in government institutes and this also matches our main priority to organise students from government institutes. Fighting for their rights in the government institutes we have to demand for the expansion of reservations in the private institutions also.

Without organising girl students in considerable numbers we cannot call ourselves a student organisation representing all sections of students. According to the latest education statistics nearly 40% of students in higher education are girl students. The patriarchal notion of 'superiority of the male', consumerist culture, denigration of women in the society, eve teasing and all other forms of sexual harassment and attacks are impediments for

the girl students. SFI should stand in the forefront of taking up the issues of the girl students and lead the struggle against patriarchy and all other anti-democratic notions.

10. Cadre: To perform all these tasks we need to increase the number of cadre and activists manifold. Most weak state committees deter from undertaking any programmes because they feel that it would burden their limited cadre. There are thousands and thousands of students around us but we fail to identify and develop cadre amongst them. We should always bear in mind that faulty policies of the government are increasing the number of discontented students who desire to protest, who are ready to render all assistance they can in our fight for education for all and jobs for all and against lack of quality in education and against inequity in education. We are unable to identify such students and this is the fault of our leadership and should be overcome immediately. Only a proper political and ideological training can help us in identifying students who can be our cadre and future leaders.

Another important drawback of our organisation is assigning proper work to the available cadre and dealing with them in a correct manner. We must not confine our judgement to a short period or a single incident in a cadre's life, but should consider his/her work as a whole. This is the principal method of judging cadres. Leadership involves two main responsibilities: to work out ideas, and to use cadres well. Such things as drawing up plans, making decisions, and giving orders and directives, are all in the category of "working out ideas". To put the ideas into practice, we must weld the cadres together and encourage them to go into action. The criterion for the use of cadre is whether or not a cadre is resolute in carrying out the line, keeps to organisational discipline, has close ties with the masses, has the ability to find his bearings independently, and is active, hard-working and unselfish.

We must also know how to take good care of cadres.

- First, give them timely guidance as well as allow them a free hand so that they have the courage to assume responsibility and make full use of their initiative.
- Second, raise their level. This means educating them by giving them the opportunity to study so that they can enhance their theoretical understanding and their working ability.
- Third, check up on their work, and help them sum up their experience, carry forward their achievements and correct their mistakes. To assign work without checking up and to take notice only when serious mistakes are made--that is not the way to take care of cadres.
- Fourth, use the method of persuasion with cadres who have made mistakes, and help them correct their mistakes. The method of struggle

should be confined to those who make serious mistakes and nevertheless refuse to accept guidance. Here patience is essential.

■ Fifth, help them with their difficulties. When cadres are in difficulty as a result of illness, straitened means or domestic or other troubles, we must be sure to give them as much care as possible.

Cadres are to be treasured like gold and it should always be remembered that to train an ordinary student into becoming a cadre involves lot of effort. We should take all the possible care to retain cadres in our democratic movement's fold and never lose them.

11. Funds: Many state committees are facing severe crisis of funds. This is not only hampering the smooth conduct of our programmes and movements but even the visit of our comrades to the districts. Often this becomes an excuse to spend membership levy for other purposes. Many of our plans depend on the availability monetary resources. Collecting funds only when we are in need of money for organising some programme eats into our time and effort and puts the success of the original programme in jeopardy. To overcome all these obstacles we must plan fund collection at various levels. A year long budget has to be prepared and resources mobilised accordingly. Mass collections, through publication of souvenirs, calendars and other innovative means have to employed for collecting fund. Proper accounts have to be maintained and placed regularly before respective committees.

12. Agitation, struggle and propaganda: These are the three important means through which we can advance our organisation: agitation, struggle, propaganda. Through our agitations and struggles we help students attain primary consciousness about our organisation and understand the need for a democratic and progressive organisation like ours. Propaganda helps us develop political consciousness among the students. It helps them in understanding the need for working for a social change. Struggles instil confidence on our organisation and our ideology among the students.

The general weakness in our movement is that we carry out lot of struggles but do not give sufficient importance to agitation and propaganda. It also happens at times that students themselves drive us into struggles because of the nature of their problems but this does not happen with agitation and propaganda. So in a sense, agitation and propaganda are conscious activities that we need to carry out. Extension of our movement largely depends on how extensively we carry out agitational programmes. The only precaution that we need to take before initiating our agitation is that we should be aware of the consciousness levels of the audience whom we are addressing and our language should be simple and true to facts. All our agitation programmes should invariably call upon the students to join action. We should use all the opportunities to carry our agitational programmes against imperialism and communalism. Agitation is one of

the important means for us to expose the link between the problems that the students are facing with the policies that the governments are pursuing. Indignation and discontent against the existing injustices cannot be roused without agitation. All the opportunities that present before us should be used for agitation. Agitation should be carried out wherever students exist, wherever problems exist.

Agitation and struggle should be always followed by propaganda. Propaganda helps in understanding the reasons and the policies behind unjust systems. Propaganda helps in the ideological strengthening of our cadres and developing their political and revolutionary consciousness. It brings maturity to the cadres and is useful in the development of secondary leadership. The lack of secondary leadership, a problem haunting many states is the result of the absence of proper propaganda work. Political schools, workshops etc. that we organise should be conducted in a planned manner to reap maximum dividends from propaganda.

Over the last few years many states are putting in efforts to conduct propaganda by regularly organising political schools. But this should be done in a planned manner. Before organising any political school or workshop we should always first answer the question 'what should be taught, to whom and what is the purpose'. Proper monitoring of all activists/cadre who take part in political schools, workshops is also very necessary.

A synchronised implementation of these three tasks will result in the growth and consolidation of our organisation. The need of the hour is to plan our work properly, utilise all the opportunities for our growth, synchronise all our efforts, implement all the decisions with iron determination, monitor and follow-up our work, develop individual responsibility and collective functioning. Only then we can ensure that our organisation spreads its influence throughout the country, politicises the students and radicalises them to work for social change.

13. Conclusion: Protection of public education and organising students in government education institutions, dalits, tribals and other deprived sections should be our priority. Around this core we have to build our organisation into a real mass organisation by attracting all other sections of the students. There are lakhs of students who are not only outside our organisational fold but are out of all organisations. It is only through a vigorous political ideological campaign based on sustained and militant struggles that we can attract students to our fold. Proper planning and orienting our work in this direction will help us utilise the possibilities that the present political situation is offering for our growth and advancement. For this, to reiterate once again:

The poor and the marginalised sections facing the brunt of neo-liberal policies are the sections that we need to prioritise - the dalits, tribals, minorities and students from socially and economically backward

communities, etc.

- Organising the students studying in government institutions should also be our priority.
- This should not mean that we neglect the other sections of the students as around this core we have to weave all the other sections of the students into our organisation.
- Consolidation of our membership into units on the basis of local struggles. Linking the local issues to the broader policy issues.
- All our efforts should be directed to increase our cadre and temper them politically and organisationally.

Comrades, today's situation is throwing many challenges before us. It is up to us to be ready to face these challenges. The entire history of SFI shows that activists and cadres of the organisation never shy away from challenges - be it the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal during early 70s, or the draconian Emergency, or the separatist forces in Assam, Punjab and many other parts of the country or casteist and communal challenges or ideologues who have predicted the end of history. There are many sections of the student movement both right and left that have ridiculed the slogans and ideology of SFI and predicted our doom. None of this could stop the forward march of our organisation. It is upon us to stand true to this legacy. The present day might present a new set of challenges. Imperialism might be bragging about its dominance but let us forget not that there are now many countries challenging its dominance right from Cuba to China and Latin America. We must continue to keep fight against communalism. Careerism, consumerism, apolitical atmosphere, individualism together with the casteist, communal and other sectarian trends might be posing few questions to our movement. We should give a fitting reply to all these questions. The answer should be through our actions - by expanding our organisation to all the nooks and corners of our country, increasing the number of cadre steeled in our ideology, consolidating and strengthening the organisation and increasing our membership manifold. Armed with correct ideology and tempered by militant struggles we should always remember that if we all improve our work style there is a 'world to win'.

