**SKILLS FOR FREEDOM**

**Newsletter from India**

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This electronic newsletter from **PEACE TRUST, INDIA** is addressed to NGO's, Social Activists, Media, Opinion makers, Leaders and Bureaucrats shows interest in skills for youth for addressing social issues like modern slavery, child labour, migrant labour, unemployability of youth. Officials on the Migrant issue. We send this to people who we believe are involved in impressing the migrant's conditions. You are welcome to unsubscribe yourself, if you so choose,

**-EDITOR**

Peace Trust is Non Government Organization working on Child Labour and Bonded Labour issue since 1984. It has also focused on Migrant workers rights issue since 1999.

Skills for Freedom is an answer to Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu. It is a joint effort for enhancing the employment opportunities of rural youth in Dindigul, Karur, Tiruppur Districts.

SPSC Vocational Education & Employment Facilitation Centre provides Access to vocational education and employment facilitation for rural poor youth in Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur District Tamil Nadu and Karaikal District, Puducherry.

Peace Trust also provides training for Quality Teacher Education and gainful employment to young women from resource poor families in Dindigul and Karur District.

The views expressed are not of the donors but a compilation of field realities for the purpose of sharing and action.

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**1.MIGRANT LABOUR**

**After NRI, effort to give voting rights to migrants: SC told**

**PTI | Jul 8, 2015, 08.03 PM IST**

NEW DELHI: The draft bill to provide voting rights to NRIs through postal ballots would be further revised before it is tabled in Parliament and the Cabinet would consider a note in this regard, government told the Supreme Court was informed on Wednesday. The government was also considering a demand for granting similar voting rights for migrants in the country who leave their native places and go to other states for work, additional solicitor general (ASG) P L Narasimha said.

"The effort has been made by them," a bench headed by Chief Justice H L Dattu said after Narasimha made the statement on the issue. The ASG also informed the bench that a committee has been set up to look into the issue of voting rights for migrants and its report will be submitted by September 15.

The bench, which also comprised justices Arun Mishra and Amitava Roy, observed that the issue of extending voting rights to migrants, who move from one place to another in search of job, through postal ballots was being examined by the Election Commission.

The bench posted the matter for hearing after two months saying more time has to be given as the magnitude of work involved was enormous.

The issue of migrants was raised by advocate Prashant Bhushan who said since effort was being made to take care of the rights of NRIs, personnel of services and government officials, the same should be extended to the migrants.

The court was hearing a batch of petitions filed by Nagender Chindam, who is the chairman of London-based Pravasi Bharat organization and other NRIs including Shamsheer VP on the issue.

During the last hearing on April 13, the apex court had said it cannot order the legislature to make or amend a law within a particular time-frame and had granted time to the Centre to effect changes in statutes to extend voting rights to NRIs through postal ballots.

The Election Commission, earlier, did not favour extending the same benefit to migrants in the country.

"Scheme of the Representation of People Act is that a person can be enrolled only at the place where he is ordinarily resident, the question of any person migrating to a different place from his native place, enrolling himself in the electoral roll of his native place does not arise," the poll panel had said in an affidavit.

Various government departments including law ministry is involved in the exercise of carrying out electoral reforms. It was submitted that in Kerala, 70 per cent people were NRIs who should be given this right as they contribute so much to the country.

The PILs have said that 114 countries, including 20 Asian nations, have adopted external voting. It said external voting could be held by setting up polling booths at diplomatic missions or through postal, proxy or electronic voting. Earlier, the Centre had told the apex court that the EC's recommendation to extend voting rights to NRIs through postal ballots have been accepted in letter and spirit and now the law has to be changed accordingly.

On the issue of migrants, the poll panel, in its affidavit, had opposed it and said that persons, migrating from their native places, cease to be residents of that place and they cannot cast vote in elections in that constituency.

A person would not become a voter of his native place just because of owning a house there and migrants must register themselves at the place where they reside, it had said.

"Such person has to get himself enrolled in the electoral roll of the new place where he is ordinarily resident and he can then vote in such new place," it had said.

"A person shall not be deemed to be ordinarily resident in a constituency on the ground only that he owns or is in possession of a dwelling house therein. The qualification for being resident at given place is not fulfilled merely because a person owns a house at that place," the affidavit had said.

The apex court had granted time to government to reply to proposal prepared by a 12-member committee led by deputy Election Commissioner Vinod Zutshi for exploring feasibility of alternative options for voting by overseas electors. In the report, the committee had said that e-postal ballot, where blank postal ballot is transferred electronically to NRIs and returned by post, can be employed after validation of the process and pilot implementation in one or two constituencies.

The report further said the process can be scaled up for Parliamentary elections, if found feasible, practicable and meeting the objectives of free and fair polls. The committee comprising officials from the EC, Law and External Affairs Ministries had gathered opinion from all sections before submitting a report to the apex court.

The poll panel had contended that the move to allow NRIs to use proxy voting on the lines of defence personnel and e-ballot facility would require changes in the law and a legislative framework.

**THE INVISIBLE CITY MAKERS:**

**MIGRATION AND MIGRANT WORKERS IN INDIA**

by Café Dissensus on August 1, 2014

Invisible city makers

By Amrita Sharma & Rajiv Khandewal

On July 5, 2014, sixty-one workers died in Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu, India, crushed under rubbles of an under-construction building. All the workers were seasonal migrants from rural Vizianagram and Srikakulum districts of Andhra Pradesh and Gajpati district of Odisha. 20 of them were young mothers. As the farms failed to provide enough food, they came to Chennai to work in the booming construction sector which promised higher wages –Rs. 175 more than what were able to earn back home. Men made Rs. 400 a day while women worked at Rs. 225-275. None held any employment contract, worked seven days a week for long hours, without safety equipments. None were entitled to any insurance or compensation in case of a death or injury. (Indian Express, 5th July, 2014)

That the city would eventually triumph over the village is no longer debated. Country after country has followed this trend. In most cases, the flux from the rural to urban has not been smooth and to achieve the illustrious goal of economic growth, human lives, mostly of migrants caught in transit, have suffered aplenty. India is no exception. If anything, lack of a policy stand on internal migration and poor safeguards for labor interests has given way to perverse labor market conditions thriving on abundant and unregulated access to cheap rural labor, easily recruited, circulated, and cast away at will.

The story of economic growth in India is essentially the story of labor migration and of migrants, who leave the increasingly poor villages with a decadent farm economy in search of better lives. They build resplendent city economies but fail to get a share of the riches; much worse, many struggle for a dignified human existence – for shelter, subsidized food, healthcare, and education – in the same cities they build. Unfortunately, their voices never make it to the mainstream. What we instead experience is a discourse dominated by the concerns of the urban majority, crying foul over burgeoning city populations, slumming of cities, and over-burdened city resources.

What is the story of internal labor migration in India? Why are more and more people moving en masse lately? What do they bring to the city and what do they take away? Here is a story of a population stuck in transit, struggling with disenfranchisement within the boundaries of its own country and an uncertain livelihood option which is their only exit from poverty.

**Of Numbers and Patterns in Labor Mobility**

The estimates on number of seasonal migrants vary from 15 million, as argued by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) to 100 million, a figure put by Priya Deshingkar, a renowned migration scholar from India. This open range can also be interpreted as saying that we do not have a reasonable estimate on seasonal migration. A wide variation in migration cycles, corridors, and an ever-changing nature of labor circulation makes the task of defining migration difficult. Nevertheless, over time a popular understanding on migration patterns has emerged, thanks to the micro/meso-investigations carried out by civil society organizations, academics, and to the efforts by NSSO.

