

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 for improving their understanding on skilling the youth for gainful employment and addressing social issues like modern slavery, child labour, migrant labour, un-employability of youth. We also send this to people who we believe are involved in improving the migrant worker's conditions. You are welcome to unsubscribe yourself, if you so choose.

-EDITOR

Peace Trust is a Non Government Organization working on Child Labour and Bonded Labour issues since 1984. It has also focused on Migrant workers rights and Anti Trafficking of Person issue since 1999. Facilitating decent employment of youth is taken up.

- o Peace Trust's Skills for Freedom is the only solution to end Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu. It is on decent and skill based effort for enhancing the employment opportunities of rural youth in Dindigul, Karur, Tiruppur Districts.
- o Reduce the risk for Young Workers - Peace Trust is actively involved in Initiative to "Support School Education, Health Protection, Livelihood Development and Skill Training for Gainful Employment among Vulnerable Young Population in Dindigul District".
- o 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.
- o Peace Trust also provides training for Quality Teacher Education and gainful employment to young women from resource poor families in Dindigul and Karur District.
- o Peace Trust has also been broadcasting Pasumai FM community radio.
- o Peace Trust is actively engaged in building the capacity of youth aspiring for Government, Public Sector, Bank job
- o Peace Trust is providing guidance for higher studies to 17 + youth.

The views expressed are not of the partners or collaborators but a simple compilation of field realities for the purpose of sharing, learning and action. The News Letter is for academic purpose to understand Human Resources, Skill Education and Development concerns.

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Migration

H1-B scheme under U.S. immigration scanner

Move to reduce validity to less than three years.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is taking forward proposals to end work permits for spouses of H1-B visas holders.

In December 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had announced that it was planning to make changes in the rules that allowed a certain category of H-4 visa holders spouses of H-1B visa holders to obtain Employment Authorisation Documents (EAD). The Obama administration allowed EAD for them in 2015 after several years of debate. A court case challenging the rule is pending and the DHS is expected to submit its proposed changes in the rules in May, to the court.

According to USCIS data, 104750 H-4 visa holders have been issued EAD until 2017. Most of them are Indians and most of them are women.

No deadline

In an April 4 letter to Senator Charles E. Grassley USCIS Director L Frank Cissna said the agency had announced the curbs earlier and the public would have an opportunity to provide feedback during a notice and comment period, as is the case with all regulatory changes.

No deadline has been specified for these steps. Mr. Cissna had written a similar letter to a group of 15 lawmakers in March also, after they sought the continuation of the H4 EAD. USCIS has said that starting this year, it may approve H-1B visas for a duration shorter than three years, which has been the norm until now. The agency has also started treating H-1B renewal applications as fresh petitions, requiring the petitioners to establish the eligibility all over again.

As a result, requests for additional information before renewal petitions are processed, have dramatically increased under the Trump administration.

Trafficking

She wages a war against child trafficking

This woman has taken on the mantle of saving as many girl children as she can from prostitution, and boys from child labour, in Pune. For this she needs both raw courage and compassion... qualities she has aplenty.

In the corridor of a modest building, which has now been covered nicely with a decent roof thanks to the largess of a Rotarian in Pune, Renu Gavaskar, famous in Pune as Renutai, is interacting with her 50-odd children. What she is doing for them restores your faith in humanity. These bright-eyed, intelligent, vivacious children, both boys and girls in the age group 4 to 11 have virtually being rescued from a life of extreme trauma, violence and imminent danger of being trafficked and sucked into the flesh trade.

They are the children of sex workers from the Budhwar Peth red light area of Pune, estimated to have several thousand sex workers, and Renutai, a social worker of not only great grit and determination but also incredible tenderness and compassion, is singlehandedly responsible for getting them out of that environment of violence and fear and into her magic circle of love and caring. Thanks to the *Ekalavya Trust* started by her, the children go to a private school, get additional lessons in her little home-school, where there is not only singing and dancing and smiles, but also dreams.

The freshly scrubbed faces that greet me warmly are all excited and curious about the visitor. "They are going to ask me so many questions about you after you leave," smiles Renutai, adding, "and I will tell them that if they study well and work hard they can also become like you!"