Note on Organisation

**(Adopted by the SFI, Central Executive Committee meeting,
27th & 28th December, 1987)**

1. INTRODUCTION

The SFI after enrolling over 1.5 million members last year at the time of holding of our sixth All India Conference at Vijaywada, has emerged as the largest organization of the democratic minded students of the country. Developments subsequent to the conference, substantiating the correctness of the political conclusions reached at the conference, unfold before us a situation where a very big united democratic student movement can be built with SFI playing a pivotal role. The truly immense possibilities that exist before us was amply demonstrated through the massive student mobilizations in Calcutta, Guwahati, Trivandrum and Delhi in August and September this year. The most noteworthy was the 23rd September rally in Delhi when for the first time we could mobilize in such a massive scale from the Hindi heartland, where in the past, we have not been so strong. This was followed by the historic 9th December Parliament march organized by 24 class and mass organizations of which SFI was one. The importance of all these mobilizations lies in the fact that, apart from issues related to the student community, these highlighted vital political issues. Therefore, to ensure the role that is demanded of us, never was the question of strengthening the organization so important, as it is now. So at the present

point of time, we would like to initiate a threadbare discussion on the different aspects of organization, with a view to render ourselves equal to the tasks in the present situation.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH NOTE

The resolution on organization which was adopted at the 5th All-India conference held at Dum Dum, 1984, aimed to concretise the organizational understanding spelt out in our programme and constitution. This document was subsequently circulated in the Vijaywada conference. Three years have elapsed since the passing of the Dum Dum resolution, but the concrete experience of implementing this document is not available with us. Therefore, there is a need to make such a concrete and comprehensive review thereby trying to pinpoint the weakness which hamstringing our growth and the possible methods for their rectification. Moreover, it is also important to update that document and elaborate certain formulations in the light of contemporary realities and subsequent experience, So, this note will try to initiate the widest possible discussions in the CEC and the States. Collective contribution can only ensure that such a discussion will be all embracing. On the basis of the discussion and finalization in the C.E.C. it has to be taken to the State Committees, especially to the weaker ones. Given the importance of the Hindi belt, the Centre and the Secretariat has to physically involve itself in taking these to the State Committees in the region. More so, since such a discussion, given the unevenness in the strength of our movement and organization, can not be initiated effectively by any single State Committee of the region. The weakness of the weaker State Committees can only be overcome by assimilating the lessons and experiences of these states. We should learn from our achievements, as well as, our weakness.

3. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRESENT TIMES

The overall growth that we have registered in the recent past and the scope that exists before us in the prevailing political situation, calls for a changed style of functioning of our entire organization. The present situation is characterized by an extensive and intense discontent of the student community over the attacks on their academic life and their future. The State level rallies and the All India Rally that we have organized in the recent past, shows the extent to which restlessness exists among the common mass of students. They have also demonstrated the almost unlimited scope of linking this widespread discontent through concrete slogans with the mainstream of struggle for changing the policies, pursued by the Government. The striking power of the student movement at the present point of time also depends crucially on our ability to mobilize the student masses on policy issues. This is more so, because the problems faced by the students in their day to day academic life is increasingly flowing from the policies of the Central Government and its various centralised agencies. Therefore, the importance of uniting the student

movement on an all India basis against such centralized policy measures is, as it was never before. At the same time, inspite of the large growth that we have registered in terms of membership, influence, mobilization and fighting capacity, we find that vast masses of students are outside the influence of the SFI and the organised student movement. Infact about 95 percent of the student above the age of 12 are not related to any student organization and if we take the influence of the organized student movement, it is only limited to 20 percent of the student population of the country. Naturally, given the sharpened nature of the battle of policies, these unorganized sections are becoming easy victims of reactionary ideologies. This phenomenon is accentuated by the massive growth and politicization of the media represented by television, radio, newspaper, periodicals etc. Therefore, these student masses remaining outside the influence of the organized student movement do not continue to remain unorganized, in the sense, they used to be, say, 5 years back. So it is the most urgent task of the student movement to reach out of these student masses. A strong and united student movement, reaching beyond the confines of the existing student organization can bring about such a result. Such a course of development is unthinkable, without our increased independent initiative. Given the manifold expansion in our membership and influence and the existing discontent among the student masses, immense scope remains in this direction. We can effectively address ourselves to this task by adopting a two pronged strategy of qualitatively consolidating the organization and unleash its fighting potential and expanding our organization among the millions of unorganized students of the country. These two aspects are however, not unrelated but interlinked and one cannot progress in the absence of the other.

The present stage of development of the policy battle also demands a growth in the all round initiative of the SFI. Therefore, the sort of seasonal functioning that we used to have, has to be completely done away with. Our organizational activities, should be spread over the entire year and not just limited to the academic session. In order to cover a lot of area of work, it is also important to develop the capacity to undertake many faceted organizational activities simultaneously. Given the complicated nature of the situation, the organization should also develop the capacity for displaying immediate reaction. The major thrust of the organization will have to be directed towards mobilizing the widest sections of the students at the grass root level on policy issues.

4. PLANNING

Proper planning is one of the most important aspects of an organization. It is true, that is a system, which is ridden by crisis, and our organization which strives for changing the present systems has to respond to the developments that take place every day. We have also to respond to spontaneous developments and intervene in such a manner that these

may be linked up to the mainstream of organized struggle. But without planned activities, we cannot properly respond to such spontaneous developments, nor can develop such strength, as would enable us to dictate the developments in the student movement. Therefore, planning in our organization involves the deployment of our functionaries to conduct agitation, membership enrollment, political education of our activities, fixing our area of activities according to importance, taking up of issues considering the strength of our organization, the importance they demand the impact it might have on students and other sections of people and so on and so forth.

The maturity of our organization will be reflected by the extent to which we can plan properly. At the present stage the main weakness lies in the fact that our district committees and committees at further lower levels, are not in a position to plan independently, except for in some strong states. Therefore it is important for the state committees to impress upon the district committees the fact that only by having evolved the capacity to plan that the concrete situation in which SFI has to work can be taken into consideration and concrete tactics worked out apart from implementing the all India and state level decisions.

The stage of development of the student movement at the present point of time demands that we have to intervene on different issues and react to different developments all round the year. Therefore the year round activities have to be planned. The student movement and our activities have been in the past (in majority of the States) restricted to the academic session. Therefore the planning of our state committees began only in the middle of the year. This does not correspond to the demands of the present day student movement. So the planning for the whole year at the state level has to be done in the beginning of the year, with out which it is impossible for us to address ourselves to the growing challenges that we face. Secondly, particularly for the weaker state movements we should have a perspective plan for a longer period of 2 to 3 years

Planning involves proper political organizational assessment of the concrete situation. So it is implied that for a certain committees to plan at its respective level, it should have feed backs from the lower level committees. For this to start with the higher level committees have to physically participate in the activities and the committee meeting at the lower levels. On the other hand when a certain higher level committees adopts a certain plan it has to explain the considerations, assessments, and objectives of such a plan to the lower level committees. Through this the lower level committees can familiarize themselves with the proper methods of planning and eventually they themselves can master the method of planning independently.

The extent to which planning facilitates the advance and consolidation of the organization is evident in the stronger states like west Bengal Kerala

and Tripura. Since the West Ben gal state committee initiate the organizational planning at the very beginning of the year, it is also possible for them to initiate district level and local level planning along similar lines. In Kerala the practice is to have early planning incorporated in the deliberation of the state conference which takes place at the beginning of the year. The experience of the Tripura state committee is that they have been able to reach the membership target within the middle of the September as a result of planning in the very beginning of the year. The experience in all these states is also that due to such a scientific approach they can address themselves to subtle changes in the political situation and the discharging of responsibilities in the student movement flowing there from.

5. OUR COMMITTEES

(A) The C.E.C. Central Secretariat and the all India Centre

The CEC is the most important policy making body between two all India Conferences. It is also a leading body in setting up a functioning model for our state committees in discharging the organizational responsibilities. Given the representative character of our CEC, there is a danger of it being reduced to a mere representative body, becoming a forum for fixing up quotas and giving calls, which will remain unimplemented to a great extent, most of the time. Such a danger, if not fought effectively, might spell disaster for the entire organization. It has to assert the leading role that has been assigned to it. Only by discharging this leading role can the CEC effectively galvanise the growing movements at the state level, and combine suitable tactics in implementing the decisions of the All India Conference, and respond to the major national and international developments that take place in between. Due to the efforts since the inception of our organization, we have been able to continuously improve the functioning of the CEC. Since the Vijaywada Conference the attempt has been to hold the CEC regularly. Reports have been placed to initiate collective discussion on behalf of the central secretariat. These reports have been aimed at covering political, organizational, agitational and ideological aspects. These have yielded good results. To ensure the increasing role of the CEC, as a whole, we must have :-

- (a) At least 4 meetings in a year. (approximately after every 3 months).
- (b) Written reports submitted and circulated amongst the CEC members before the CEC meeting, so that, a collective and comprehensive discussion can take place.
- (c) Fixation of the individual responsibilities in discharging all India programmes.
- (d) Review of earlier decisions.
- (e) Placing of accounts.