In recent times, labor movement in India has become more long distance with an increase in inter-state mobility. The patterns of labor mobility have also grown more diverse, defying conventional wisdom informed by the Bihar-Punjab age. There are new hotspots of migrant sending and receiving regions and more sectors are known to employ migrant work force. Labor is circulated far, wide, and in between, blurring state boundaries, distances, and also definitions of migrant receiving and sending regions.

Figure 1 depicts some of the well established corridors of migration in India. At the national level, there is a clear trend of labor movement from the north and eastFigure 1 of India to the west and south, a trend that can be mapped parallel to the regional variations in economic prosperity in the country. States such as Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand with laggard economies and a surplus of labour are the primary suppliers of labour. At the other end, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, known for their robust and flourishing local economies attract large numbers of workers. Some of the notable corridors include eastern UP to Maharashtra, Bihar to Delhi-NCR, Odisha to Gujarat and to the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan to Gujarat and more. The last two decades have seen an upsurge of migration numbers from the states of Odisha and Rajasthan with creation of new corridors. Kerala is another new entry in top migration corridors, but as a migrant receiving economy. The North-East which was known predominantly for high student migration is increasingly in news for its economic migrants. While these are broad trends, there are hundreds of smaller corridors driven by creation of new towns and work opportunities in the local economies, mostly casual.

The tide of movement is also not linear, as many regions are found to be both sending and receiving migrants. Labor markets show a preference for migrant over local labour, giving way to extensive labor circulation. For instance, a large group of brick kiln workers from Allahabad and Pratapgarh migrates to work in the brick kilns of Bihar, while the local brick kilns recruit Oriya labor from Nuapada in western Odisha. Jodhpur district receives migrants from other districts of Rajasthan and from other states to work its mines while workers from Jodhpur move hundreds of kilometers to work in cotton ginning mills of Gujarat, or as tractor drivers to other parts of the country. Commuting between the rural to urban is a trend growing stronger by the day. It would not be an exaggeration to say that economic growth in India today rests on the rising mobility of labor. New India has also perfected the model that thrives on keeping the rural masses parked in the villages or the sub-urban peripheries, as reservoirs of labor.

The work sectors employing migrants are mostly a part of the unorganized economy. The rapidly growing construction sector is known to be the largest employer with 40 million migrants. This is followed by employment as domestic work (20 million), employment in textile industries (11 million), brick-kilns (10 million), transportation, mines and quarries and agriculture[1]. Within these sectors, seasonal migrants are mostly employed to do bottom-end tasks, which entail back-breaking labour and high risks; tasks which the local labour would not be willing to undertake.

Notably, social kinship networks and private labor contractors play a pivotal role in shaping migrant labor markets – migrants show clear trends in movement across regions – people from a region move to work at a specific destination, at times far away from the source and defying comprehension. It is striking that most plumbers found in urban India come from select districts of coastal Odisha, in and around Kendrapada. Similarly, most of the master firemen fuelling India’s brick-kilns originate from three adjoining districts of Uttar Pradesh – Allahabad, Pratapgarh, and Kausambi. And, all the youth manning the unbranded ice-cream lorries across India named Sawariya, Mewar etc. come from select blocks of Rajsamand and Chittaurgarh in Rajasthan. These are telling examples of social networks in migration and how they shape migrant labor markets. However, known for providing a safety net and access to job opportunities, these informal networks, are also known to perpetuate caste and gender relations and often limit the mobility of workers up the value chain.

Not all migrants face the same set of vulnerabilities. Migration of semi-permanent or long-term circular migrants and seasonal or short-term migrants needs more attention, because seasonal migrants are engaged as casual labour and face difficulties both in establishing and claiming their entitlements. Seasonal or short-duration migrants are more vulnerable and more likely to come from the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, and more likely to have lower levels of education, skills, and lower asset ownership than other migrants. NSS statistics show that 54 per cent of short-term migrants fall in the bottom two MPCE quintiles. Notably, incidence of temporary, circular movement is found to be more dominant among women migrant workers. Child migrants, though undercounted, form a significant part of seasonal migrants either migrating alone or with parents. A study by Human Rights Watch finds that bonded child laborers are employed in large numbers to work in brick-kilns, stone quarries, carpet-weaving, bidi rolling etc.

**Of Migrant Lives**

Most workers join the urban labor markets at an age as young as 13–14 years. As dropouts from school, they lack both education and skills and are forced to undertake manual labour at whatever meager wages it is offered. Lack of skills exacerbates their vulnerabilities, because they are highly replaceable and are found to be frequently rotated across work sites and sectors. The urban labour markets treat them with opportunistic indifference extracting hard labour but denying basic welfare entitlements and often cheating them of hard earned wages. Scattered, ill-informed and uneducated migrants frequently become victims of poor labour practices, unfair wage deduction, and fraudulence. They have little recourse to legal action or redress.

An early departure from the village also means that migrant youth lack all verifiable proof of their identity. The inability to establish one’s identity becomes a cause of frequent harassment by civic authorities and police in the cities. Migrants become easy suspects in case of theft or other crimes. When spoken to, identity related harassment is the most commonly voiced concerns by migrants.

In cities, migrants do not have access to reasonably priced, good quality public facilities for food, health, transportation, and financial services. They are also known for paying much more than the local population for basic services. For lack of access to subsidized ration, expenses on food account for majority of the living costs (40 per cent). In such a scenario, migrants often have inadequate nutritional intake, which affects their ability to work and earn a livelihood in a sustainable manner.

Long working hours, poor living and working conditions and inadequate nutrition often become breeding grounds for health problems. Migrants are highly susceptible to tuberculosis, HIV, and a range of occupational health hazards arising from the risky jobs they enter into. Healthcare seeking behavior is also highly compromised and limited to the informal health service providers who are easily accessible but unqualified, thereby exacerbating their vulnerabilities further.

Women and child migrants form an even more vulnerable group within this community facing serious lack of security at the destination areas. Women in particular face high risks of trafficking and various forms of exploitation, including forced prostitution. Because of the real estate prices in the cities and low disposable incomes, migrants are compelled to live in sub-human conditions on work sites, pavements, filthy, and congested slums, which lack basic amenities and sanitation facilities. This gives rise to issues such as harassment and abuse by the police and local land mafia, increased vulnerability of women and children and risks to health and well-being. For households that migrate with children, access to good quality education also becomes a significant challenge. As per an estimate, the number of children out of school because of seasonal migration is six million, almost 60 per cent of the total number of children out of school. The fall-out of this exclusion is thus inter-generational, condemning the children to a similar future as their disadvantaged parents [Editor’s Note: See Rosaria-Centrone & Murphy’s papers on migrant children’s education in this issue.]

The root of this exclusion lies in the way economic relations are increasingly structured in the larger economy – relations that incentivize informalization and casualization of labour. Several recent studies analyzing rural livelihoods report that more and more rural households are dependent on wage labor. With a growing trend in capitalistic farming and inadequate investment in agricultural inputs and technology, farming is no more a sustainable or remunerative option. Local livelihood opportunities are scarce, leaving people with no option but to move out of villages.

**Of the State and Civil Society Response**

Despite the compelling numbers that underlie this phenomenon and a blatant abuse of human rights, the policies of the Indian state have failed to provide any form of legal or social protection to this vulnerable population. Owing to the highly mobile nature of their employment, migrant workers get excluded from the scope of both urban and rural policy design. This has a significant impact on their access to public amenities and welfare schemes. A large number of migrants are unable to cast their vote and participate in elections because they are highly mobile and are not entitled to vote outside their place of origin. Serious citizenship issues arise as the state machinery does not allow a portability of basic entitlements and workers lose access to state subsidies for the poor, as they move.

Further, most civil society initiatives, caught in the artificial separation of “rural” and “urban geographies and populations miss out on the millions of people, who are in between and can be termed as neither rural nor urban.