Rotary connect

Renutai's connection with RC Pune Laxmi Road, D 3131, began four years ago when its former president Sadanand Bhagwat heard her speak at his club president's installation meet. "I felt we should visit her school and work with her; we did that and found there was so much to be done," he says.

Renutai runs two units; one housing children from Budhwar Peth and the other has 60-odd street children.

When he met her, the stories she had to relate shocked him. And once, while expecting some guests, an 8-year-old child asked her: “*Ajji*(Dadi), your friends are coming to meet you, but why aren’t you dressed in a red saree and not wearing lipstick. When my mother’s friends visit, she always wears a red saree and lipstick.”

At another time, at Renutai’s little home-come-school for these children, he was talking to an 8-year-old boy “and told him I am going to have a cup of tea, will you have milk? And he said: ‘No, I will have a beer.’ So I asked him how do you know beer. And he said my mother’s friends often give me 100 or 150 and ask me to get beer from the shop opposite our house. But they drink half and leave the rest and because it will go waste, I drink it.”

But what is even more heartbreaking is what Deepa Bhagwat, his wife, also a former president of the same club, relates. Very often, as there is no other place, children remain under the bed while their mothers are with their clients. But the scene before me filled with happy, chirpy kids who are assembled in the make-shift classroom actually a corridor which has been given a nice roof by Bhagwat, who is in the construction business... lifts the spirit. “It cost less than 1 lakh,” he smiles, adding, “We did it because the children were spending a lot of time in the open corridor, exposed to the elements, sun and rain. So we first put the roof four years ago, and yesterday renovated it again.”

His club soon got involved and next, the flooring in the kitchen was changed and a platform provided. The children soon got from the Rotarians school uniforms, study material, notebooks, school bags and then desks. “They sit on the floor, and have to bend down to write. Imagine what it does to their backs. And I believe that one whose back is bent, has a bent mind too, and one with a bent mind can never stand straight, says Bhagwat, spelling out his quaint philosophy!

The children were extremely happy, because they thought “*hamey bhi kuch milta hei* (we also get something).” Then came the question of celebrating birthdays. They’ve found from their schools that in other homes the parents celebrate their children’s birthdays, but they had never experienced that. So now the Rotarians celebrate Renutai’s children’s birthdays by cutting a cake and presenting the child a new dress!

Dreams galore

In an interaction that is great fun, the children share their dreams, but these do have boundaries. Little Tarun, a Class 4 student, articulates the most common aspiration of most of the boys, and some girls too he wants to join the police force. So does Saloni. When asked why, she says simply, “To get justice for the people”. Elaborates Renutai, “In their worldview, the police not only beat up people but is also corrupt; they take money and round up innocent people, so she wants to help such people and get them justice.”

If she becomes a policewoman and gets a good job, will she pull her mother out of this area, I ask her gently. “I will first get a good house, and put my family together (her brothers and sisters are separated, though one sister, Manisha, is also here). My two brothers are working in a garage, but in my house all of us will be together,” she says cheerfully. Mercifully, the siblings do get together and the mothers regularly visit the children.

The girls, I find, are much more forthcoming in sharing their plans about the future and rescuing their mothers from their present plight. The boys want it too, but maintain a stoic exterior and don’t articulate this. Anuradha, on the other hand, doesn’t flinch when asked what she wants to do for her mother. “She is suffering and is very sad. And I won’t allow her to do whatever she is doing now because she is very unhappy. I will get her out of here when I become a nurse and get a good job,” she says. Quite a few want to become film heroes! “My favourite hero is Salman Khan,” Rohan smiles. Rajendra, who is a great dancer, wants to become like Salman too. Renutai is quick to add, “But the older boys here don’t like Salman because they think he has committed a crime.”

Some of the other boys want to become Superman. As the chorus of “police” continues, Renutai says, “There is a special dimension here; they and their mothers have been so much harassed by the police that they want to protect themselves, and the hero does the same.” Lakshmi, Anuradha’s younger sister, wants to become a soldier. “She feels that’s the only way to protect the country, the community and rescue her mother. You can see the repercussions of these children being without somebody to protect them and provide for them. The dreams are

different; while other children want to be successful and happy, these children want to overcome their suffering," she sighs.