It is by having concrete discussion and decisions that we will lay down the foundation for its successful implementation. In the case of failure, we should take recourse to the method of criticism and self criticism in a comradely manner. We should be able to draw proper and generalized lessons from our achievements, as well as, our mistakes.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

In a country, as big as ours and in the background of our growth, it is impossible for the SFI all India centre to function effectively, unless the central secretariat assumes the role of "functioning as a unified body of the leadership with all members sharing task of central functioning", (Vijaywada conference report). The conference also directed us to meet more often, independent of the CEC. In the first CEC meeting after the conference, there has been a job distribution among the central secretariat members. There is a perceptible improvement in terms of living relation between the all India centre and the state centres. This process has to be strengthened and improved upon.

ALL INDIA CENTRE

The role of the all India centre in strengthening of an all India organisation in a country of our size, inhabited by many nationalities and their languages, in itself poses certain inherent problems. But nevertheless, this cannot be undermined. On this the fourth conference noted, "in order to be an effective force at the all India level capable of drawing into a single mainstream the various state level movements into an organized student movement at the all India level, and in order to be able to initiate united actions, an effective all India centre is necessary....". The fifth conference further enriched this understanding by stating, "Strengthen the centre for timely intervention in events of national importance and (be) equipped to send people (Central functionaries) to various states". The growing strength of the student movement demands of the All India centre, increased intervention, facilitates of united actions, production of ideological material, strengthening of international relations, sharp and alert political reaction and most importantly stronger living links with the States. At the same time, the centre has to take all India initiatives among various sections of the students to help the State committees in evolving proper priorities and tactics. Formation of sub committees and their regular functioning is urgently needed for this purpose. Time and again, it has been pointed out, that, these multifarious activities are very difficult to be conducted by the centre with the present inadequacy of personnel and infrastructure. While continuing to strive for overcoming these inadequacies, the centre has to play a key role politically and organizationally, in evolving collective functioning of the central secretariat and the C.E.C. By really improving collective functioning of these two bodies, part of these inadequacies can be overcome. Simultaneously, the role of the State committees as enunciated in the Dum Dum resolution has to be implemented in terms of

giving the centre proper political, organizational and financial support. Though there has been some amount of success in terms of coping with challenge by the centre, the decisions which has to be implemented by the State committees have with few exceptions remained unimplemented. Immediate improvement is called for in this direction.

(B) State, District and Local Level Functioning :

The present scope that is present cannot be exploited to the fullest possible extent without these.

The State secretariat and the State committees are playing the most crucial role at the present stage of our movement. At the present point of time, state committees should meet at least once in two months while the State secretariat should meet once a month. In the Dum Dum resolution the functioning of the State centre, secretariat and the committees was outlined in great detail. Since then there have been some developments in this direction, but there is still much to be done. The regularity of the meetings of the committees are of vital importance. The State centre is mainly responsible for this. It is also responsible for evolving the collective functioning of the secretariat which, in its turn, can coordinate the activities of the districts. Because of the complicated nature of the student movement at present, maximum efforts should be there to bring out journals in the regional languages. The State centre has to produce ideological material and other material for campaign. If it is impossible to bring out journals then at least booklets and leaflets on major issues should be brought out by the State centre. Recently the Maharashtra State Committee has taken very good initiative in this direction by bringing out two booklets-one on basic documents of the SFI and the other on the organizational and understanding. This is proving to be very effective among the activists. The State centre apart from politically leading and guiding the independent political and organizational initiatives of the organization should also, in view of the existing situation, try to explore the scope of united actions in the respective States. Such united actions are particularly needed in the weaker States.

Our State committees have somewhat developed in terms of functioning independently. But district level functioning is in a very bad shape. The major thrust of the State committees should be to ensure the regular functioning of the district committees which will have to meet once a month, while the district secretariat should meet once every fortnight. The district committees should take up issues at the district level apart from implementing the all India and State level decisions. Apart from the weaker States, even in some of the stronger States like. Andhra Pradesh some of the District Committee functioning is weak and reflect an uneven nature.

Local committees are in most of the States yet to come to existence.

Given the size of the districts, without proper and functioning local committees, it is nearly impossible to co-ordinate the activities of our primary units, establish units where we have contacts, and open up new possibilities and expand in new areas. At the local committee level we must be continuously aware of the danger of over emphasizing the importance of our work outside the institutions.

Though it was decided in Dum Dum that we must have annual conference at the local and district level, this aspect has not been getting proper importance, as it should have received. Given the fluidity of the student movement unless new leadership is evolved in a systematic manner, the continuity of the movement gets disrupted. Therefore, the holding of conferences annually is of utmost importance and whenever any district or local level functionary becomes inactive, it is necessary to substitute him/her by upcoming active comrades as invitees to the committee meetings. However, these should not exclude our continuing efforts to reactivate those who are becoming inactive. Finally, collective functioning is assuming increased importance in the present situation. As the movement continues to grow and become complicated, it is very difficult to have such functionaries, who in themselves would be the embodiment of the qualities that is demanded of the present day student movement. Therefore a collective and only a collective leadership can comprehensively lead the present day student movement.

(C) Primary unit committees :

The most important aspect of the present day student movement, is our ability to rally our membership and those sections of the student community whom we can influence on policy issues. It is for this, that the day to day problems have to be linked up with national level policy issues. It is only by establishing this linkage can a common student identify himself/herself with the national and international issues which we continue to raise. Therefore, our work in the education institutions should start with intervening and raising issues relating to the day to day problem of academic life. These have to be related to the policy issues from which these problems flow. It is the development of struggles on such day to day issues, that can give expression to the widespread discontent that is characteristic of the student community, at the present point of time. It is by establishment of such a linkage and introducing such policy issues, that we can radicalize the general mass of the students within an institution. It is by enrolling every student who supports and participates in such struggles as members of the SFI, that we can ensure the mass character of the organization. At the same time, we can ensure our entire membership and support in a specific policy direction. Moreover, the general development of political consciousness of the student, as a whole, would create favourable atmosphere for the growth of SFI. Those students who emerge in the course of the struggle can be organized into the primary unit committees.

Such a background will ensure that, our units are natural leaders of the students of the institution. Unfortunately, at present, our major weakness is that we are not being able to conduct struggles and establish linkages in such a manner. This should be the number one task that we should undertake.

The figures that are available with us reveal that, the number of unit committees that we have according to the constitutional provisions, is disproportionately small with regards to our over all membership and influence. This weakens our organization. Consolidating our membership into units on the basis of local struggles, is the foundation on which the growing edifice of the organization has to be erected. To start with, at least in every institution we should try to develop two effective activists who can function as the secretary and president of the unit. Such an attempt would also lead to the emergence of effective functionaries at the local and district levels. This will help our expansion in new institutions, along with the consolidation and expansion of the organization where the unit exists. The unit committees should function regularly, meeting at least once a fortnight and the continuity of the units should be maintained by holding annual conferences. The existence of the unit will also give us the scope to enliven our links with the general members through general body meetings, which have to be convened once in two months and address them individual letters on vital issues from time to time. Maintaining a membership register for discharging this responsibility is vital for this purpose.

The importance, as well as the general weakness in this regard, is amply demonstrated on the basis of some of the positive as well as negative experience. The strong unit functioning in West Bengal has ensured the participation of a very big portion of the membership in major political struggles like the 1987 assembly election. For this election, the State committee had published five lakhs letters addressed to individual members to urge them to support actively the left front in the election. On the basis of the strong unit functioning, this letter could reach the individual members and a very big percentage responded. In Kerala the strong unit functioning is reflected in college, university, as well as, school parliament elections where we are achieving increasingly extraordinary success. On the other hand, in States like Rajasthan and Bihar, we are not being able to translate the possibilities because of the weakness in this regard.

(6) POLITICAL EDUCATION :

The growth and complexities of the present day student movement demand from us a qualitative development. It is only by ensuring the political-ideological development of the organization that we can resolve the problems of growth. Political ideological education, therefore, assumes increased significance. However, the widespread notion about political education in that, it is just limited to political classes for state and at the

most, district level functionaries. Without undermining the importance of political classes for such functionaries, it is to be understood that, such a notion is inadequate in the present circumstances. If our present growth and influence has to be consolidated, which will lay the foundation for our further advance, political education should have to be extended to the leadership of the institution level. The ability to lecture on political subjects is not the hallmark of an organizer of the SFI. The essence of being politically educated, implies that one should be able to link up the day to day problems of the students in the concrete situation in which he/she is working with the overall political issues. This has to be ensured by conducting proper struggles at the local level related to overall issues. Therefore, our committee meeting should become the major forums for political education. Combined with this, there should be popular lectures and general body meetings to introduce relevant political subjects. This in its turn, should be reinforced by full fledged political study camps for state and district level functionaries giving them a broad approach and inspiring in them a habit of self education. It is by proper combination of all these aspects, that we can ensure that sort of political education which has to be imparted to our comrades, at present.

