

NFIR

&

WOMEN RAIL WORKERS



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Women Rail Workers in **NFIR** (National Federation of Indian Railwaymen) play an Essential part in growth and rise of Modern Trade Union Movement. In the present times, there has been a Steady rise in the number of Working Women in Railways. Women Workers are no longer a '**rare species**' in any of the spheres in Railways. But due to prolonged working hours and shift duties, women have less career progress in Railways as well as Transport Sectors.

Even though less in Number, Women Employees are doing their share of Work, under entirely **novel conditions**. The **Wage-Earning Woman** is always a Subject of priority and her attitude towards entering into Trade Unions always makes difference. But still women in working place have to confront with their male counterparts.

Parity between men and women in trade unions is still a long way off. Else, anyway this situation can be confronted by **voluntary participation** of women at gross root level.

NFIR's Initiative: Drawing a picture of the trade union movement in terms of women's involvement is no easy task; **General Secretary of NFIR Sri. M. Raghavaiah** garu, through his untiring efforts enabled the Women Railway Workers to aspire higher positions in Trade Unions and a measure of respectability in the Railways. **NFIR** respected the **Working Woman Interests and self-expression irrespective of their strength**. This gave a hope and confidence among Women and thus started representation of their voice in all the affiliated Organizations of NFIR.

Care has been taken at the initial stages for increasing the Women membership, but still working women take little part in the work of Trade Union. NFIR is seeking to change the attitudes, to welcome more Rail Women and increase awareness for better participation in Trade Union activities. Ensuring that the Women Workers participation leads to Organizational Growth.

NFIR through its Collective bargaining and other consultative mechanisms, (PNM/JCM), even with representative forums has covered the women related issues right from the initial stages. The Main focus was made in the charter of demands of NFIR. Most of the Key issues highlighted were regarding implementation of industrial relations at plant level for women workers;

Examples of successful Historical Background :

o Implementation of Laws :

- Maternity Benefit Act – 1961 (45 days leave for MTP)
- Equal Remuneration Act –1976
- Minimum Wages Act -1948
- Payment of Gratuity Act – 1972
- Payment of Bonus Act – 1965
- The Factories Act - 1948

Better Working Conditions for Women at Work Place:

1. Water and sanitation at workplace
2. Crèches for children of Working Mothers
3. Working Women Hostels
4. Lunch Room Facilities
5. Rest Room Facilities
6. Provision of Canteens

NFIR Recommendations - 6th PAY COMMISSION:

The demands raised by the Women Employees in Railways were referred and recommended by NFIR in the 6th Pay Commission, 2006. Now Women Employees are having the Fruits of the Success.

1. **Maternity Leave** : Increased from 135 to 180 days.
2. **Child Care Leave** : Two years of CCL for all Women Employees for Taking care of their children up to 18 yrs.
3. **Special Allowance** : for child care for women with disabilities and Education Allowance for disabled children of Railway employees

Many Clarifications were referred by NFIR regarding CCL to Railway Board, and subsequently all the Clarifications of CCL are in favor of Women Workers till date.

3. Grant of Travelling Allowance On Transfer

References by NFIR to Railway Board:

1. Supply of Quality Uniform to Female Staff.
2. Recognition of Schools Run by Women Welfare Associations
3. Provision of Rest Rooms in other stations for women working as front line staff.

Key Positions for Women in SCRE SANGH (AFFILIATED TO NFIR) :-

SCRE Sangh affirmed the importance of women's access to and participation in Sangh Activities hence gave key position for a Woman in its Central Level Genral Body, i.e, position of **Assistant General Secretary** to **Smt. Uma Nagendramani**. Apart from that, Women in SCRE Sangh hold the positions as **Central Office Bearers** and **Central Working Committee Members**. These key positions offered to them paved way for active participation of Women in Regional Levels and take part in local level activities.

Sri. D. Reddeppa garu, **Divisional Secretary** of Guntakal Division shouldered the responsibility of organizing a meeting on “**International Women’s Day**” on **March 8th, 2011** at Guntakal Junction. The meeting was success as the women attendees attended in large number. Multipurpose Box was given as compliment for all the Women Workers who attended the meeting.