UP girl, sold by parents at 8, is mother of 4 by 16

BAREILLY: In a case of child rape and captivity over years, a girl from Sambhal, who gave birth to four children by the time she was 16 after being trafficked at the age of 8 to a man in Rajasthan, has lodged an FIR against her father, stepmother and aunt. According to the FIR, the girl's parents sold her to a man in Bharatpur in 2010. Her sisters, who were six and four years old then, were also sold to people in Rajasthan, the FIR alleged. After eight years of captivity, during which the eldest girl was raped repeatedly and gave birth four times, she managed to escape from a house in Bharatpur where she was confined, and reached a relative's house in Sambhal. Police officers lodged an FIR under sections 366 A (procurement of minor girl), a stringent and rarely-invoked section along with 372 (selling minor for purposes of prostitution) and 370 A (exploitation of trafficked person) of the IPC and have begun investigations. The girl belongs to the minority community.

"The father, stepmother, aunt and the man who bought the girl have been named in the FIR and efforts are on to arrest them," said Nakhasa police station house officer Sarvendra Kumar Sharma. Circle officer Sudesh Kumar said, "The girl has been sent for medical examination, and prima facie appears to have been raped and has given birth."

Junaid Arshi, the man who gave shelter to the victim, told TOI, "The girl's father's sister is my acquaintance. On Monday, the aunt told me to give shelter to the girl because her life is in danger. I was shocked to hear her ordeal. The girl's father is a truck driver. He told his sister that he had got the girls married off in Rajasthan to suitable men, whereas he had sold them to men."

According to the girl, her father got married again after his first wife passed away in 2010.

"My stepmother started to torture us. We are five siblings including a brother and four sisters. I was taken to my stepmother's sister's house in Rajasthan with two sisters. I was sold to a 50-year-old man for Rs 3 lakh. I was married to him and given a new name. In six years, I gave birth to four boys. However, two of them died within months of their birth. The other two boys are still with my husband. My two sisters were married to two men, who live in Dhaulpur in Rajasthan," the girl said in a statement which was recorded in a video.

SHO Sharma said, "The girl's parents and aunt are absconding. Senior officers have been informed of the case. A team will be sent to Rajasthan to arrest the accused man soon. On Tuesday we sent the girl for medical examination and will produce her before a magistrate on Wednesday to record her statement."

Child trafficking

The primary motive behind Renutai's passion and devotion towards these children, and her determination to return their childhood to them, is to prevent child trafficking to the extent she can. She has no doubt that if left there, almost all the girls will end up being trafficked. "and don't think the boys are safe. Look at Rohan, he is so handsome, and he knows that too! But he is at great danger too."

From paedophiles, I ask, my heart sinking. "Not so much that, as being groomed to trap women into love marriages and lure them to the red light area from where escape is impossible," says Renutai. She then relates the heartbreaking story of a nine-year-old girl she had rescued, but who was sold by her mother, "who was in debt, without our knowledge. She was a beautiful girl, we tried so hard but she just disappeared. When we approached the middleman trying to get her back, one of them said: '*Aap itna dukh kyo karti ho, woh ab Bangalore ki khidki mei hei, yaha nahi* (Why are you so sad; she is now in the Bangalore trade).' That was some 15 years ago during the beginning of my work. And then I understood that every girl has to be protected. As boys too; to be fair and beautiful/handsome is a curse in this place."

Boys, she adds, apart from being used to trap girls into marriage and bring them into the flesh trade, are also used for child labour, fetching food, *daru* and other work. "The child is happy because food is his necessity, education is not, and child labour is so much cheaper."

Plight of street children

In her other facility, she has rescued 62 street children and put them in schools. “But I know there are another 62,000 boys who’ve come from villages and are staying on the pavements. I’ve told myself thus far and no more... *jitna ho sakey utna karo* (do what you can.) My daughter Gowri, who is with me, will carry on my work, I know.”