(7) CAMPAIGN, MOBILISATIONS AND STRIKING POWER :

The striking power of the democratic student movement in general and the SFI in particular, at present depends vitally on its ability to mobilize students on issues. Though other forms of struggle are also abundantly utilized in advancing struggles, mobilization is the single most important element. Therefore, the strength to mobilize is one of the major indicators of the strength of the organisation as a whole. This has been substantiated by our experience in the recent past, where we have been able to mobilize in large numbers (in comparison with the past) and thereby able to seize the initiative in the student movement.

Mobilisation depends vitally on three factors. Firstly, the campaign on the issue on which mobilization is taking place. Secondly, the sustained initiative in day to day intervention and linking up such interventions with the issues on which the mobilization is going to take place. Finally, it is also important to gauge the mass mood of the students on that issue and evolve the appropriate slogans.

Campaign, therefore, has a special significance in the development of the student movement. It is very important to decide on the content and approach of the campaign. Therefore, at all levels it is very important to have a comprehensive and collective discussion on campaign. Our campaign, while raising an issue, should not be limited to making some generalized formulation but should be backed up by concrete statistics and all possible forums should be employed for this purpose. The campaign should also be taken to the students in a language that they understand and should correspond to the level of their consciousness. Our campaign,

in the background of the growing disillusionment of the students with the existing education system and the shrinking avenues of employment, should be every offensive when we deal with reactionary political organizations influenced by the ruling classes. In dealing with divisive and communal student movements we should be firm and persuasive. In dealing with the student movement posing as left, we should be analytical. In spite of our aggression, while we conduct our campaign, appeal should be incorporated so that we can break away students from the influence of other organizations. While conducting campaign among the students who are outside the influence of the organized student movement, we should realize that every day they are being fed with reactionary ideas and understandings, in the background of the growing and sharply politicised role of the ruling class controlled media. These vital aspects of campaign have to be assimilated in influencing the millions of students, whom the present situation have given us the opportunity to address and move.

Campaign should be followed up by concrete decisions for mobilization. Without a concrete organizational mechanism with specific responsibilities for our activists who have to function as mobilisers, even a good campaign cannot produce the desired result, thus robbing us of that vital striking power.

Our all India mobilization together with the DYFI on 23rd September at Delhi is a case in point. The manner in which we integrated the slogans of our contemporary struggle with that of our central campaign slogan of "Jobs for all, Education for all", that it could inspire an overwhelming response among the student masses of our country, particularly those of the Hindi belt. The massive mobilization paved the way for our effective intervention in the political process and also created an overall positive background for the historic 29th December Delhi mobilization by 24 mass organizations (including the SFI). Since then, new avenues have opened up and truly immense possibilities for our expansion have been demonstrated, which we are to make full use of. This exemplifies that how an effective campaign followed by massive mobilization on a correct slogan can arm us with a strike power to bring out a breakthrough in the student movement.

(8) MEMBERSHIP :

The Dum Dum resolution went into the question of mass membership and there has been a massive growth in our membership. Still the present situation is far adequate in responding to the challenges faced by the student movement. It is to be understood that, though our membership is as large as 1.5 million, it is only 0.5% of the total student population above the age of 12 years. The dangerous growth of divisive, communal and caste ideologies, the growing reach of the sharply politicized campaign of the media is vitiating the unorganized sections of the students. Therefore, a bigger growth in our influence and membership is required to secure

our existing strength, which might come under attack in the event of these unorganized sections rallying behind reactionary political demands. Therefore, mass membership based on local level struggles should be one of our major priorities. The membership list should be maintained and enlisted in a register at the unit level. Copies of this list should also be available with the local and district committees. Apart from this, all the recommendations made in the Dum Dum resolution should be continued to be implemented. Finally, our normal practice of enrolling members in only the second half of the year in most of the State committees has to be done away with. This is vitally important to avail ourselves of the maximum scope for membership enrollment, as well as, contacting our members and involving them in our activities, once they have been enrolled.

Studying the membership in 1987, the C.E.C. has come to a conclusion that despite the Dum Dum resolution, misconceptions continue regarding the enrollment of mass membership. Support to our day to day struggles in the institutions on the basis of our charter of demands (which reflects our programmatic understanding) is the objective basis of our mass membership. The formation and proper functioning of our primary units is the most effective method to expand and politically consolidate our membership. The overall target for the membership should also be spaced over the whole year and a concrete percentage of the whole target should be allotted for each of these phases. At the end of phase, proper review should be made at all levels, rectifying the mistakes and assimilating the lessons of the achievements. Taking account of all these factors, will pave the way for reflecting our overall influence and our growing struggles in terms of membership.

(9) ACTIVISTS :

The strength of our organisation lies in our activists. In our organization we have to have a systematic approach for evolving and developing activists from our membership. However correct and scientific our understanding may be, they cannot be appreciated by our general members and the students, in general unless it is taken to them by our activists. Therefore, our activists should have two essential qualities. First, they should be able to mobilize our members and common students in struggles. Secondly, they should be able to independently explain our programmatic understanding and link them up with the issues of the day to day struggle. It is clear that such an activist is a leader, as well. Such functionaries cannot develop spontaneously, but have to be nursed and educated. Therefore, at all levels our effort should be systematic in developing such cadres. Not only this, our activists should evolve those qualities which make them popular among the mass of the students. It is only by developing such activists at all levels, that we can discharge the tremendous responsibilities that have been thrust upon us. It is in this background, that slogans of 'study and struggle' and 'SFI member-a complete student'

assume unique significance. In many state committees like Andhra Pradesh, through our conscious effort good activists have been evolved.

(10) FUND :

The growth of the movement and the general cost escalation has increased the importance of fund. Unlike other reactionary organizations, we do not have unscrupulous patrons. Therefore fund, lack of which severely hamstringing our capacity to intervene, has to be given the importance it demands. It has been our experience that whenever we have gone to the student masses and other democratic sections for fund for a right cause they have not refused. Therefore, we should evolve a systematic method of fund collection reaching out to broad masses with a campaign only with which we will overcome these problems. Organizationally, we have to have a fund incharge at every level. The State committees should try to emulate the practice of the C.E.C., of presenting accounts from meeting to meeting. At the same time there is a need to have a budget for all the committees which should be worked out in the beginning of the year itself.

(11) STUDENT STRUGGLE AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS :

Regarding Student Struggle we have already adopted a note in the C.E.C. It is important for us to move in that direction. Given the complexity of the present day student movement, it is absolutely imperative that our State committees take up the task of publishing journals and other ideological material in the regional languages. At the same time the all India centre has to take up the responsibility of stepping up its initiative in producing ideological material for the entire organization. When an organized propaganda blitz is continuously directed against progressive forces, it is impossible for us to make a headway without a sustained vigilance on the ideological front.

(12) UNIVERSITY AND OTHER IMPORTANT CENTRES :

It was underlined in the Dum Dum resolution itself, after the Vijaywada conference, realising the serious significance of this aspect, the C.E.C. has organized the All India university students' convention in Bhubaneswar on 8th & 9th August. Bhubaneswar report and the appeal embodies our approach and priority in this direction. The task of developing a united movement of the students engaged in higher education and formation of SFI units in all the university centres of the country by the end of 1988, is very much a viable target. Some State Committees have already taken laudable initiative and achieved results. Positive experience in Himachal Pradesh where the SFI has emerged as the largest organization with 60% of the total college student population as its members only after beginning the work in 1979-80, is not worthy. This was facilitated by proper intervention in the Himachal Pradesh university. Along with the emergence

as a major force in the university, SFI organization, in almost all the affiliated colleges, has been established. Now the State committees are, in a planned manner, trying to expand our area of activity in the school and other professional institutions.

(13) HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS :

The momentum and sweep of the student movement cannot develop without the millions of our High School students joining the movement. While there is a continuous progress, still the scope remains largely unexploited. Particularly, at the present point of time, students are spontaneously coming out in the streets in many States against the fee hike, which has been there as a result of the New Education Policy. To organize school students, one point has to be kept in consideration that continuity in maintaining links on a regular basis, is of foremost importance. Today's High school students, due to the growing impoverishment of majority of their guardians, are increasingly receptive of responding to and participating in Democratic student movements. District level conventions of school students should be organized in weaker states to highlight the problems of the school students and for organizing them.