Trade Union Activities of NFIR --- Women Workers:

1. Observing Special Calendar Days pertaining to Women Importance:

March 8th : International Women's Day

Dec 7th to 13th : Human Rights Week

2. Trade Union Education and Training Programmes for Women at Work Places.
3. Awareness programmes on **HIV/AIDS**
4. Promoting Participation of Women Employees in Trade Union Activities.
5. Inclusion of Women in **Important Conversations**.
6. Encouraging Participation of Women Workers in **Protests/Strikes**.
7. Representing Women Employees to participate in **Regional/National/International Conferences led by ITF and ILO**.
8. Representation in **Decision making bodies**. (AGS/SCRES - Smt. Uma Nagendramani garu)
9. Conducting **Workshops at Divisional Levels** on Women Issues.

Rail Sandesh and Indian Rail Worker Magazines:

The mouth piece of NFIR, Indian Rail Worker Magazine (IRW) and Rail Sandesh the print media, now being published in Regional Language, provide wide coverage of features of Women Rail Workers their abilities and expertise.

Unlike other areas of media coverage where women are sidelines, IRW and Rail Sandesh publish articles of Women Workers Interests and their achievements covering total page.

NFIR WEB SITE: <http://www.nfirindia.com>

Globalized Media and Technological Advancements created a new History in the field of Networking to serve billions of users world wide. Internet Websites being the information resources and services, accelerated new forms of Human Interactions through Internet forums.

NFIR, with Creative Digital Inspiration has Renovated its website , www.nfirindia.com for best Infrastructural communication. NFIR website can be accessed world wide through simple Internet connection even with Personal Mobile. NFIR website provides information which helps for collaborative network. Communication, Data Transfer, Organizing Trade Union Activities, all can be accessed now under one roof i.e. www.nfirindia.com.

"WOMEN CORNER" , is appreciated in the renovated web site of NFIR , which is under construction as on date.

Women Branch:

For the first time in Indian Railway Trade Union History, in the Shade and extended support of **National Federation of Indian Railway Men(NFIR)**, the **First Women's Branch** has been formed in Western Railway, affiliated to **Western Railway Mazdoor Sangh.(WRMS)**



International Transport Workers Federation:

ITF being a **Women Friendly Organisation**, when concerned with the Railway Sector of the **Asia Pacific Region**, it concentrates on the Woman Rail Worker who become the Centre of Analysis for the **ITF**. ITF looks for ways by which the position of women workers can be **strengthened**, their opportunities and lives bettered, and their vulnerabilities decreased. ITF in present times is striving to ensure that women are better represented at the various decision-making levels by araising awareness through seminars and Training programmes.

The topics covered and discussed in Seminars conducted by ITF Covering Transport Sector Women in 2010 and 2011 till date are mentioned below in brief:

1. ITF Seminar on Promoting the Participation of Women in Transport Workers in Unions (28-29 May, 2010 – Mumbai)

- Gender Mainstreaming-Gender Equality—Gender Mainstreaming a Global Perspective.
- Gender and ITF
- Rights for Women Mean Rights for All
- Trade, Liberalisation and Globalization – Its impact on Transport Women Workers
- Women and Unions – Union campaign materials for Women Rights
- HIV – AIDS Awareness session

2. ITF Seminar on Promoting the Participation of Women in Transport Workers in Unions (04-05 April, 2011 Bhuvaneshwar)

- **EQUAL OPPURTUNITIES AND FORMULATING EQUAL OPPURTUNITY POLICY**
- Strong Union need Women
- **VIOLENCE AT WORK PLACE** – Its part of our job but shouldn't be
- HIV / AIDS -- Work Place Issue.
- **Campaigning on All Women Issues**

The elements of **liberalization and globalization** have been explained and analysed in great detail.

Conclusion:

The Success of NFIR for tomorrow is the Strength of Women who stay with it.

Compelled by :

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