So what happens to the remaining street children?

“They go into crime... those living on the streets can commit robbery, murder or get into the prostitution racket. They go into crime because there is no alternative; they take drugs... so who will give them jobs? On the Pune railway station, you’ll see so many children roaming around. They know us by face, and run away when they see us because they don’t want to come here. They feel imprisoned, and who will give them drugs? They are happy with the *vada pao* they get by begging.”

She feels unless there is a herculean effort from the government, “these children cannot be rescued, and will continue to be trafficked or end up in criminal activities.”

So what percentage of girls does she estimate ending up doing their mother’s job?

Directly, a very small one, she says, “because the mothers don’t want their daughter to enter this hell.” But the girls get married... it’s a love marriage mostly, but “what happens to them we don’t know. Because some of the men they marry... *mahol toh wahi hei na...* are already married, and ultimately abandon them. They often return with a child.”

Asked if the children’s fathers visit them, Renutai says some do, “but often it’s a false identity. The children accept somebody the mother brings; he leaves and some other man comes but they will accept him too because there is so much violence in their lives that they need a male member to protect them... they witness this violence daily, sometimes, tragically, from under the mother’s bed.”

Small wonder then, that having seen their mothers being subjected to cruelty so often, these children regard women as the weaker sex.

Skills

‘Skill India’ urgently needs reforms

There is no way the country can reap its demographic dividend without fixing vocational education

Salvaging the Indian demographic dividend must be a key part of India’s growth story. In 2016, the Government of India formed the Sharada Prasad Committee to rationalise the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), which are employer bodies mostly promoted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Confederation of Indian Industry and other industry associations, and improve ‘Skill India’. The committee submitted its report in 2016. Now over a year later, it may be prudent to look at the reforms it suggested and action taken in the vocational education/training (VET) system.

The two goals in ‘Skill India’ are, first, to meet employers’ needs of skills and, second, to prepare workers (young and old) for a decent livelihood. The recurring theme in the report is its focus on youth. Each recommendation underlines that the VET is not just for underprivileged communities; it is not a stopgap arrangement for those who cannot make it through formal education. It is for all of us.

Streaming for students

It suggests concrete steps to ensure a mindset change, such as having a separate stream for vocational education (in secondary education), creating vocational schools and vocational colleges for upward mobility, and having a Central university to award degrees and diplomas. Streaming would mean that the ‘diploma disease’, which is resulting in growing tertiary enrolment along with rising unemployment among the educated, would be stemmed.

China, for instance, has such a separate stream after nine years of compulsory schooling, and half the students choose VET at the senior secondary level (after class nine).

This requires a serious engagement of employers. Private vocational training providers (VTPs) that mushroomed as private industrial training institutes (ITIs) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)-financed short-term training providers are no substitute for industry-employer engagement with each pillar of the VET ecosystem: secondary schools; ITIs, public and private; NSDC-funded VTPs; ministries that train, and firms that conduct enterprise-based training.

A global alignment

The second recurring theme is the realisation of human potential. This means aligning the courses to international requirements, ensuring a basic foundation in the 3Rs, and life-long learning. It implies national standards for an in-demand skill set with national/global mobility that translates into better jobs. Short duration courses (with no real skills) that provide low pay for suboptimal jobs cannot be called national standards. Hence the current national standards have to drastically improve.

Yogamaya Acharya, president, Neyveli Ladies Club distributed certificates and stipends to women, who underwent training for tailoring and spoken English.

This means that we should have no more than 450 courses Germany has only 340 courses in accordance with the National Classification of Occupations 2015 (which itself was based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations). Such trainees will be a national asset. What we have instead are nearly 10,000 standards, produced mostly by consultants. There cannot be thousands of standards (compressed into 2,000 qualification packs/job roles), and “delivered” to trainees in a matter of a few months. This is not what the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) had recommended. The focus should be in strengthening reading, writing and arithmetic skills. No skill development can succeed if most of the workforce lacks the foundation to pick up skills in a fast-changing world. Vocational training must by definition be for a minimum of a year, which includes internship (without which certification is not possible). Short-term training should be confined to recognising prior learning of informally trained workers who are already working. The third theme is to do what is right when no one is watching you, because, as in other industries, the regulator has displayed a limited capacity to regulate. Cases of a conflict of interests, of rigged assessments and of training happening only on paper are not new.