The participation of high school students in West Bengal and Kerala shows the extent to which it can contribute towards the general democratic student movement. The food movement in 1959 and 1966 saw the massive participation of high school students (who even sacrificed their lives) in West Bengal. It contributed in bringing about a new political co-relation in the State. The SFI units and the parliaments led by them provides the SFI in Kerala with a wide network all over the State strengthening the democratic student movement in that part of the country.

(14) PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS :

The new economic policy of the present Government is being reflected in terms of a very severe crisis in all spheres of professional education. It is for this, that growing restlessness is being demonstrated by this sections of the students. Especially, ITI students in different parts of the country have been agitating on different issues. Some of our State Committees have taken very good initiative in organizing then and have achieved very good results. But the decision to form medical and technical sub-committees at the all India and State level have remained largely unimplemented. The C.E.C. should immediately take initiative to overcome this lacuna and organize all India conventions for this purpose. State committees should also immediately form such sub-committee and organize State level conventions for this purpose. It is only by the intervention of the SFI, that the student movement in these institutions, which have a tendency of remaining with the mainstream of democratic student movement, can be developed.

15. GIRL STUDENTS:

The strength of SFI continues to remain weak among girl students vis-a-vis the boys. Only continuous and sustained initiative can lead to the overcoming of this weakness. It is not only the question of taking up the issues peculiar to the women folk, that will be effective but participation and involvement of girl student in the general student movement has to be specifically planned and special initiative has to be unleashed State and district committees, should have girl student sub-committee formed and should function on a regular basis.

16. MINORITIES AND OTHER WEAKER SECTIONS :

The present situation requires added emphasis on this issue. If the democratic student movement cannot take initiative in raising issues related to the aspirations of these sections they will be growingly influenced by communal, caste and chauvinist appeals. Since the Dum Dum resolution was adopted, dangerous developments are taking place in different parts of the country. The activities of AISSF in Punjab, the AASU and other tribal student movements in Assam, the voluntary agencies of the Christian Missionaries in different backward tribal dominated areas, the D.S.-4 among scheduled caste students and Hindu and Muslim fundamentalist student organizations area testimonies of such a course of development. Therefore, there is a special need to study the concrete problems of these sections and identify their democratic aspirations and demands. District, regional and State level conventions should be organized to highlight these demands, as well as, to expose the anti-national nature of the student organizations who are aiming to organize them along separatist lines. Where such problems are not to confine to a single state, initiative has to be taken by the C.E.C. to organize such conventions.

Planned effort in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and most importantly in Tripura has demonstrated the wisdom of such an approach. In Tripura the Tribal Students' Union (Affiliated to the SFI) is doing good work and attracting a large section of the tribal students who were before the formation of the TSU remaining away from the mainstream of democratic student movement. In Maharashtra, there has been a tribal student convention through which the state committee has planned to take up the issues of the tribal students. In Andhra, he SFI State Committee has in a systematic manner taken up the issues related to the students belonging to scheduled castes and other backward sections, thus developing in them a democratic sense.

17. ELECTED STUDENT UNIONS:

The importance of this was correctly identified in the Dum Dum resolution. While continuing to attach importance to this question along these lines, we have to take note of certain developments. In pursuance

of the Education Policy and particularly in the background of anarchic activities of certain student movements in many areas, particularly in north India, the authorities have been doing away with elected student unions. This is a great danger for the democratic student movement and the students have to be mobilized in the defence of the right to have the elected student unions. At the same time, in the stronger states where elected students unions do not exist in the schools, this demand has to be raised. State level conventions of union office bearers and our leading activists should be organized at the State level where we control a number of unions. This is urgently needed for realizing the full potential of these forums.

The full potential of elected student unions, as instruments in advancing the democratic student movement, has yet, not been fully understood. Apart from West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh, in many other States, the SFI controls a large number of students' unions. But unfortunately the responsibility to develop the students union as a platform of the mass students, a forum for unleashing day to day struggle and a weapon for sharpening our ideological struggles led by the SFI units in such institutions, is not being properly discharged. Participation in the students' union elections, which gives us an opportunity to take the issues to then student masses, is also not given the importance, which it demands. Students' struggle on the question of holding of democratic students union elections where it is not being held, is also not been taken up with the earnestness it demands. All these shortcomings have to be overcome.

18. THE CHALLENGE OF THE DIVISIVE FORCES

Given, the diversity and unevenness in our movement, we have already discussed at length, the difficulty in developing and advancing an All India student movement. This has become, all the more so, due to the growth of the divisive forces. Their activities are principally aimed at mobilizing the young student, who suffers from a growing sense of persecution. Caste based organizations like D.S.-4, the activities of the Christian missionaries and action groups in backward areas, particularly, the tribal areas, the religious fundamentalist organizations like the AISSF the SIMI, Viswa Hindu Parishad, R.S.S. etc. are growing with an aggressive militancy. No democratic student movement, worth name, lest the SFI, can defend itself or ensure its advance without taking into account, this important development. We have to evolve proper methods to respond to these challenges. Our organization having a mass character should, by all means, reflect the composition of the students in the areas in which it is working. Ideological battle against separatist ideologies voicing their legitimate and democratic aspirations and planned recruitment of cadres from backward sections and minorities should be together forming the mainstay of our activities.

19. DIVERSE ACTIVITIES

We have already pointed out the importance of reaching out to the student masses who remain outside the influence of the organized student movement. Apart from other aspects, taking up diverse activities which attract and provoke the student mind, should also be taken up. These include cultural activities like debating, quiz, elocution, extempore speech, essay, short stories and poetry writing, art and music contests, sports activities, constructive social activities like campus cleaning and beautification, voluntary blood donation, literacy campaigns. All positive qualities of the students should be encouraged and this can be combined with concept of 'Study and struggle' by awarding the students who show academic excellence. Every student should be given an impression, that it is the SFI which is interested in the development of all the positive qualities of each and every individual student. Coupled with such a positive and constructive effort, can our criticism against all forms of social, moral and cultural degeneration, develop a sharpness which will attract these students who are otherwise not interested in organized student activities.

1. CONCLUSION

The SFI since its inception has battled against erroneous tendencies within the student movement, to de link the student movement from the mainstream of the democratic movement of the country. The present situation which is characterized by a growing crisis of the policies of the ruling classes and the burdens being attempted to be shifted on the shoulders of our Indian people, of which the students are very much an integral part. Therefore, the challenges, as well as, the possibilities are, as they were never before. Growingly and wide sections are showing interest in coming out on the streets and joining the battle of policies. Anti-national reactionary ideologies are sought to be used to misdirect the growing disillusionment, anger and the rebellious mood of the students. Therefore, never was the importance of organizing the students on a principled basis felt so much, as it is now. This is the time when proper initiative can yield results, on a scale, as they would never, in other circumstances. Therefore, our entire organization should rally like one, in assimilating the proper methods of organization, in making the best use of the situation and grow from strength to strength to each that critical stage where we can achieve our strategic objective.

Resolution on Organisation

**(Adopted by the Fifth All India Conference,
Dum Dum, 1984)**

INTRODUCTION

This 5th All India Conference of the S.F.I. is meeting at a time when our organization has just completed 13 years of its glorious existence after its founding at the 1st All-India Conference at Trivandrum on 30th December 1970. During this short period the SFI has emerged not only as the largest and most powerful organization of democratic minded students in the country, but also as the Chief initiator of united student movements. With this Conference, the SFI membership in India has for the first time crossed the 11 lakhs (1.1 million) mark, and the organizational network today has spread far and wide to cover almost all the State as well as Union Territories of the country. The SFI today is active in every State from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, and from Gujarat to Gauhati, and has units in such far-flung areas as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sikkim, Goa and Manipur.

This growth has been achieved as a result of tremendous sacrifice. In the last 13 years, more than a hundred of our devoted activists have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives in order to uphold the banner and the principles of the SFI. In order to defend the noble values of "Independence -Democracy-Socialism" against attacks from various reactionary quarters.

Thus, in West Bengal in 1970-77, scores of SFI activists were martyred in the Semi-Fascist Terror that was unleashed by the combination of Congress(I) hoodlums, the police, and extremist Naxalite elements. Thus, in Kerala, several of our activist are even now laying down their lives in the fight against the communal RSS and authoritarian Congress (I). Thus, in Assam, since 1979, our best cadres are being slaughtered in the glorious fight against the pro-imperialist, chauvinist and secessionist elements like the AASU and the AAGSP. Thus, also, it has been in State like Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan - in all of which our comrades have died fighting reaction. To them all, we pay grateful homage on this occasion of the 5th All India Conference and pledge that their unfinished work will be completed by lakhs of others. What is significant is that, in spite of these and other attacks on our organization, the SFI has not only stood unflinchingly, but has actually grown from strength to strength. Our martyrs have been our inspiration.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESOLUTION ON ORGANISATION

Basing ourselves on our organizational experience of the last 13 years which has made our progress possible and reviewing our past work, comprehensive guidelines for future organizational growth must be set forth.