In the past few years, there have been certain dedicated attempts to understand the vulnerabilities and concerns of seasonal migrants in India and design solutions and services for migrants in India; focused interventions that would make migration a more secure and dignified experience. These interventions, notably, have been led by civil society organizations working on the increasing casualization and informalization of labour. Aajeevika Bureau, a non-government, public service organization, for instance, has been working in western India reaching out to migrants with the help of targeted livelihood services helping them reduce the vagaries associated with the movement and leverage migration as an opportunity. There are notable interventions on education of migrant’s children, access to health care, legal aid, decent employment opportunities, and more. Given the magnitude, there is a need for a much bigger, stronger, and a concerted policy response, which acknowledges migration as a growing reality in rural livelihoods and makes this rural-urban shift more humane.

**HEALTH EQUITY FOR INTERNAL MIGRANT LABOURERS IN INDIA:**

**AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Ajoke Basirat Akinola, Anil Kumar Indira Krishna, Satish Kumar Chetlapalli

In the developing countries, internal migrationis a survival strategy for many labourers in search of a better livelihood and opportunities. It is inevitable that many of them will leave their home towns and villages in the coming years, and that the future will see an increase in the number of migrant labourers in developing countries such as India. Migrant workers face unique health problems and it is important for the health system to prepare itself to face these. In this context, the system will need to address certain key ethical issues. There is plenty of published literature on international migration and its ethical aspects. However, there is a scarcity of information on ethical issues relating to internal migration. This article examines these issues in the context of India. It addresses the issues of equity, non-discrimination, the provision of culturally competent care to migrants, allocation of scarce resources, and achieving a balance between benefits and risks for migrants. Our analysis should be considered while planning any healthcare intervention for internal migrant workers in all developing countries.

**SITUATION OF INTERNAL MIGRANT LABOURERS IN INDIA**

Historically and culturally, internal migration as a coping strategy for earning a livelihood has been a pronounced trend in the entire world. There is ample evidence of both voluntary and forced migration, which may result from cultural and religious persecution, natural disasters, developmental projects such as dams, a failed monsoon and the consequent famine, and the search for better livelihood options (1). Poverty and indebtedness are the most important factors that lead to migration. Workers migrating within a country usually move from less developed regions to more developed ones. In India, there are significant inequities in the development of the various states, with states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra having attained a higher level of development than Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh (2). Thus people move from the underdeveloped to the developed states. The total number of migrants as per the census of 1971 was 167 million. This rose to 213 million in 1981, 232 million in 1991 and 315 million in 2001. The figure was revised to about 400 million in 2004-5 (3).

Some scholars argue that the actual number has been grossly underestimated. They claim that the census and National Sample Surveys do not capture short-term migration, rural–rural migration, and women's migration for non-marital reasons and trafficking, all of which contribute significantly to migration (4). The insufficiency of data on internal migration is typical of most developing countries and does not allow one to appreciate the true magnitude of the issue. Migrant labourers, who account for roughly one-third of India's population, form a special group as far as the delivery of healthcare is concerned. Internal migrants the world over remain on the fringes of society. They work long hours, are paid low wages and work in unsafe environments, besides the other ills of social isolation and poor access to basic services, such as education, water, sanitation and health (5). This paper focuses mainly on unskilled and semi-skilled migrant labourers who migrate from low-income states to higher-income states in India.

**Social determinants of health among migrant labourers**

As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, the main reasons for internal migration in India are poverty and indebtedness. Labourers migrate from the underdeveloped states to the more developed ones to find work to fight poverty and indebtedness. Poverty is a universal determinant of health among most migrant workers, strongly influencing their health status. It is associated with malnutrition, a poor overall health status, poor access to preventive and curative health services, and higher mortality and morbidity rates (5). This determinant remains unchanged despite the migrant workers' relocation to greener pastures. Sometimes, the reason for migration is dire impoverishment due to a natural disaster, floods or famine. Once again, such migration perpetuates the cycle of poverty and ill health. Migration due to trafficking or internal displacement due to political unrest also lead to the disruption of most determinants of health (6).

Cultural beliefs and practices are an important determinant of health among these populations. One of the cultural practices which have a direct impact on health is open-air defecation. As this practice is common in the rural areas of India, most rural migrants moving to crowded urban areas find it culturally unacceptable to use toilets. This naturally creates a significant problem of sanitation in the densely populated settlements in which they live. Another important determinant of health is the language. India is home to diverse cultures and languages, and when people from one region migrate to another, language becomes an important barrier to communication. This complicates the delivery of effective healthcare services.

**Unique health problems of migrant labourers**

As may be inferred from the preceding paragraphs, the labourers' migrant status, their deprivation in terms of the social determinants of health and their poverty put them in a precarious position that predisposes them to unique health problems.

**Spread of communicable diseases**

Each state has a unique epidemiological profile of communicable diseases. For example, Orissa is hyper-endemic to malaria. When labourers from Orissa migrate to some other state, such as Kerala, where the potential vector is available but the disease is not present, they introduce the disease in the state. Several new cases of malaria have been reported in regions where the disease was absent, and this has been attributed largely to migration (7). While responding to outbreaks of diseases, the public health system often focuses on diseases which are endemic in the region. When an outbreak is caused by the importation of the disease-causing agent by migrant workers, the health system is unable to respond promptly because it is not prepared for this situation. Kerala, one of the most developed states in India with respect to health indicators, had nearly eliminated malaria. However, there has been a resurgence of malaria in the state due to a growing influx of migrant labourers from various malaria-endemic parts of the country. The Kerala health system has been suddenly faced with an increased demand for anti-malarial drugs, but the supply is not adequate to meet the need. This is a typical example of how communicable diseases can become a problem in the wake of migration.

**Reproductive and child health**

Many labourers who migrate with their families are in the reproductive age group. Several of them become pregnant and have their deliveries in the area to which they have migrated. These pregnant women, mothers who have just had babies and newborn babies fall outside the safety net of the reproductive and child health services of the state. It has been reported that they are also unable to avail themselves of the maternity cash benefit scheme for institutional deliveries, the Janani Suraksha Yojna, due to insufficient documentary evidence of their residential status (8, 9).

**Violence against women**

In the past, women used to migrate along with their husbands to help them with the housework while they eked out a living. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women who migrate independently in search of work (10). Women form more than half of the interstate migrant workforce. Ninety-two per cent of the 20 million domestic workers in the country are women and children, and 20% of these females are under 14 years of age (10). Women constitute more than one-third of the labour in the construction industry. Female migrant labourers face several important gender-based problems, including gender-based discrimination at work and violence. Several women are subjected to physical, verbal and sexual abuse at the workplace and their place of residence. Apart from this, emerging research shows that intimate partner violence is higher among migrant women than other women. Given the lack of a supportive environment and social system, this can have a significant impact on the physical and mental health of these women (11).

**Child labour**

Children who migrate along with their families do not get adequate opportunities for education. As a result of this, along with the poverty in which the migrants live, the children are pushed into child labour. They are often engaged in occupations which are as dangerous as those in which the adults are engaged. Thus, the children are exposed to health problems and occupational hazards similar to those faced by the adults. This hampers the overall growth and development of the child. It also contributes to increased childhood morbidity and mortality (12).

**Adaptation, adjustment and psychosocial disorders**

Migrant labourers do not have social capital and social support structures in the place to which they have migrated. They uproot themselves from their native place and move to a totally new environment, and initially, they face problems adjusting to the new sociocultural milieu. This gives rise to a good deal of psychological distress. The absence of strong social support perpetuates the psychosocial distress and has an adverse effect on the migrant labourers' mental health (13).