A recent parliamentary report on private ITIs has exposed yet another scam the Quality Council of India’s approval for thousands of private ITIs. If the number of private ITIs has grown from under 2,000 to over 11,000 in five years, it points to a colossal failure of regulation, accompanied by a lack of quality training on offer at such ITIs.

There is a huge ethics and accountability issue if there is no credible assessment board and when there are too many sector skill councils, each trying to maximise their business. The Sharada Prasad Committee had recommended that the number of SSCs should correspond to the National Industrial (Activity) Classification (which has 21 economic activities across the entire economy), but which is still way larger than Australia’s six. Little has happened except for the number of SSCs dropping from 40 to 39.

For a unification

The first policy step should be towards a unification of the entire VET system. What we have today are fragmented pillars. Each of the five pillars does what it wants to, with no synergy. An NSDC-centric focus has left the skill development efforts of 17 ministries out of the same scrutiny. ‘Skill India’ can have an impact only when all of them work together and learn from each other. SSCs, which are supposedly industry representatives, should be engaging themselves with each pillar of the system, and not just NSDC-funded VTPs.

For a better future: Youth4Jobs has set up placement linked skilling centres for youngsters with locomotor, hearing and speech disabilities.

The second step is to enhance employer ownership, responsibility and their ‘skin in the game’. Media reports often highlight the corporate sector lamenting about “unemployable youth”. The private sector places the onus on the government, treating it as a welfare responsibility, while the government looks to the private sector since it is the end consumer of skills. The result is that only 36% of India’s organised sector firms conduct in-firm training (mostly large ones, which are also the only ones that take on apprentices under a Government of India Act). 6

We need a clear fix for this. In this regard the committee's recommendation of a reimbursable industry contribution model (applicable only to the organised sector) should solve the perennial problem of poaching while providing a common level field. It could ensure reimbursements for those companies undertaking training while rewarding industry for sharing and undertaking skilling until everyone in the company is skilled. This will lay the foundation for making at least our organised workforce 100% skilled.

The third policy step is in getting the government to recognise that decades have been spent in building a government-financed and managed, and hence supply-driven system.

Data gathering by sector

Does the government, which is not generating much employment in the public sector, really know what industry's skill requirements are in the private sector? Private employers do know this but there has been no serious effort by them to gather data. So the government needs to confine itself to roles it is capable of performing and not involving itself through multiple ministries in activities in which it has no comparative advantage.

One such role is to have surveys, once every five years, through the National Sample Survey Office, to collect data on skill providers and skill gaps by sector. Such data can guide evidence-based policy-making, as against the current approach of shooting in the dark.

Finally, we need more reflection from stakeholders on the actual value addition done by the skilling initiative. The NSDC, which was envisioned as a public-private partnership, receives 99% of its funding from government, but its flagship scheme has a less than 12% record of placement for trainees. The NSQF framework has seen little adoption in private sector. And, more than two-thirds of courses developed have not trained even one student so far.

India can surely become the world's skill capital but not with what it is doing right now. The reforms suggested by the committee can be a good starting point for we cannot let another generation lose its dreams. Santosh Mehrotra is Professor, Centre for Labour, JNU, a member of the Expert Committee on SSCs, and a lead author of the NSQF. Ashutosh Pratap worked with the Expert Committee

How inclusive are India's top 100 listed companies?

Civil Society News, New Delhi

The top 100 listed companies in India could do better by way of inclusion, according to an index of socially responsible policies in the corporate sector. Overall, the picture that emerges from the index is of a continuing distance between the interests of managements and shareholders on the one hand and communities and workers on the other.

Companies seem to conflate corporate social responsibility (CSR) with inclusion when it is the latter which should be integral to their business processes so that they can spread the benefits of economic growth.

