

WAF Meeting Minutes

15th September 2021

Participants

1. Elaine Alam
2. Humaira (Noni)
3. Khawar Mumtaz (Rani)
4. Mehreen Ahmed
5. Naila Naz
6. Nasrene Shah
7. Nazish Ata-ullah (Naji)
8. Neelam Hussein
9. Nighat Khan (Bunny)
10. Sultanat Bukhari (Popi)
11. Tauseef Hyat

Agenda Item # 1: Rules and Procedures

Nighat Dad was supposed to help with these, but she has taken leave for a week. Neelam and Rani will get together and finalize them. There was a discussion on the 'cut-off' number for WAF WC members, and it was decided that there should be a criteria for this.

Bunny suggested that those members who missed three consecutive meetings should leave the WC, and join the General Body, where WAF posts all its news and events.

Popi was quite dismayed by this, and there was sympathy for senior WAF WC Members who were not regular, but Bunny said we should have the same rule for everyone as there was no hierarchy in WAF.

Neelam and Rani will present a draft to the WC for discussion and finalization of these rules.

Agenda Item # 2: Law Committee

The Law committee was not able to co-ordinate a meeting this week.

Agenda item # 3: Single National Curriculum (SNC)

Neelam said that Tauseef had sent her evaluation for English Grades, 1, 2 and 3. Neelam is working on Grades 4 and 5, which are more difficult and more time consuming. Neelam pointed out that the books were full of grammatical and pedagogical errors, and it will take her a bit longer to complete the process.

Popti said that Dr. Maryam Chughtai, the Government's Curriculum Head, had stated that it was not their intent to add religion to all the subjects and she would look into this, and see what could be done.

Bunny said that it was necessary to continue making a noise about the SNC and continue pressurizing the Government.

Najji said that the Ulema Board was a Punjab issue, and the law to allow this had been passed by the Punjab Assembly. Rani had heard that only religious text was to be approved by the Ulema Board, but this needs to be confirmed.

Nasrene Shah said there had been some very good articles pointing out the problems in the Science books.

Popti informed the WC members about the Education Department personnel visiting their Paragon School to make certain they were using the SNC Books. What was worrying is that they said that someone from the Ulema Board would also be visiting to check out the teacher who was teaching Nazra. Members felt that this interference and attempt to control does not auger well for the future.

Najji felt that that we should meet with Maryam Chughtai as soon as possible, but after some discussion, the decision was to let WAF complete its Evaluation of all the subjects so that we could then present something more concrete.

Agenda item # 4: Political School

Bunny would like to restart the Political School Discussions around the middle of October, when she feels better. One of the subjects could be on the Essay written by Farida Shaheed – *Anatomy*

of a Resistance, from the book Womansplaining. Nida has also committed to helping with the Political School. This activity also helps in getting the younger women involved with WAF.

Agenda Item # 5: Solidarity and Support for women and children from Afghanistan

Elaine discussed the problem of Afghani women and children in all the Provinces including those in the Punjab. Refugees already settled earlier and those coming in now. The fact that they do not have access to education, health, banking services etc as they did not have any identity card of any sort.

Neelam pointed out that the Government was not admitting that any refugees were coming in, and therefore we needed to be careful that any statement from WAF should not create a problem for the new refugees and their location should not be identified.

WAF could put pressure on the Government to announce a policy on Afghanistan, including refugees and to give the refugees some sort of status, some registration process, and some policy allowing them access to education and health and employment.

WAF members were very worried about the fallout from the Afghan situation, its impact on women and the danger of TTP and IS entering Pakistan in the guise of refugees.

Agenda Item # 6: WAF Duppattas

There has been a demand from Karachi WAF for the WAF Duppattas. Bunny said that there is no reason why different chapters cannot have their own duppattas made. Lahore has been taking this responsibility for a long time and it is not an easy task. The business house that was supporting WAF is no longer able to support us because of the increase in prices. Bunny said that she knows how difficult it is to manage the sale and collection of money as she has been dealing with the dupattas for a long time.

Decision was to request chapters to have their own duppattas made.