The objective of this resolution is therefore, to help various committees as well as our activists to build the SFI in their respective areas in a proper manner and on the correct lines borne out by our past experience. The purpose is that, the guidelines set out in this resolution should enable our activists to imbibe and implement the basic organizational principles around which the SFI has been built.

The fundamental document that must be consulted and followed in the matter of the SFI organization is, of course, the SFI Constitution. Apart from this, some organizational guidelines, especially with regard to primary units, were set at the Madurai CEC meeting in 1972. In the 3rd All-India SFI Conference at Patna that was held in February 1979, a Resolution on Organisation was placed and later adopted. Later, as per the direction of then CEC meeting held in New Delhi in October 1982, a note on Organisation for inner-SFI discussion was circulated to all State Committees and this incorporated many important observations. The present Resolution on Organisation tries to incorporate all the important aspects of these, but it does not claim to replace them, rather, it stands by the formulations made therein and explore newer areas. The following Resolution is to be understood strictly as supplementing the SFI Constitution, because those points are not repeated here.

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATION

The crucial importance of Organisation has been succinctly explained by

one of the towering leaders of the world socialist movement who had himself played a major role in organizing and consolidating the first socialist revolution in the world. "Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct line, proclaim it from house-tops, enunciate it in the form of general thesis and resolutions, and carry them unanimously in order to make victory come itself, automatically, so to speak. This, of course, is very wrong. This is a great delusion. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and office rats think that. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line are only a beginning, they merely express the desire to win, but it is not victory. After the correct line has been laid down, after a correct solution to the problem has been found, success depends on the way the work is organised, on the organization of the struggle for the application of the line, on the proper selection of personnel, on the way a check is kept on the fulfillment of the decisions of the leading bodies. Without this, the correct line and the correct solution are in danger of being severely damaged. More than that, after a correct political line has been given, organizational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure." Nothing more now need be said. Now, coming to the various organisational guidelines:

1. MASS MEMBERSHIP - THE BASIS OF OUR ORGANIZATION

There is no doubt that mass membership is the very basis of our organisation, and that ever-larger numbers of students must be approached in the course of mass membership drives of the SFI, so as to accurately reflect the growing struggles and increasing influence of our organization. But since there, still exists some confusion as regards the concept of mass membership and its importance, we can do no better than to give below an extract from the report that was unanimously adopted at the 4th All-India SFI Conference held in Bombay in December 1981, so that the issue can be clinched once and for all.

"It should be borne in mind that our membership is only a fraction of the overall student population of our country. Lakhs of students are outside the sphere of organized student movement and these sections should be approached and should be drawn into our organizational fold. In order to achieve this, the organization should be oriented to conduct regular and intense membership campaigns and should diversify its activities so as to appeal to the widest sections of the student community. The practice of enrolling members only prior to state and All-India conferences must be abandoned. State Committees should work out programmes for regular and systematic membership drives.

"Unless this is taken up seriously we will not be able to exert our influence on vast sections of the student population and will leave them to be utilized by reactionary forces. Membership is the basis of our organization. Expansion of membership should be the constant watchword of our organization. We have to develop into a mass force much larger

than what we are today if we are to fulfill the historic task before the students in the current political situation. This weakness of not paying sufficient attention to membership is a serious one and should be overcome in a determined fashion. Membership drives are often neglected under the plea of pre-occupation with struggles and activities. Similarly renewals are not taken seriously. This weakness must be overcome. Study, struggles and membership drives should be our constant and combined activity."

While enrolling SFI members, it is necessary that they have a basic idea of the main SFI slogans and demands. Also, SFI members must be an example to other students in the matter of academic proficiency, extra-curricular activities, relevance, character, honesty and so on.

Some important organizational guidelines with regard to membership are as follows :-

(a) All membership books for a State must be printed at the State Centre and then distributed to the District Committee, so that an accurate record can be kept.

(b) If possible, the major SFI slogans and demands may be printed at the block of each membership receipt, so as to popularize them directly among members.

(c) While conducting membership drives, District Committees may print an adequate number of leaflets explaining the major principles, slogans and demands (All-India, State and local) of the SFI for distribution to members and sympathizers. Membership campaigns should proceed throughout the year.

(d) While declaring membership, there must be the practice of a strict check-up of the membership counterfoils, and this must be made a must. All, counterfoils must be collected at the State Centre each year and destroyed.

(e) District Committee should maintain proper membership records at all levels. SFI membership, unlike that of other organization is recorded membership. While keeping this record, the DCs must categorise the membership each year according to talukas, primary units, boys/girls break-up, school/college/other institutions break-up, etc. and a copy of this record must be submitted to the State Centre, so that a yearly progress record of each district can be prepared, strengths and weaknesses analysed, and improvements made.

2. CONSOLIDATION OF MEMBERSHIP - THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY UNITS

Consolidation of membership is possible only with stress laid on primary units. Primary units are the flesh and blood of our organisation as they are the live links with the mass of students. In 1972, at the Madurai

CEC meeting, guidelines were set for the formation of primary units on the institution basis (i.e., minimum of 100 members or 10 per cent of the total strength of the institution, whichever is less). This Conference stresses the importance of this principle and reiterates the necessity of following these guidelines.

Primary units based on each college, high school, etc., with their own elected committees and office-bearers, are the network by which we actively involve students in our day-to-day activities. Local problems of each institution constitute the cornerstone of our mobilization. Further it is by institution-based demands and movement that an organized movement can be developed- a movement that can channelize the spontaneous energies and militancy of the students. Such a network of institution-based primary units provides the stability of organization, ability to plan and organize movements, entire-grass-roots mobilization and continuity of leadership through the primary unit committees.

Reviewing the experience of this principle of primary unit and its implementation, it can be stated that it has proved its validity and helped us give organized shape to the student movement. In states like West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra and Assam, it has been proved beyond doubt that these primary units are the real backbone of our organization. The SFI at all levels must concentrate on the extremely important task of building, consolidating and constantly guiding and supervising these primary units.

3. STATE, DISTRICT AND LOCAL LEVEL FUNCTIONING

This is one of the most important indicators of consolidation. The better and more regular the functioning of these levels, the stronger and more resilient is the organization. Constant check and supervision, however, is necessary to ensure proper functioning at these levels. The following guidelines are suggested in this regard:-

- (a) There must be a strong and effective State Centre in each State, and this must take the responsibility for general political-organisational guidance to the state movement and organization; maintain regular contact with District Committees by means of circulars, letters, etc.; publish the State journal if any; keep constant check and supervision on District Committee functioning; react to important events in the proper manner; and so on. The State Secretary preferably, and /or the State President should be in charge of running the State Centre. The great importance of an effective State Centre is illustrated in the case of Maharashtra, where the radical strengthening of the Centre among other factors, has led to impressive results within a short time.
- (b) The State Secretariat is the most important guiding centre for the state movement and organization, and it is normally supposed to

consist of the most mature State activists. Ideally, meeting of the State Secretariat should be held about once a month, if not more often. There should be division of responsibility between State Secretariat members, and different districts may be put in their charge.

Continuous and regular contact of State Secretariat members with the State Centre is extremely necessary if proper co-ordination and functioning is to be achieved. State Secretariat members take much greater individual initiative in giving a push to the growth of the movement and the organization in the districts that fall under their charge and must also take special care to see that their own districts are in the forefront in all matters. They must especially guard against the tendency to function merely as District leaders, and must always keep the overall State perspective in mind. Lastly, it is of utmost importance that they equip themselves ideologically by a constant process of self-study since the State Secretariat also serves as the ideological centre of the state movement.

- (c) Much of what has been said above also applies to State Committee members and State Committee functioning. State Committee meeting should be held roughly at regular intervals of 2-3 months. These meeting may be rotated between different centres in the State, with very fruitful results. State Committee members should come prepared for meetings with written reports of their district activities at each meeting, so that time can be saved for most important issues.
- (d) District Committee meeting should be held on an average of once in a month or more often, and the District Secretariat should meet once a fortnight or more often.
- (e) A minimum of 1000 members or 10 primary units must be the condition for setting up a district committee. Short of this, it will be called an organizing committee.
- (f) Local Committees can be constituted as Taluka Committees and City/Town Committees. These will be in charge of their respective primary units, under the supervision of the District Committee. These should also meet regularly.
- (g) Attendance of members at all the above meetings of Committees must be kept under check and supervision, if proper functioning is to be achieved.
- (h) At all Committee meetings, one of the first subject on the agenda should be the review of the implementation of last time's decision, and the role of each member in it.
- (i) Prompt review of activities and campaigns undertaken and the lessons drawn there from must be a regular feature.