The India Responsible Business Index (IRBI) is in its third year and is the result of a collaborative effort by Corporate Responsibility Watch, Oxfam India, Change Alliance, Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices and Partners in Change. The index is based on data drawn from public disclosures made by 100 companies, beginning with Business Responsibility Reporting (BRR), which is meant to reflect compliance with the National Voluntary Guidelines (NVG) framed in 2011 by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on the social, environmental and economic responsibilities of businesses.

The NVG have nine principles of social inclusion. The IRBI measures five of them: non-discrimination in the workplace, respecting employee dignity and human rights, community development, inclusiveness in the supply chain and community as stakeholders. BRR was made mandatory by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for the top 100 and now 500 companies based on market capitalisation. Additionally, companies are required to spend two percent of profits on corporate social responsibility (CSR). The IRBI captures what companies are telling society about themselves. Apart from BRR, research has been done into annual reports, websites and policy pronouncements. An effort has also been made to elicit responses from managements.

The purpose of the index is not to condemn or shame companies but instead to help them see themselves as the agents of change and development they can be. The private sector's success is important for economic growth. But in an economy where disparities are stark and complex and slow to narrow, it is important to be formally committed to spreading prosperity. To remain socially relevant, companies need their managements to be inclusive in their thinking and processes. It was to this end that the NVG were framed.

While BRR and the two-percent rule are mandatory, it is the NVG that embody the spirit of inclusivity. The index seeks to put the focus on voluntary guidelines so that managements go beyond what is mandatory and are encouraged to be innovative in their quest to be accountable not just to shareholders but to society at large. "Business and human rights is now the buzzword in companies," says Dheeraj, senior programme officer at Praxis and one of the lead researchers, citing an example. "In some company reports you will find human rights mentioned upfront which is a big change. Three years ago, we never saw any such mention."

1. Non-discrimination in the workplace

Companies are expected to have a policy on non-discrimination in place. A policy enables a company to recruit people who have faced discrimination. The index finds out if companies use the terms non-discrimination and equal opportunities while hiring and promoting employees and if board members too are selected on this basis. The index also assesses if companies have systems to ensure that there is non-discrimination and diversity in the workplace.

"When we started, we didn't think that companies would write openly about caste-related dimensions as part of their policy," says Dheeraj. "After all, affirmative action is not mandated. Three companies have started disclosing. Tata Steel is clearly making public the SC/ST percentage in its workforce. Also, Bajaj Finance and Godrej are disclosing the number of SC/ST people they hire."

More companies now have anti-sexual harassment policies in place and disclose whether cases were filed and action taken. "One reason is that this law is mandatory," says Anusha, programme manager, communications, with Praxis. Only four companies didn't have systems in place. But the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act doesn't seem to have made a dent on recruitment. Only 19 companies had a policy to hire people with disabilities. And 24 companies didn't disclose their commitment to non-discrimination in their recruitment process.

2. Employee dignity and human rights

The index looks at company policies on freedom of association, wages, worker rights, workplaces and labour issues, including child labour and safety training. There hasn't been much change since the last report. While majority of the companies 68 and 52 respectively recognise association of employees and collective bargaining only 16 companies disclose systems and mechanisms that show commitment to it. They kept very few records of how many people were part of those unions. None extended the right of association to contract workers or temporary employees.

In fact, contract workers don't seem to figure in most company's calculations. Bigger companies in the mining, power, oil and gas sectors did not even report the number of contract workers they hired.

Only six companies, including Bajaj Auto, HDFC Finance and BPCL, said they extend social benefits to contract workers. Bajaj Auto has a Charter of Fair and Responsible Workplace Guidelines for Contract Labour. HDFC ensures minimum wages and social security benefits to its contract employees.

Only 24 companies six less than in the 2016 report explicitly stated their commitment to ensuring minimum wages. Six companies stated they were committed to providing fair living wages. While 91 companies reported that they were committed to health and worker safety, 40 companies still need to disclose systems to assess this. Most companies have knowledge systems to prevent child labour but systems to assess worker rights and labour issues were abysmal with 90 companies not disclosing systems for assessing both.