**Occupational diseases**

Migrant labourers are usually employed in the 3-D jobs – dangerous, dirty and degrading. These are jobs which the local population of the developed state would not take up and hence, labour is brought in from outside the state for the same wages and sometimes for less (same or less than what?). These jobs are invariably associated with more occupational hazards than other jobs. Migrant labourers working on construction sites commonly suffer from falls, injuries caused by machines, amputations and crush injuries (14). Though the employers are required to provide personal protection equipment as per the labour laws, these laws are not heeded (15).

Key ethical principles of healthcare delivery to migrant labourers

**Equity and avoiding disparities**

Migrant labourers are at a significant disadvantage in the community into which they have migrated. They are in unfamiliar territory amidst strangers. They are also not familiar with the language and culture of the new place. In addition, they are discriminated against by the members of society, who feel that they "belong to another culture". As a result of these factors, migrant labourers may be deprived of access to healthcare facilities and services. There is, therefore, an urgent need to prevent discrimination on the basis of these disparities (16).

Ensuring health as a human right

According to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the "highest attainable form of health and well-being" has been described as a basic human right under the economic, cultural and social rights (17). The government is to ensure that all its citizens, irrespective of their state of origin or residence, enjoy the full realisation of this right. Since economic, cultural and social rights are not justiciable in the "here and now" manner, their realisation often remains a mirage. However, the realisation of favourable social determinants of health and access to healthcare services as basic human rights is an important ethical principle (13).

**Efforts to mitigate negative impacts**

While planning health services for migrant labourers, it is important not only to provide curative services, but also to create circumstances under which the negative health impacts of migration may be mitigated. For example, when there is an outbreak of a water-borne disease in a migrant construction colony, it is important not only to provide treatment to the patients and a proper water supply and sanitary and hygienic conditions; it is also important to make sure that the services are rendered in a culturally acceptable manner, and in a way that the migrant labourers can access and use. The availability of a healthcare provider who speaks the same language as the migrant labourers or of translators in the health system can go a long way in improving the health-seeking behaviour of the migrant labourers.

**Ethical issues in delivery of healthcare to migrant labourers**

**Balance of risks and benefits**

Migrant labourers are employed in jobs which the local people prefer to shun (18). An analysis shows that migrant workers most often take up jobs in the construction industry, with its inherent risks of accidents, injuries, crushes and falls; commercial sex work, associated with a high risk of sexually transmitted diseases; and brick kilns, in which they face the risk of burn injuries. Two population groups competefor the healthcare services in a state – the local population and the migrant population. It is evident that the health risks are much higher among the migrant population than the other group and that the relative benefits they get from the health system are limited. On the other hand, the local population faces relatively lower risks and the benefits it enjoys are relatively higher. Sometimes, there is a distinct disregard for the moral agency of migrant workers as they are considered biological non-citizens. This form of discrimination calls the ethics of healthcare provision into question. A case study from a Chinese city that illustrates such discrimination may be found in Box 1. There is a need to assess the situation and incorporate measures to ensure a balance between risks and benefits. The following steps can be useful in establishing this balance:

Inclusive planning of health service delivery in urban areas to ensure that the care of migrant workers is given special emphasis. The allocation of a dedicated budget for the welfare of migrant labourers. The inclusion of an occupational health unit at the primary care level to cater to the needs of the migrant workforce

Dedicated outreach clinical services for migrant labourers at their worksites

The extension of routine primary care services, such as antenatal care, immunisation, post-natal care and treatment for minor ailments, to migrant labourers through dedicated outreach programmes.

**Allocation of scarce health resources**

Health resources are scarce in developing countries such as India and there is intense competition for the resources available. World Bank reports state that India has less than 1 hospital bed per 1000 population and the doctor-to-population ratio is close to 1:1800 (20). Health is largely a state subject and the budget allocated to it comes mainly from the state revenue. Given the scarcity of healthcare resources in the states, there is intense competition between the local residents and interstate migrants. One may ask which of the two should receive the benefits of the scarce resources. The ethical issues involved in the allocation of resources are as follows.

**Allocation of resources in the states**

Most interstate migration is from low-resource states to high-resource states. The amount of funds allotted by the National Rural Health Mission and the Centre to the low-resource states is proportionately greater than that allotted to the high-resource states.

**Higher demand for resources in states with lower allocation**

Due to the large-scale influx of migrant labourers, and the poverty, mixed epidemiological patterns of diseases (the migrants bring different and unique illnesses into the state) and high exposure to occupational hazards that accompany this, the high-resource states have a heavy burden of morbidity. Therefore, there may be a greater need to allocate resources to these states to look after the needs of the migrant labourers.

**Need-based versus entitlement-based allocation**

The question arises as to whether the resources of a state should be allocated on the basis of the needs of the population or on the basis of entitlements. Being the tax-payers, the local residents are rightfully entitled to the resources. However, the needs of the migrant population are greater. This is the subject of yet another significant debate on the justice aspect of the allocation of resources.

One can apply Normal Daniels' framework of accountability for reasonableness to deliberate on this issue. The criterion of fairness can be met by taking four important steps – making reasonable decisions, ensuring that the decisions are transparent, seeing to it that they are subject to appeals and revisions, and finally, having a mechanism to enforce them (21). In the case of healthcare for migrant workers, evidence of the higher burden of health problems among this population should be collected and compiled. A baseline health survey of these labourers should be conducted to get a clear idea of their needs. This should be used as evidence to support the decision taken to allocate resources to migrant labourers. The next most important criterion is to publicise that decision. All the relevant stakeholders, including representatives of the local community and migrants, should know about and understand the decision on the allocation of resources. The decision should be open to discussion, appeals and revision. Greater allocation of resources should be allowed on a case-to-case basis, ie when the circumstances warrant it. Finally, the decision should be implemented and enforced.

Analysis of public health, human rights and ethical considerations

The provision of healthcare to migrant workers in India must take three important considerations into account. These are the public health, human rights and ethical considerations. The differences in the epidemiology of diseases in this population need to be taken seriously and warrant attention from a public health perspective. This paper has highlighted the various social determinants of health among migrant labourers and how these need to be addressed to protect the health of this population group. As for the consideration of human rights, health has been described as a basic human right. Therefore, the provision of good healthcare services should be seen as a matter of the fulfilment of a human right. There has been much discussion on the fact that migrants are often considered biological non-citizens and their human rights are neglected. We should make continued efforts to address this matter and measures must be implemented at the national and international levels to remedy the situation. Finally, from an ethical perspective, the effective allotment of scarce resources is of great importance, as is the achievement of equity in services for marginalised migrant workers. These three considerations have to be given equal importance while addressing the healthcare challenges arising from the increasing interstate migration in the country.

Initiatives for equitable delivery of healthcare to migrant workers

**The Tamil Nadu story (19)**

In January 2013, NGOs, labour unions and activists held a seminar to pass a resolution to urge the government of Tamil Nadu to organise dedicated child welfare services for the children of migrant labourers. The seminar was attended by a member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. It pushed the government to pass a draft action plan on migrant child labour that had been framed previously. The key recommendations of the seminar were:

* To ensure the registration of all migrant labourers and issue temporary public distribution system (PDS) cards for subsidised food supplies
* To ensure the right to education for all migrant children
* To set up crèches for children below three years of age at the migrants' worksites
* To set up exclusive anganwadi centres (under the Integrated Child Development Scheme) for the children of migrant workers in the districts of Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur, which see the maximum influx of migrant workers
* To form civil society monitoring groups for migrant welfare.

The outcome of the initiative is yet to be understood in detail as it has been in operation for a short period of time. But it would be very useful to understand the outcomes as it can direct future course of action in this domain.

