**APPROACH PAPER FOR FORMATION OF CONFEDERATION**

**OF ESM ASSOCIATIONS IN INDIA**

**Background**

1. There are a large number of ESM organizations all over the country and very few having Pan India presence. Most of the ESM organizations are Registered in their own States/Districts of their location and are also affiliated to one political party or the other. These Registered Organisations have well established Bye-Laws, Org Structure, and Finances contributed by their respective Members.
2. These ESM organizations at the State/District level mainly pursue the agenda of getting land allotments, House sites and various reservations in education, employment and other areas under ex-servicemen quota or other amenities offered to the ESM and widows by the respective State Governments. Due to fragmented approach of the ESM organizations and their political affiliations, no substantial achievements are made towards welfare of the ESM Community at the State Level.
3. At the National Level, there are a few ESM Organisations like IESL, IESM, Navy Foundation, Air Force Association, War Wounded Association, RDOA, AIEWA, War Widows Association, NExCC, AFVOA and TSEWA which have made their presence Pan India with their own Bye-Laws, Org Structure and Finances. Attempts to forge unity amongst various ESM Organisations in the past have not fructified and such unity is not likely to fructify in future given the unique Identity and the agenda they pursue as per their internal resolutions arrived at the General Body Meetings. These Organisations have been pursuing various welfare agenda points with the Government at the Center and again due to the fragmented approach no substantial progress was made in the past for the welfare of ESM and Widows.
4. TSEWA has recently coordinated and organized a meeting with the Raksha Mantri on 12 Dec 2017 and due to paucity of time could muster only seven ESM Organisations for the meeting including IESL which is the oldest ESM Organisation in the country. A meeting was hurriedly organized to arrive at a common agenda from amongst the participants and a Memorandum was handed over to the RM during the meeting which was lead by Lt Gen Balbir Singh Yadav, President of the IESL. The effort was well appreciated by the RM who promised to have a quarterly welfare meeting Chaired by the RRM to look into various grievances and welfare measures. However, the meeting to be Chaired by RRM could not materialize presumably due to lack of consensus on which of the ESM Organisations to be invited for the meeting.
5. The Ministry of Defence vide their Letter No. 28(86) 2017/D(Res-1) dated 06 Mar 2018 have recently issued guidelines for recognition of ESM Organisations in India which amongst various conditions spells of a minimum of 1,00,000 Membership which could be relaxed in case of certain Organisations like the Navy Foundation or War widows Association or such other organizations which are decided by the MOD based on merits. The above stipulation does not qualify any ESM Organisation barring a couple of them to be recognized by the MOD. We have to admit that there will be no worthwhile welfare which could be discussed and achieved for the 25 lakh ESM and 5 lakh Widows in the country with one or two organizations holding meetings with MOD. Moreover, it will not be representational at an All India Letter and the voice from ESM and widows of all the States will not reach the MOD.
6. In the light of the above background, it is proposed to form a confederation of ESM Associations which will be the apex body to sit on the round table meetings to be chaired by the RRM as assured by the RM.

**Aim**

1. The Aim of the Confederation is to project unified approach to the Central (MOD) /State Governments for Redressal of grievances of ESM and Widows and for implementation of welfare measures to them on an All India basis.

**Proposed Structure at State Level**

1. It is proposed to name the apex organization as Confederation Ex-Servicemen (CESM). It is also proposed to invite all major Registered ESM Organisations in each State at a convenient date and time after giving wide publicity to the proposed meeting. Since it will be humongous task to accommodate thousands of ESM Organisations that have mushroomed in each Tehsil and District, it will be necessary for the volunteer ESM Organisations intending to join the Confederation to have a minimum verifiable Membership of 2,000 ESM/Widows at the District level or a ward level in case of major cities. It will the responsibility of the ESM Organisation to form a Confederation of like-minded ESM Organisations coming together either at Village/Tehsil or District Level, in case they don’t have the requisite Members explained above.
2. There will be no merger of any individual ESM Organisation nor will they surrender their individual identity or any finances unless their respective General Body decides to merge and form a combined ESM Organisation in the style and format as decided by the such merging ESM Organisations. However, for the purposes of Confederation, each ESM Organisation will be independent entity. The President of each ESM Organisation willing to join the State Level Confederation will be a Member of State Level Confederation**. It is however incumbent upon the willing ESM Organisations to be apolitical and will not participate or associate themselves with the political activities of any political party**
3. All such Confederations or ESM Organisations at the District Level with the above strength and willing to join the Confederation at the State Level will assemble at a convenient venue, Date and Time and will elect a State Confederation President (SCP) whose tenure will be for a period of two years.
4. The SCP will initiate such correspondence as necessary with the State Government in power and organize Quarterly or half early meetings at the appropriate level not less than the Home Minister or preferably at the Chief Minister’s level.
5. The SCP will communicate the date time and venue of such meetings to all Confederation Members well in advance, convene a meeting and arrive at the common Agenda to be discussed with the State Government. The SCP will not exercise any authority over other ESM Organisations or District Level Confederations. His main duty shall only be to act as the coordinator and lead the delegation at the State Level. All District Level Confederations or ESM Organisations will be represented by the respective Presidents or a person from their own Executive Committee and attend the State Level Meetings as organized by the SCP in consultation with the respective State Governments.
6. Since the elected SCP will be representing his own ESM Organisation, the secretarial work of the State Level Confederation will be made available from within his resources. There will be no need for any separate finances except for hosting State Level Meetings if any. The expenditure for such meetings should be met from within the resources of the hosting organization or by contribution as decided jointly by the Members of the State Level Confederation.
7. The State Level Confederation will also elect one Vice President from amongst them to act as discipline member to address the issues of **Conflict Resolution and Grievance Redressal (CRGR)** or can be designated as the State Ombudsman of the Confederation. **The CRGR will be headed by the Vice President and may have one or two Nominated Members of repute who need not be a President of an ESM.** The Vice President shall also lead the Confederation in the absence of the President due to any reason.
8. The tenure of the President shall only be for a period of two years and elections for a new President after completion of the tenure shall be conducted prior to expiry of the tenure. This will give an opportunity to the District Level Confederation Presidents and Presidents of Participating ESM Organisations to lead the confederation turn by turn.