“That is the scene with permanent workers. With contractual labour it is worse,” says Dheeraj. “Labour as a constituency has weakened.” Neither employment policies nor social benefits are extended to them. The report recommends a law on contract labour.

3. Community development

The NVG recognise the positive role companies can play in improving the lives of marginalised communities.

The index assesses CSR policies and strategies of companies, and whether these are shaped in partnership with communities and reflect their needs. On the whole, companies do well. Companies identifying marginalised groups for projects rose from 81 in 2016 to 86 in 2017.

“In community development, companies are willing to commit more and have more robust policies in place. They are very open to disclosing activities they are doing and the sectors they are working on. In this area, they have been consistently scoring well. But their assessment systems, both needs assessment and impact assessment are still weak,” explains Dheeraj. Eighty-four companies failed to assess the needs and aspirations of the community before planning their CSR projects. Companies are still mostly unwilling to work in backward, remote areas. Eighty-one companies didn’t disclose identification of backward regions as an important aspect for CSR projects. “Only 16 companies have this as part of their policy. CSR expenditure is largely concentrated in industrialised states. So, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu will have more expenditure. But in terms of actual practice we have not gone into that,” said Dheeraj.

4. Inclusivity in supply chain

Companies have a responsibility to ensure that their supply chains comply with the NVG. After all, nearly 92 percent of workers are employed in the informal sector, to which most companies outsource work.

Fifty-seven companies, seven more than the last report, recognised the importance of giving priority to local suppliers but only 15 have systems to do this, three less than last year. A big concern is that 34 companies have not disclosed whether they extend their child labour policy to their supplier chain. Likewise, only 49 companies, down from 54 in 2016, extended their human rights policy to the supply chain. Also, just 22 companies, instead of 24 in 2016, extended their employment policies to the supply chain.

Only four companies disclosed assessing issues relating to workers' rights in the supply chain. Just six companies have systems to assess the capacity needs of local suppliers, vendors and other stakeholders.

Banks say they don’t have a supply chain. They think supply chain only refers to manufacturing units. “In supply chain we do have some positive movements because of UK’s Modern Slavery Act,” says Dheeraj. “Around 26 companies who operate in the UK have put their Modern Slavery Statement mostly on their UK websites, affirming that they are committed to upholding human rights principles across the supply chain and that they will have assessment systems in place. That is influencing Indian operations. Although right now we don’t see direct attribution to Indian supply chains, that debate has started.”

5. Community as business stakeholders

With large tracts of land being acquired for infrastructure and other industrial projects, it is important to assess whether companies have policies to include communities as stakeholders in their projects, whether they respect the principle of prior informed consent, resettle and rehabilitate project-affected people, provide local employment and judiciously use natural resources.

Companies are doing badly on this score and there hasn’t been much improvement over the past three years.

Fifty-four companies recognised the need for impact assessments but only nine mentioned public hearings or informing communities about project impacts. Only three companies Godrej, HUL, Vedanta recognised the principle of free, prior informed consent. More than 95 companies do not recognise their responsibility to provide better or similar living conditions and services to project-affected people and prior commitment through discussions for land acquisition and displacement.

Seventy companies, eight more than 2016, acknowledge judicious use of local resources and 44 provided systems to do this. Companies also don't recognise and create knowledge systems that promote sensitivity to local concerns, culture or environment. Less than 15 percent of companies disclosed commitment to local culture.

Analysis

Companies across sectors scored well in community development and non-discrimination in the workplace. While companies don't generally fare well in relation to supply chain, the FMCG sector performed well. In respecting employee dignity and human rights, finance, IT, telecom, media and publishing scored the least. The finance sector and the metals and mining sector score the least in supply chain. The pharma sector lags in non-discrimination in employment.

"FMCG does well in supply chain. Again, it's a comfort zone. You talk about procurement, retail and so on. Finance is an area to be looked at with more scrutiny because they fund industrial and infrastructure projects," says Dheeraj.

"If they don't have due diligence systems in place they can't push other companies to act on community as stakeholder. Finance companies would have the most influence, more than other stakeholders. In supply chain, they are the weakest in community as stakeholder. They should start acting in this area." Also, as in previous years PSUs disclosed more commitment to the five elements of the IRBI. The private sector did marginally better in community development and supply chain outreach.