**The Kerala story**

The Kerala government has taken several steps to deal with the challenges arising from the influx of migrant labourers. The most important among these are the introduction of a welfare programme for migrant workers. Under the programme, these labourers receive higher welfare benefits than before, assistance for medical care, assistance in the event of accidents leading to death and educational assistance for their children. The government has announced a few monetary packages according to the categories under the welfare programme. The Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act of 1979 and the rules framed under it are being enforced in the state. The labour minister of the state and the Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Fund Board, through which the welfare scheme is being implemented, are working together. In return, the migrant labourers are expected to annually remit a minimal amount to the welfare fund by way of a contribution. The Labour Commissioner and the representatives of various trade unions have set up an advisory committee for the purpose of monitoring the programme. These steps are commendable and may serve as a model for other states to follow suit.

**Construction workers' union in Rajasthan**

Aajeevika Bureau is a local NGO in Rajasthan working towards the health and welfare of migrant construction laborers. The International Organization for Migration reports that Aajeevika has graduated from a small, local organization, established in 2005, to one that runs in several areas that are the source and destination of migrant workers in western India. Jaipur and some places in Gujarat are among the places that have been identified as areas from which there is an especially high quantum of migration. Through a network of mini-centers, which the migrant workers can enter freely, Aajeevika Bureau offers them registration, a photo ID, training in skills, job placement, legal aid, financial services and opportunities for collectivization. Aajeevika Bureau works both in source and destination regions, in the areas of construction, head-loading and rickshaw-pulling. By formation of effective social networks of migrant workers, Aajeevika Bureau has helped to establish spatial connection and contacts between migrants and also between migrants and their families. The organization is growing day by day, as can be seen by the fact that two registered trade unions have emerged as a result of its activities. Aajeevika Bureau reported that in Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan alone there were more than 200,000 undocumented migrant workers. The major successes achieved by 2010 were the registration of migrant construction workers and the issuance of photo IDs to them; mediation of disputes between the construction workers and their contractors, through fair documentation and dialogue; provision of assistance for placement in jobs in Jaipur; and large-scale enrolment of construction workers in state-run social security schemes for construction workers.

**CONCLUSION**

With the increasing quantum of migration within the country, the problem of providing effective healthcare services to migrant workers will assume greater proportions over the years. To avoid this scenario, we must make sure that our policies and programmes incorporate migrant health. This is important not only for the ethical reasons discussed above, but also because if health is to be realised as a human right, it has to reach all individuals in the country. The ongoing discussions about universal health access in the country should take the issue of the healthcare of migrant workers into account. For example, urban health plans should feature special interventions for migrant workers.

The issues discussed in this paper are applicable not only to India, but to all developing countries, in which internal migration is bound to be a survival option.

**2.ENVIRONMENT**

**THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS OF**

**POPE FRANCIS’S CLIMATE CHANGE ENCYCLICAL**

Pope Francis’s groundbreaking encyclical letter on care for creation made its anticipated debut Thursday morning, and once again, the Bishop of Rome has delivered a masterpiece. The document will play a key role in United Nations Paris Climate Change Conference this November and will be a pivotal point of debate as the 2016 presidential campaign heats up here at home. So what exactly does the pope address in this letter? Here are the top five points in what Francis describes as a “dialogue with all people about our common home.”

Climate change is real, and it’s getting worse. Though some politicians in the U.S. still argue about the reality of the climate change, Pope Francis doesn’t mince words: “Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day,” he says. “If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us.”

Human beings are a major contributor to climate change. While many agree that climate change is real, some believe that human beings don’t contribute to it. The science suggests otherwise, and Pope Francis—a trained chemist—says human beings do have an effect on the Earth: “We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will.”

Climate change disproportionately affects the poor. Climate change’s worst impact, Pope Francis says, “will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry.” This environmental inequality creates a strange economic phenomenon: Poor countries are often financially indebted to rich countries. The world has what Pope Francis calls a “social debt towards the poor … because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

We can and must make things better. Some of those who study climate change believe this process to be irreversible, too far gone. Nevertheless, Francis—whose first major letter was entitled Joy of the Gospel—says he doesn’t believe we should be robbed of hope. “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start”

Individuals can help, but politicians must lead the charge. Francis argues that personal responsibility is an important step toward reversing climate change, but that political and structural transformations are needed for lasting change. “Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies.”

Some politicians argue that Pope Francis and the Catholic Church should stay out of climate change debates and “leave science to the scientists.” But Francis and the church know that protecting creation is first and foremost a moral and religious issue. It’s a response to God’s ancient request that we preserve, protect, and sustain creation. Francis has said before that he hopes today’s politicians will take this responsibility to heart as they address one of the most important issues of our times: “I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, and the lives of the poor!”

**3. SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

*Govt clears new policy for skill development and entrepreneurship*

*Team YS | July 03, 2015 at 10:29 am*

Indian government said that it has approved the first integrated national policy for developing skills and promoting entrepreneurship at a large scale with speed and quality. “The policy aims to align supply with demand, bridging existing skill gaps, promoting industry engagement, operationalise a quality assurance framework, leveraging technology and promoting apprenticeship to tackle the identified issues,” Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters in New Delhi.

The government has also approved common norms for Skill Development Schemes being implemented by the Centre as well as an institutional framework for the National Skill Development Mission. The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 acknowledges the need for an effective roadmap for promotion of entrepreneurship as the key to a successful skills strategy.

The vision of the policy is to create an ecosystem of empowerment by skilling on a large scale at speed with high standards and to promote a culture of innovation-based entrepreneurship which can generate wealth and employment so as to ensure sustainable livelihoods for all citizens. The Policy has four thrust areas, an official statement said, adding that it addresses key obstacles to skilling, including low aspirational value, lack of integration with formal education, lack of focus on outcomes, low quality of training infrastructure and trainers.

Further, it said the policy seeks to align supply and demand for skills by bridging existing skill gaps, promoting industry engagement, operationalising a quality assurance framework, leverage technology and promoting greater opportunities for apprenticeship training. “Equity is also a focus of the Policy, which targets skilling opportunities for socially/geographically marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Skill development and entrepreneurship programmes for women are a specific focus of the Policy,” it added.

In the entrepreneurship domain, the policy seeks to educate and equip potential entrepreneurs, both within and outside the formal education system. It also seeks to connect entrepreneurs to mentors, incubators and credit markets, foster innovation and entrepreneurial culture, improve ease of doing business and promote a focus on social entrepreneurship.

Jaitely said that last week the Prime Minister launched programme on smart cities, on Wednesday on Digital India and the government has also similar plans for ‘Skilling India’.

**Teaching the poor to behave**

**Published: June 30, 2015 02:20 IST | Updated: June 30, 2015 02:42 IST June 30, 2015**

By shifting the burden of poverty alleviation from the state onto the poor themselves, behavioural economists are ignoring the structural causes of poverty. They are also erasing the behaviour of the owners of capital from the poverty debate

The World Bank’s World Development Report (WDR) 2014 was about ‘Risk and Opportunity’. The 2013 WDR is simply named ‘Jobs’. The 2012 WDR is titled ‘Gender Equality and Development’.

Other WDR themes in the recent past include ‘Agriculture for Development’ (2008), ‘Equity and Development’ (2006), and ‘Building Institutions for Markets’ (2002). They all have an overt economic dimension. Naturally — for it’s a bank, after all. But the World Bank’s 2015 WDR is titled ‘Mind, Society and Behaviour’. That’s right. Now, what would a bank — or, if you prefer, a multilateral development finance institution — want with mind, society and behaviour?

There is a two-word answer to this question: behavioral economics. In its 2015 WDR, the World Bank makes a strong pitch to governments for applying behavioral economics to development policy.

As the report notes in its opening chapter, “The analytical foundations of public policy have traditionally come from standard economic theory.” Standard economic theory assumes that individuals are rational economic agents acting in their best self-interest.