**Proposed Structure at the National Level**

1. The National Confederation President (NCP) will be elected similarly as at State Level by the SCPs of all the States for a period not exceeding two years.
2. The NCP shall be the Coordinator at the Central Government Level (MOD) and Lead the delegation of all SCPs in a similar fashion. He shall provide the secretarial effort through his parent organization and will also host all the periodical meetings of the National Confederation within his resources or share the expenses as decided jointly by all the SCPs.
3. The National Confederation will also elect a National Confederation Vice President for CRGR purposes. He will act as the ombudsman of the confederation and also act as the President of the Confederation during his absence. **The Vice President may be assisted by one or two Nominated Members of repute who need not be a President of an ESM.**
4. There will be no requirement for separate Registration of Confederation at District, State or National Level but the First SCP and First NCP shall communicate formation of the Confederation by a letter addressed to the respective State Government/MOD giving the names of Confederation Members. As and when the changes occur, a similar letter shall be addressed intimating the changes in composition.
5. All rules explained in the organization at the State Level shall be applicable mutatis –mutandis at the National Level.

**Effective Date for Formation**

1. The effective date for bringing the Confederation into force at the State Level and National Level as envisaged above, shall be two years from the date of formation of the Interim Confederation. In the event of any delays in formation of State Level Confederations and the National Level Confederation, the tenure of the Interim Confederation may be extended by another two years. It shall be the responsibility of the first Interim NCP to implement the Organisation in a true spirit of camaraderie and for the unity of ESM to achieve the main AIM of the Confederation.

**Interim Organisation**

1. The Confederation as envisaged at the State Level and the National Level may take two to four years to come into being. Since RM has in principle agreed to have quarterly meetings of ESM Organisations Chaired by RRM, it is essential that an Interim Confederation is brought into force and the first such meeting held before the moral code of conduct for the next General Elections comes into force.
2. In the Interim, it is proposed to invite all major Registered ESM organizations willing to join the Confederation to come together to form the Interim Confederation. **The ESM Organisations willing to form the Interim Confederation should be Registered, preferably having Pan India presence and must not have any political affiliations.**
3. If the major ESM Organisations as per the criteria mentioned in paragraph 21 above can come together, it would be an excellent step forward to form the Confederation and have a powerful voice to redress major grievances and welfare activities of the ESM community. It is proposed to have a meeting of the Presidents of all such organizations to take the proposal forward and establish the Interim Confederation. TSEWA has consented to host such a meeting at Hyderabad.
4. During the proposed meeting on a date convenient, it is also proposed to elect the Interim National Confederation President and also an Interim National Confederation Vice President for CRGR. He could also be called as the Confederation Ombudsman. **The CRGR Team will be headed by the elected Vice President and may have one or two other Nominated Members of repute who need not be President of an ESM Organisation**
5. The Interim NCP when elected will establish communication with the MOD and propose the dates for the first meeting of the Confederation to be Chaired by the RRM.

**Conclusion**

1. The intention of the proposal is not to forge any mergers but create an Apex Organisation for the purposes of conveying unified voice to the MOD at the National Level and the State Governments at the State Level for Redressal of Grievances and institution of various welfare measures for the benefit of the ESM Community and the Widows. The Confederation will not exercise supremacy over any individual ESM Organisation nor will there be any Identity loss. It is the considered opinion that the confederation when formed, will command due respect at all levels of Governance.