- (j) The principle of collective functioning and individual responsibility should be retained as the basis of our organizational work at all levels.
- (k) A State Conference should generally be held once in every 2 years, but there are some States like Kerala which have the practice of Annual State Conference.
- (l) District, local and primary unit conferences must, however, be held every year.
- (m) Regular reporting from the higher to the lower committee and back is one of the fundamental principles of our organization. The lower committee must send regular reports of its activities to the higher committee.
- (n) Democratic functioning at all levels is one of the cornerstones of our organization. Lower committees, however, must implement the decisions of the higher committee.

4. AN EFFECTIVE ALL-INDIA CENTRE

The Patna Conference specially noted the urgent need to set up an effective All-India Centre at Delhi and strengthen its functioning. It underlined that in order to be an effective force at the All-India level capable of coordinating and drawing into a single mainstream the various state level movements into an organized student movement at the All-India level and in order to be able to initiate united actions, an effective All-India Centre is necessary and that the Central Office should shift from Calcutta to Delhi.

The decision was implemented after the Patna Conference, and the period since then has seen a marked improvement in the functioning of the All-India Centre, more so since the Bombay Conference. This step has yielded immediate and substantial results, and a functioning Central team now exists, visiting various states, meeting the State Committees and maintaining co-ordination between the movements in various states. The Centre has also been able to react to various developments at the All-India level and give timely calls for action on a number of issues. It has also been able to keep a live contact with the other student and youth organizations and has been able to initiate a number of joint actions and pave the way for meaningful united actions on common demands at the all-India and State levels.

Notwithstanding these positive aspects which should be underlined there are still certain weaknesses that should be overcome. The Centre will have to be further strengthened in order to ensure effective and timely intervention in developments of national importance and should be better equipped to send people to various states. In order to strengthen the Centre the State Committees should fulfill their responsibilities. For this,

the following steps must be urgently taken :-

- (a) Prompt response to circulars and immediate clearance of dues should be ensured, for which the very consciousness of our comrades will have to be raised.
- (b) Reports on activities, events and work of the State Committees between the CEC meetings must be sent to the Centre 10 days in advance before every CEC meeting, so as to enable the Centre to present a consolidated report to the CEC and make the meeting meaningful.
- (c) Whenever State Committees are being convened, the information must be sent to the Centre at least 15 days in advance, and whenever possible, the dates are to be fixed in consultation with the Centre.
- (d) Whether someone from the Centre attends a State Committee meeting or not, a report of the meeting-agenda, important decisions, resolutions adopted etc. should be sent immediately to the Centre.
- (e) Statements of State Committees, the relevance of which does not confine to that of the particular state, should be translated in English and sent to the Centre.
- (f) All membership dues must be deposited in time, the latest permissible date being one month after the closing of the membership year on 31st December, i.e. by 31st January. Moreover, the membership dues should be paid installment wise to the Centre, so that finances for Central functioning will be available.
- (g) Special attention should be paid to "Student Struggle" (in separate section)

In conclusion, unless the State Committees realize the importance of all these steps and begin to implement them, effective Centre-functioning of the type that is envisaged will not be possible. In this regard, it must be remembered that the stronger State Committees are expected to give a lead in strengthening the All-India Centre further. The State Committees should take up the above as priority tasks.

5. "STUDENT STRUGGLE" AND OTHER CENTRAL PUBLICATIONS

Special importance must be given in this Resolution on Organization to the section on "Student Struggle", our All-India journal. "Student Struggle", is now being published fairly regularly. The form, content and quality of the journal are satisfactory and are to be appreciated. It has developed today into a journal of standing, easily among the better of its kind brought out in the country.

However, certain weaknesses must also be noted. The publication has to

be regularized. The main reason for the delay in publication of some issues has been the shortage of personnel to undertake the editorial and managerial tasks and the negligence of the State Committees in clearing outstanding dues, the total amount of which comes to a staggering sum. No journal can ever survive in this manner. Moreover, the task of popularizing the journal in the state is not being taken seriously by many state committees. There are immense possibilities of increasing the present circulation, and these must be vigorously exploited. Similarly, very few states have responded to the call for procuring advertisement to "Student Struggle". The sending of regular reports of activities by State Committees to "Student Struggle" has also, by and large, been poor, unless serious steps are taken by the State Committees to remove all the above weaknesses in their functioning vis-à-vis "Student Struggle", it will defeat the very purpose of publication of the journal. There is also a great need to bring out a Hindi edition of "Student Struggle".

Similar is the position with regard to the other Central publications, e.g. the SFI Programme and Constitution, Appeal to the Student Community, and so on. In spite of placing orders for several hundred copies, many States Committees have not even taken charges of their copies, with the result that they are still lying around in the Centre. Something has to be immediately worked out in relation to this also.

6. STATE PUBLICATIONS AND JOURNALS

About 6-7 State Committees are now publishing their own SFI State journals in their mother-tongue. This is a good effort that must be appreciated. However, even here, it must be pointed out that the circulation of these periodically, by and large, is quite low when compared to the organizational strength that we enjoy, especially in the stronger states. Continuous efforts must be made to improve the quality and content of these journals and step up the drive to increase their circulation. This must be taken up on a priority basis if we are to succeed in our political and ideological campaign among students. State journals, if properly brought out can serve as effective instruments of agit-prop, organization as well as ideology. Those State Committees not yet publishing their own organs must consider the possibility seriously, in keeping with their organizational situation. A start can be made with a small bulletin. Other publications on burning current issues must also be considered. But more important than, this, basic SFI literature and documents must first be made available in the mother-tongue, if they are not already existing. This must form one of the primary tasks of any State Committee, as the presence of such literature in the mother-tongue is a great asset. For all this to be organized, funds are an immediate necessity ; also if the mechanism for circulation of a state journal is to be made efficient, arrangement for the clearing of dues, sending of reports and articles, securing of advertisements and so on, are all matters that must be discussed collectively and decided.

7. EXPANSION INTO NEW AREAS

Along with consolidation, the Patna Conference had also laid stress on rapid expansion of the organization into new areas in a planned manner, and the Bombay Conference had reiterated this understanding. Consolidation and expansion must be regarded as being complementary to each other; they are both very closely inter-related. To achieve expansion, a special attempt is necessary to build new contact with potential activists, keep in constant touch with them, and guide them properly. Thus SFI must constantly try to spread to new districts of the State, to new talukas in same district and, of course, to new institutions in the same talukas. In the beginning, the results may not be too encouraging, but sustained efforts at planned expansion are bound to yield good results. But while doing this, our past experience suggests that there are certain specific fields or areas where concentration should be laid. Some of these are outlined below.

8. UNIVERSITY AND MAJOR EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

These are the nerve-centres of education, with thousands of students, and anything happening there has an impact on the whole surrounding region and on the State as well. Hence, no effort is to be spared in greatly increasing our work in these centres. Given the importance of university and major educational centres, we have stressed in the past the need to overcome the weakness in developing these centres. In the past few years, some States like West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh have made progress in this regard, and this has been reflected in our winning a greater number of university unions also.

In order to pay greater attention to this aspect, it is necessary that State Committees directly look after such important centres unless there is a developed district committee in the area. In the University units formed under guidance of the State Centre, specific study of the problems of the students in these centres, and special emphasis on political and ideological work and Campaigns are necessary in order to advance. If a particular University spans a number of districts, the State Committee may, if it so desires, set up a co-ordination committee between these districts so that common problems can be effectively tackled. The All-India Centre must also utilize our substantial representation in university unions to co-ordinate common demands and evolve joint (stands).

9. FERTILE GROUND IN THE RURAL AREAS

While concentrating on University and major educational centres, it must also be remembered that the maximum activity of rival student organizations is also generally centred in these large cities. Cities are also often citadels of organized reactionary influence, and SFI here has to face heavy odds.

If the organization is to be taken to the grass-roots in a big way, another important avenue that must not be neglected is concentration on the large rural areas where, moreover, the problems faced by students are the most acute and thus response to our organization is generally very encouraging. Besides, the organized resistance of other rival and reactionary student organizations is certainly much less when compared to the cities. Thus, rural areas constitute extremely fertile ground for the rapid growth of our organization, and this must be exploited in a planned manner.

10. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In States where the SFI has a broad-based mass appeal, it has got mass membership amongst high school students. There are nearly one crore secondary school students in the country. Organising high school students is admittedly a difficult task for many of the weaker states, given limited cadre and the necessity of primary concentration on colleges. However, with some base developed among college students, efforts must be made to penetrate into high schools. With the implementation of the 10+2+3 system, a host of problems have arisen in many states as regards school students, and these must be identified and taken up. This will provide a good basis for our efforts to organize this vital section. In this regard, the example of the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura in providing free education till the 12th Standard, free mid-day meals, text-books, exercise-books, uniforms etc. must be prominently cited.

11. FEMALE STUDENTS

All State Committees must lay special emphasis on the problem of female students and create conditions within our organization for their entry and active participation despite many social obstacles. Due care must be given by the State Committees to promote active girls to committees and leading bodies. State Committees must make special study of female students' problem and formulate demands. While formulating them, burning social problem of women, e.g. dowry-deaths, bride-burning, atrocities on women, etc. must be seriously taken up so as to appeal to this section and bring it in the fold of our organization, and our viewpoint on these social problems must be properly explained. It is suggested that all State Committees set up separate "female Sub-committees" which can study and initiate steps to organize female students. It is clear that much greater efforts are necessary on our part to bring this important section to the mainstream of the democratic movement.

12. PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATION-BASED STUDENT MOVEMENTS

Our influence among the professional and vocation-based students like medical, ayurvedic, homeopathic, engineering, ITI, agricultural, etc. has been steadily growing in many states. The struggles of these sections in

many places have assumed a State-wide and united character. The State Committees must pay due attention to the problems of these sections and to develop their movement, while at the same time trying to integrate them with the general student movement. Further, many of these institutions have their policies made at the state government level, and therefore the necessity of co-ordination by the State Committees arises. For this if necessary, sub-committees of different categories may be formed. State Committees must take the initiative in calling state level conventions and formulating common demands and initiating actions.

At the All-India level, the Patna and Bombay Conferences had directed that All-India Conventions of Medical, Technical and Agricultural students be held to co-ordinate the respective All-India movements. Out of these, All-India Medical Student convention was successfully held in Gwalior in August 1983, but others have not yet been held. The task should be taken up seriously by the next CEC, and these conventions should be held at the earliest so that the state -level movement can be knit into an All-India movement and thus properly integrated. The Sub-Committees set up by these All-India conventions must be active in guiding various state movements under the guidance of the CEC.

13. ELECTED STUDENTS UNIONS

The SFI has won several important University, College and School elections in recent years, showing that it is becoming a major force in several places and is enjoying the support and confidence of large masses of students. However, these victories entail much greater responsibilities for us. We have to ensure that those Unions won by us are run in a democratic and effective manner, while at the same time militantly organizing students around their problems. Every effort must be made to actively involve the maximum number of students in the functioning of the Union. Similarly, the Unions won by us should encourage both academic as well as extra-curricular activities of students in a big way. In short, every attempt must be made to highlight the distinctively superior manner in which the SFI conducts elected Unions.

In those states where we are still weak in the matter of elections, efforts should be made to concentrate on this. At the same time, all opportunistic election alliances which go against the basic SFI policy should be avoided, while encouraging healthy united tactics in this field also.

14. ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS

It is necessary for all our units to pay attention to the all-round development of our members in every sphere-sport, literary, cultural and so on. Encouragement of members to actively participate in these activities has not received the necessary emphasis in the past. These talents in our activists should be encouraged and adequate recognition should be given

to this in the organization. To attract larger sections of students, the SFI Committees at various levels may take the initiative in organizing various cultural programmes and competitions, e.g. essay and poetry, elocution and debates, dramatics, sports, cultural events and so on. This has yielded excellent result in many places.

15. THE BUILDING OF ACTIVISTS THROUGH "STUDY AND STRUGGLE"

This is, no doubt, one of the most important tasks on the organizational plane, without which no concrete organizational progress is possible. Militant activists with full awareness and ideological conviction about what they are doing are the basis of our organization. Through the large reservoir of mass membership, the next task becomes to select and train honest, sincere, dedicated and militant activist. There are two ways of doing this and both these are to be used together. They are embodied in our slogan of "Study and Struggle" 1) Political-ideological study and education is extremely important and serious attention must be paid at all levels to organizing study-circles regularly for activists, discussions on various topics, and so on. But self study is also indispensable and in this the new activist is to be properly guided in the choice of books, etc. 2). Struggles are the crucible in which an activist is tempered, tested and corrected if necessary. His participation and behavior in struggle will provide a clue to his mettle. The day-to-day organizational work done by him, the initiative taken in building up the movement must be considered. The progress of each student should be properly assessed and the necessary guidance given.

16. ATTENTION TO PUBLICITY

One of the important organizational aspects on which we should concentrate more attention is that of publicity to the SFI and its various activities and programmes. All the major avenues of publicity should be fully utilized, e.g. wall-writing, which is the cheapest and more lasting form of publicity and must be used to propagate our demands, slogans and activities ; leaflets to be brought out for membership drives, struggles, district and state conferences and other major activities ; posters, printed and hand made, are a very important media of publicity : and finally, the press which must be utilized to the maximum possible extent to convey our stands on burning issues, our activities, struggles and other programmes. It is very important that through all these avenues, the name of the SFI and what it stands for reaches far and wide. Regular publicity campaigns of this kind should be conducted at all levels.

17. IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This is such a crucial principle of organization that it merits a separate section. For an organization like the SFI, the strict implementation of decisions taken at various levels has a very special place in the running of

the organization along proper lines. If this is not done, the process of decision-making tends to lose all meaning, since a feeling grows that decisions are taken only to remain on paper and thus need not be implemented. This is a very harmful trend and, once started, is difficult to check, thus threatening to strike at the roots of the organization and its discipline. Hence, as suggested, one of the first points on the agenda of committee meetings must be the review of the implementation of last time's decisions, and strict assessment of each individual's responsibility in the same. This is a difficult process, and constant check-up on this is very necessary on the part of the higher committee.

18. THE TIMELY CLEARANCE OF DUE

This point is important enough to deserve a special mention by itself. On this score also, our functioning at all levels has been very disappointing. The CEC has repeatedly pointed out this lapse on the part of State Committee. At the lower levels like District, Taluka, etc. the situation is much worse. If dues are not cleared in time, not only does the functioning of the organization suffer, but very unhealthy habits are formed at various levels which are bound to prove detrimental. Hence, this aspect must be considered with the greatest seriousness, and all efforts constantly made to instill self-discipline in this regard and at all levels.

19. FUNDS AND FINANCES

Though this item is kept towards the end of the Resolution, there is no doubt that it is one of the most vital aspects of running an organization. Everything connected with the day-to-day running of the organization-office functioning travel, publicity, journal, and so on-requires funds first and foremost. Paucity of funds is one of the main reasons why we cannot advance more than we have, and it is therefore of the utmost importance that a decisive break through be made on this front on a war footing. There is also the vital question of supporting SFI whole-timers at various levels, without which it is difficult to grow. Hence a constant Fund Drive carried out constantly is an urgent need. Our experience is that this aspect is often neglected by most committees. Apart from fund drives by means of direct collections, box-collections, advertisements for souvenir, fund-collection through organizing cultural shows, etc. can be carried out. Another important avenue that can be suggested is to enroll regular sympathizers who will give a fixed monthly sum for the organization. This has been successfully implemented in many places. Proper accounts of income and expenditure must be maintained at all levels and these must be placed for approval not only in Committee meeting, but also in the Local District and State Conference, as per the practice followed in our All-India Conferences.

20. A UNITED MASS ORGANIZATION LOYAL TO THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

In the manner outlined above, the SFI must emerge everywhere as a dedicated mass organization loyal to its noble principle and its motto of "Independence-Democracy-Socialism". The SFI Programme has made it amply clear that the SFI is not a political party, but a united mass organization of students. This must be borne out by our actions and behavior. It is only then that students will join us in a large numbers. But this does not mean that the SFI instructs its members to remain away from politics. On the contrary, our programmatic understanding is quite the reverse. Through study and struggle, our activists have to be trained in the tenets of Independence-Democracy-Socialism. There is no doubt at all that they have to be progressively brought closer to identify themselves with the democratic movement of the toiling sections in the country. They must be fully convinced that the various activities and programmes of SFI are but an integral part of the much larger democratic struggle taking place in our country and the world. Our aim, therefore, should be that when we leave the SFI after our student days, we shall be so developed as to be always remaining loyal to, and active in, the democratic movement of our country. If we fail in this crucial task, we cannot claim true success in the building of the democratic student movement.

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