But in the real world, people often behave irrationally, and not always in their own best economic interest. For instance, they might splurge when they could save, or give excessive weight to the immediate present as opposed to the distant future.

**Is poverty a mindset?**

Behavioural economics uses insights from psychology, anthropology, sociology and the cognitive sciences to come up with more realistic models of how people think and make decisions. Where these decisions tend to be flawed from an economic point of view, governments can intervene with policies aimed at ‘nudging’ the targeted citizens towards the right decision.

All this seems fairly unobjectionable. However, things change when behavioural economists focus their attention exclusively on the behaviour of the poor. Till date, there is no evidence that monitoring and ‘nudging’ the behaviour of the world’s poor is a better route to alleviate poverty than, say, monitoring and ‘nudging’ the behaviour of the financial elite. Surely the latter cannot be deemed as altogether rational economic agents — not after the 2008 crisis?

The second assumption of behavioural economics — presented as a new ‘finding’ based on research, and regurgitated wholesale by the 2015 WDR — is that the poor are less intelligent than the rich. It is an obnoxious idea, and also politically incorrect. Of course, this is not stated in as many words.

The correct way to say it, then, is to state that “the context of poverty” depletes a person’s “bandwidth” — the mental resources necessary to think properly — as a result of which he or she is, well, a poor decision-maker, especially compared to those who are not in “the context of poverty”, such as the rich and the middle classes.

Lest anyone misunderstand, the authors of the report hasten to add that it’s not just the poor but anyone — even the wealthy — who, when placed in a “context” of poverty, would make wrong decisions. (For the record, it must be noted that the poor are — all else being equal — more likely to be in “the context of poverty” than the rich.)

To support these assumptions, a number of research studies are trotted out. One such study, mentioned in the report, was conducted on Indian sugarcane farmers, who typically receive their income once a year, at the time of harvest.

It was found that the farmers’ IQ was ten points lower before they received their harvest income than afterward (when they were flush with cash and were comparatively richer). So ideally, they should not take major financial decisions before harvest time. Such an insight into how poverty affects behaviour could have policy implications for, say, cash transfers — which can be timed, or made conditional, on displaying certain behaviours pre-determined by the state as ‘rational’.

The report states in all earnestness that poverty “shapes mindsets”. From here, it is a hop, skip, and jump to holding, as the leading behavioural economists of the day do, that the poor are poor because their poverty prevents them from thinking and acting in ways that can take them out of poverty.

Thus the focus as well as the burden/responsibility of poverty-alleviation would shift from the state — from macroeconomic policy, from having to provide employment, health and education — to changing the behaviour of the poor. The structural causes of poverty — rising inequality and unemployment — as well as the behaviour of the owners of capital are evicted from the poverty debate, and no longer need be the focus of public policy.

**Behavioural economics**

In this context, it might be pertinent to note that the rise of behavioural economics as a discipline parallels the rise of neo liberalism, starting from the 1980s and rapidly gaining respectability and funding from the 1990s. All the leading lights of the field such as Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky, Robert Shiller, Senthil Mullainathan, Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein made their mark in this period, and are heavily referenced in this report.

A fundamental principle of neoliberal thought is to find market-led solutions to socio-economic problems. No matter that poverty is often a symptom of market failure. Free market ideologues attribute poverty and all socio-economic ills to market distortions caused by state interference. The economists who get to shape the World Bank’s WDRs are chosen for their ability to toe this line.

On the odd occasion that the lead author of a WDR made a bid for intellectual independence, he had to make an untimely exit. For the 2000-01 WDR, titled ‘Attacking Poverty’, the original draft prepared by the distinguished development economist Ravi Kanbur — incidentally brought in by Joseph Stiglitz — spoke of the need to build effective safety nets for the poor before the introduction of free market reforms.

Both Mr. Kanbur and Mr. Stiglitz were out of the World Bank before the report was. As the economist Robert Wade points out in an essay on this episode, titled ‘Showdown at the World Bank’, the version eventually published no longer spoke of creating prior safety nets for the poor. It instead called for putting them in place “simultaneously with labour-shedding reforms”.

The point of this detour into WDR history is that — to borrow the jargon of behavioural economics — the overarching necessity to conform to free market ideology may be said to impose a ‘cognitive tax’ on World Bank economists, as a result of which their ‘mental models’ do not permit the ‘framing’ of poverty in ways that may contradict this ideology.

The Keynesian formula of safety nets from the free market may well be permanently banished from the policy agenda. But that still leaves unresolved the problem of how to manage the social and political consequences of the widening income gap between the 1 per cent and the 99 per cent. This is critical because growing discontent could lead to political instability. After all, in order for markets to function, and commodities to flow freely and predictably, the excluded masses must be taught to behave. This is where behavioural economics comes in.

**Action and behaviour**

In order to change the behaviour of the poor, one must first understand it. It is this understanding that behavioural economics promises to codify into knowledge. To be sure, the WDR readily acknowledges that even the rich, the economists, and the World Bank staff themselves, might be subject to cognitive biases.

But nowhere in its 230-odd pages does the report present an instance, or even a hypothetical example, of a behavioural economics-inspired policy intervention whose target is, say, a class of billionaire investors, despite the fact that today, compared to the poor, this is a group that wields far more influence, per capita, on a nation’s economic destiny. Changing their behaviour — for instance, manipulating them into deploying their billions on productive rather than speculative investments — could generate more beneficial, and more effective, outcomes than micro-manipulating the financial decisions of a poor peasant.

A major confusion that dogs this report is the conflation of ‘action’ and ‘behaviour’. The term ‘behaviour’ comes with the baggage of the empirical sciences. It is typically used with reference to animals and objects under scientific observation. Behaviours can be studied for patterns. To the extent that human beings are also animals, they can also be said to exhibit behaviours. But what makes them human is precisely their capacity to transcend behaviour patterns — in other words, to act.

The political theorist Hannah Arendt, in The Human Condition, speaks of three kinds of human activity: labour, work and action. Of the three, what distinguishes action is its political nature. When behaviourist economics speaks of poverty as a “cognitive tax”, it writes ‘action’ — the political agency of the poor — out of the equation.

As democratic nation states reorient themselves to being accountable to global financial markets, non-democratic bodies such as the World Trade Organization, and trade agreements such as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and Trade in Services Agreement , they will necessarily become less responsive to the aspirations of their own citizens. With overt repression not always the most felicitous or cost-effective policy option, it has become imperative to find ways and means to ideologically tame the economically excluded. Hence the new focus on the minds and behaviour of the poor.

Behavioural economics, insofar as it is concerned with the behaviour of people in poverty — and it is this stream which dominates this year’s WDR — is simply the latest addition to the neo-liberal toolkit of political management.

**Health costs forcing families into debt**

Early results from an official survey on expenditure on health and education show that people are spending far beyond their means on these requirements.

From January to June last year, the National Sample Survey Office collected data from 66,000 households on their utilisation of, and expenditure on, education and health. The data show the growing dominance of the private sector in health and education.

Over 70 per cent of all people who reported an illness in the 15 days preceding the survey went to a private doctor, clinic or hospital in both rural and urban India. The usage of private facilities further rises with income. The frequency of usage of public and private hospitals has not changed much in rural areas, but in urban areas, the usage of private hospitals grew by six percentage points over the past decade.

Allopathy dominates in both rural and urban areas and across all income groups. This despite the fact that treatment in a private hospital costs four times as much as it does in a public hospital on an average, with the treatment of cancer and cardiovascular diseases proving to be most expensive.

As a result, hospitalisation proves well beyond the means of most; it can cost a person in the poorest 20 per cent of the country over 15 times their usual monthly expenditure. Even among the richest 20 per cent, hospitalisation tends to cost over five times the person’s monthly expenditure.

Yet 85 per cent of the people have no health expenditure support, either from a government scheme or through an employer or private insurance. As a result, over two of three households dip into their savings to pay for hospitalisation, and another 20 per cent have to borrow money.

Boys are taken to doctors more frequently than girls in childhood. In the reproductive age, women are hospitalised more frequently than men.

**Education**

When it comes to education, the public sector still dominates from primary to higher secondary schools, while the private sector dominates when it comes to diploma, graduation and above.

At all levels, a household’s expenditure on education has doubled since 2007-08.

Families spend more on education of boys than girls, and far more in urban than in rural areas. In urban areas, the average expenditure ranges from Rs. 10,000 a year for primary education to Rs. 23,000 a year for a diploma course. In urban areas, education in private institutions costs five times as much as in public schools.

**PUTTING OUT THE WEST ASIAN FIRE**

July 8, 2015

Narendra Modi’s visit to the five Central Asian States presents an excellent opportunity for India to nurture peace in a region being swept by radical extremist winds.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s eight-day visit to the five Central Asian States — Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan — is taking place at the most opportune juncture, for Mr. Modi has indicated that he proposes to focus on the radical Islamist threat to the region. Given the kind of extremist winds sweeping across the region, the Muslim populations of these states face uncertain times. States such as Tajikistan are especially vulnerable, as many from the ranks of their security agencies are beginning to join the Islamic State (IS).

The threats that these states face from radical Islamist elements are, indeed, real. At the same time, it is also significant that the leadership of these Central Asian States should look to India to provide them with answers on how to insulate their Muslim populations from these kinds of threats. India’s success, to date, in insulating its own Muslim population from such radicalism has gained wide acceptance, even as the so-called ‘counter radicalisation’ programmes followed in the West are proving to be a failure.

**Showcasing strengths**

This should prove to be an excellent opportunity for India to showcase its strengths, while extending a hand of friendship to a bloc of countries that have consistently sided with it over the years. India also needs as many allies as possible at this time, to ward off the potential challenge posed by the widening embrace of radical Islam. As it is, Afghanistan, a country in which India had invested heavily for an entire decade (employing the ‘soft power’ of developmental assistance), is on the verge of falling into the Taliban-IS net.

Pakistan already poses many problems for India. The latest danger, however, is that it demonstrates an intrinsic inability to withstand the forces of radical Islam. Coming on top of a pronounced state weakness to take appropriate decisions even where it confronts problems of a grave magnitude, Pakistan cannot be expected to act as a buffer when it comes to checking an irredentist challenge from West Asia. Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to engage in ‘perilous risk taking’, and a ‘Don Quixotic type tilt’ at imaginary windmills (India), instead of taking precautions not to be consumed by the ever-widening sectarian fire.

As Mr. Modi travels through Central Asia, he also needs to think about what is taking place further to the West. West Asia is passing through one of the most turbulent phases in its history, and it needs to figure far more prominently in India’s foreign policy priorities. Reflection would reveal that there is a grave challenge to India of a new and specific kind from this region. India is, however, clearly out of the loop as far as developments there are concerned.

This is a region with which India has always had the closest of relations. Today, however, India is increasingly seen as a bystander, or worse, an outsider. If Mr. Modi is serious in playing a messianic role, then he should immediately take steps to try and resurrect our relations with West Asia. The current turmoil in West Asia impacts India in various ways. First, the post-Arab Spring fracturing of West Asian States into ethnic and sectarian fiefs has geo-political and geo-strategic implications. Second, India is marginalised from a region from which it obtains 70 per cent of its oil — this has economic implications. Third, the region is home to around 7 million Indians, and the region’s Foreign Exchange remittances add substantially to India’s Foreign Exchange Reserves. Also, less apparent, but possibly more critical, is that as a country with one of the largest Muslim population in the world, India cannot be oblivious to the fact that it could be infected by the same virus sweeping across West Asia, if radical extremist fires are not doused soon.

As religious wars destroy Syria and Iraq, Libya gets increasingly drawn into the vortex of the IS, chaos takes place in Yemen, and epic struggles take place between Shiite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia, India must not remain on the sidelines, as it has been a factor in the politics and history of countries in West Asia for a long time. With many states currently having to deal with a new uber-Wahhabi model of Islam, and with the IS and the latest al-Qaeda offshoots seeking to redraw the contours of West Asia by replacing history with sectarian geography, India must act for its own security and stability.

The international community must conceive of new paradigms of thought and action, and India should play its appointed role in this endeavour. The persistent bombing by the U.S. and allied forces on IS hideouts has proved to be of little avail. The world may be a better place with the killing of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula leader Nasser-al-Wuhayshi, and militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar, but their replacements have already been announced and the ‘struggle’ goes on unchecked. The number of recruits to terrorist outfits has only increased.

Not only is the IS growing rapidly, but its success has also spawned many new al-Qaeda proxies who flaunt different labels. Across West Asia, wars are being fought not only between state armies and non-state outfits like the IS, but increasingly between non-state militias, each backed by various countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the Gulf states.

This shows that the situation is deteriorating dangerously. Bigotry has led to genocide on a fairly extensive scale, with emphasis being on the elimination of religious minorities. This, in turn, is breeding a violent and totalitarian culture, as seen in the past weeks’ events where, following an IS directive, jihadis carried out attacks in Tunisia (on foreign tourists), Kuwait (against Shia Muslims) and France. The IS has also attacked several military check points in Egypt’s North Sinai killing 70 people, possibly one of the biggest militant attacks in Egypt’s modern history.

Instability in West Asia adversely affects India. With the number of militant outfits growing rapidly and a steady increase in the number of recruits to their ranks, all inspired by a belief in reviving Islam’s ‘pristine glory’, India must not live in the hope that Muslims in the country will not fall a victim to such inducements. The West has failed to put out the religious fires burning in West Asia. India previously had an image in West Asia, which was unrivalled by any other power. An attempt should be made to revive this spirit. Mr. Modi must use all the levers available to nurture peace in West Asia — using India’s moral strength, spiritual influence and its current position in the comity of world nations.

**4. CHILD LABOUR**

**Girl child rescued**

With the launch of Operation Muskaan in the district, the police swung into action and rescued an adolescent girl child who was missing in Keeranur and lodged her in a children’s home here on Friday.

The rescued girl belonged to Sanmarga Gurukulam.

Superintendent of Police A. Saravanan advised the police to expedite investigation in other pending cases and rescue missing children. A total of 14 cases had been were registered in connection with children.

Earlier, the SP conducted a workshop on ‘Operation Muskaan’ to police personnel and other department officials and advised them to work as a team to rescue missing children and identify orphaned children.

The police officials in all sub divisions, officials from social welfare, labour welfare, child development departments, assistant public prosecutors, prosecutors and officials from various voluntary organizations Peace Trust took part. A district level committee to monitor Human trafficking in District has been formed by police. Peace Trust represent district NGO’s in the committee.

**58 CHILDREN RESCUED FROM AZADPUR MANDI**

Updated: July 9, 2015 09:10 IST

Around 60 children, aged between 8 and 15 years, working as labourers in North Delhi’s Azadpur Market were rescued early on Wednesday. The children include 18 girls and 42 boys.

They were engaged in selling stolen vegetables and carrying sacks of vegetables, among other chores. The rescue operation was conducted by NGO Prayas.

Project Manager at the Jahangirpuri Home of the NGO, Mr. Mukesh said: “We received a call on July 6 saying that a number of children, mostly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, had been seen working in the Azadpur market. Most of them were forced into labour and even begging. The information came from a former Prayas child who now teaches at the Home.”

“A complaint was lodged with the Child Welfare Committee and the police station at Mahindra Park. The raid began on Wednesday at 5 a.m. The children were then taken to the Jahangirpuri Children Home,” Mr. Mukesh added.

The rescue operation has once again brought to the fore the conditions at Azadpur Market, which has been known as a hub for child traffickers. “Had we gone with a bigger team, we could have rescued more children. There must be around 200-300 children working there,” he added. Amod Kanth, General Secretary of Prayas, said: “This operation brings out the ugly face of Azadpur Market where children from across India become victims of various offences. They are vulnerable to exploitation despite so many laws to protect them.”

The children were produced before the Child Welfare Committee, which has said that they will be counselled and kept at child care homes.

**OPERATION MUSKAAN: 37 KIDS RESCUED**

HYDERABAD: Various departments of Telangana government have joined hands to trace missing children as part of ‘Operation Muskaan,’ a project implemented throughout India following a directive from the Central government.

As part of the month-long mission which started on July 1 in Hyderabad, 37 children were rescued till Thursday. Children found at railway stations and streets were rescued. The CID branch of Telangana Police along with departments of Labour, Revenue, Women and Child Welfare and Hyderabad district administration has launched an operation to trace missing chidren.

As it is a tough task to elicit information from children, counsellors are helping to collect details. The information gathered will be verified with that uploaded in the website trackthemissingchild.gov.in. Parents will be traced and children will be handed over to them.

The rescued children were all from Telangana. Boys were accommodated at Government Children’s Home for Boys at Saidabad and girls were taken to Girls’ Home at Nimboliadda.

In January, a similar initiative titled ‘Operation Smile’ was conducted in the state. Though children were rescued, there were problems in providing accommodation to them. The government homes were not able to provide shelter to all, as the number of children exceeded the available capacity.

Officials claimed there would be no such issues this time. “A meeting of the departments concerned was held before launching ‘Operation Muskaan’. Right now, 147 children are accommodated at the home for boys. We can provide shelter for more,” said A Naveen Kumar, deputy superintendent, Government Children’s Home for Boys.

Another official said that the boys who will be rescued from Saturday will be accommodated at the rescue home run by Women and Child Welfare Department at Kukatpally, which has space to accommodate about 500 people.

**RESCUE MISSION**

* Operation Muskaan to trace missing children
* 37 children rescued in two days from the city
* Month long operation jointly carried out by Police, departments of Labour, Revenue, Women and Child Welfare and district administration
* Rescued Children to be produced before district Child Welfare Committees.
* Accommodation Provided at govt homes

**ANTI TRAFFICKING MONITORING COMMITTEE:**

Peace Trust is nominated as a member of Anti Trafficking Monitoring Committee headed by Mr. Saravanan IPS, Superdt of Police Dindigul. The first meeting was held on the district Ploive Head Quarters.

**SEMINAR ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION-June 5, 2015**

On the eve of World Environment Day on 5 June - a day designated by the UN to raise awareness of environmental issues, Peace Trust, Regional Resource Agency of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organized a seminar on sustainable consumption in Dindigul. Students from various colleges of Dindigul district participated.

The theme of World Environment Day 2015 is 'Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care.' This seminar highlighted the key messages through input session followed by group discussion by the students. One of the key messages is that the well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the natural resources. Evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the environment can sustainably provide. To meet this challenge we need to transition to more efficient and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns. SCP is a pattern of behaviors that aims to reduce negative environmental impacts and help meet human needs by producing more and better with less resources and fewer negative impacts.

Dr.J.Paul Baskar, Chairman, Peace Trust while delivering the presidential address stressed the need to respect the carrying capacity of the environmental resources and to manage natural resources efficiently. He further stated that to ensure prosperity and wellbeing, this yea World Environment Day challenges everyone to re-imagine their dreams for a good life de-linked from excessive consumption.

Mr.Thangapandian Environmentalist recalled the famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." He insisted the students to make one positive change towards a sustainable lifestyle. Mr.B.Walter Kennedy of Peace Trust outlined the environmental problems in Dindigul district which affected the carrying capacity of the environment in Dindigul as the quality of land and water is deteriorated beyond redemption.

The seminar concluded with a pledge to further equip the students knowledge level through successive awareness sessions on environmental issues and the solutions which can be adapted at household level and expand it to the society for achieving the sustainable consumption pattern in Dindigul district.

**WORLD CHILD LABOUR AGAINST DAY-June 12, 2015**

Peace Trust had a meeting on Child Labour against day in Dindigul on June 12, 2015. Our Child rights young volunteers have participated in this programme and shared their ideas. Fifteen young volunteer (Mr. Gautham, Mr. Narayanan, Ms. Suganthi, Ms. Angelin Ranjana Ms. Seetha Lakshmi, Ms. Jeevitha, Ms. Divya, Ms. Dhivya Lakshmi, Ms. Abirami, Ms. Karpagam, Ms. Selvi Fathima Mary, Ms. Jasmine, Mr. Pandi Thuri, Mr. Darwin, Mr. James, Mr. Jerold) spoke in length about the right of Children and the need for providing education to all children. They emphasized total elimination of child labour. Dr. J. Paul Baskar gave his presidential address in the meeting. Ms. Anitha gave the vote of thanks.

**MEETING WITH TAMIL NADU TEACHER EDUCATION UNIVERSITY**

Tamil Nadu Teacher Education University conducted a Meetings of all College Chairman on 26.6.2015 at Madurai.

The meeting discussed about the syndicate opportunity 2 year subject to court order academic council 2 years syllabus. In order to that it was decided to have first year Teaching practice 6 weeks, and in second year - 14 weeks teaching practice.

It was also decided to have co curricular activities such as yoga, computer literacy Performing Arts, Drama, Dance – Skill Training to make India skill development. 20 skills for teacher Education are needed. See website letter writing complaint

For Application, Road Safety, Paper Bag, Greetings Cards, Office cover, Candle making 50 faculty can be arranged.

No change in fee structure all including for NACC accredited colleges.

Peace College of Education Chairman Dr. J. Paul Baskar met to the Vive Chancellor Dr. Viswanathan and sought his advise.

We also provide additional courses like

**Additional / Sandwich courses:**

* Yoga, Printing Journalism, Radio Programme.
* DTP Printing
* Post Graduate Diploma NGO Management
* Post Graduate Diploma Watershed Management
* On line courses, competitive Exam preparation.

**SUMMER INTERNSHIP**

Twenty of the B. Ed Trainees of Peace College of Education was on internship for 15-30 days with Peace Trust to learn Modem Slavery, Child Labour, Migrant Workers, and Small Farmers, Agri Marketing, Skills Training, Teacher Education, Climate Change and NGO Leadership. The 20 interns learnt the following skills such as, Seminar / Workshops, Production of Radio Programmes, Updating in Social Media and Websites / News Letters, Get involved in Office Management and Assist in Canteen Maintenance and Accounts.

There were also Agri Graduates were on a field study at the Peace Watershed Training Center and brought farmers feedback.

Three MBA students from Gandhigram Rural University studied the Women associated with Peace Garment and Handicrafts Centre. Another set of PG Students of Dept of Sociology, Gandhigram Rural University stayed with us for one month.

One Post Graduate from Dept of Development and Administration-Political Science was with us for one month.

Dr. J. Paul Baskar gave certificate to all of them. They were also paid honorarium.

**NABET - QCI VISIT TO PEACE PRIVATE ITI :**

A visit was made from National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) and Quality Council of India (QCI) to Peace Private ITI on 28.06.2015 for the affiliation of the NCVT Courses such as

* Electrician Trade
* Desktop Publishing Operator
* Sewing Technology.

The assessment officer has visited all the three courses and checked out all the tools and equipments and the building infrastructure etc. This NABET – QCI approval will be useful to improve the quality of the skill education.