Getting to companies

It hasn't been easy for researchers to get the information they want from companies or interact with them.

They first peruse information that the company has placed in the public domain annual reports, BRR and policy documents on company websites. This data, along with a list of 115 queries, is sent to the company for validation. The company can also add to the data. For the past two reports, 30 percent of the companies responded. "Around 3 to 5 percent gave detailed responses. The general opinion is that this is a pretty good response rate. For the first report, we had a detailed interaction with Vedanta and Cairn. This time 10 to 15 companies assured us they would send data but they didn't," says Dheeraj.

Companies acknowledge data on the phone but resist answering on email because they don't want to formalise the interaction. Mostly it is sustainability heads in companies whom researchers reach out to. This isn't easy because sustainability heads think the IRBI is about CSR alone.

"But we are talking about core business. In the Indian narrative, CSR has become only about the 2 percent spend. We often need to explain ourselves," says Dheeraj.

Also, reporting systems are sometimes outsourced by companies to certification agencies and all of them give assurances for sustainability reports. "Many sustainability heads haven't looked at their own BRRs so their own interaction with their systems is weak. Even within companies there are gaps in how they are integrating their reporting with their own systems," says Dheeraj.

It is possible that there are companies which have good systems and practices but don't do a good job of documenting them and placing them in the public domain. There could also be companies which have robust policies which are well articulated but poorly implemented. CRW is a network of 14 organisations and independent consultants who track corporate behaviour. The IRBI serves the important purpose of keeping the narrative on responsible business alive from one year to the next. Voluntary disclosure works best when there is regulatory oversight. It is also necessary to have civil society scrutiny so that companies get feedback and feel the need to do better.

Centre aiming to create four lakh jobs annually in 800 villages: MoS for MSME Giriraj Singh

NEW DELHI: Minister of State for MSME Giriraj Singh on Friday said that the government is in the process of creating a model whereby four lakh jobs will be generated annually in 800 villages across the country through clusters.

“We have decided to create a model under which 400 villages in first phase and 400 villages in the second phase will generate four lakh jobs every year,” Singh said on the sidelines of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Board meeting, where he also launched the Khadi store locator app.

Singh said new employment opportunities will emerge when Khadi and village industry combines together. Completion and implementation of the new model is not revealed yet. According to MSME’s official statement, the Khadi and village industries’ products are manufactured by about seven lakh privately owned household units, which are funded through schemes like the Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

However, as per a report published last month, which cited official figures released by the MSME ministry to the Lok Sabha, employment in the Khadi sector fell from 11.6 lakh to 4.6 lakh between 2015-16 and 2016-17. KVIC had claimed that the job loss figures are incorrect as the figures on people leaving the sector were not being updated till 2015, while new jobs were being created. Accepting that introduction of new model charkhas did cause some job loss, it said that its decision in January 2018 to pay the subsidy directly to artisans in their Aadhaar-seeded account resulted in flushing out ‘ghost’ artisans. In the same time period, the official data showed the production of Khadi rose by 31.6 per cent and sales grew by 33 per cent.

Efforts on to empower small enterprises

Archana Sinha, Head, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, CII, briefed the participants about CII’s finance facilitation centre, which works towards creating awareness among small and medium enterprise members about various finance options and schemes. She said the centre would act as a one-stop-shop aggregating finance options from large finance institutions. It would meet the financing demands of SMEs with banks and financial institutions and project large requirements of finance across various financial institutions.

The centre would play a facilitating role for SMEs to carry out the process of accessing funds in a professional manner. It would work towards creating financial literacy among them through road shows and seminars. Member companies could apply for loans through mycii.in portal, she said.

Earlier, Sanjay Gunasingh, Chairman of CII, Thoothukudi, said the SMEs had a huge potential to grow and its growth would ensure overall growth of India. There was a need to set up a support centre to ensure that SMEs were provided with credit in a cost effective manner. It was observed that delay and other issues related to credit delivery to companies were primarily due to lack of understanding of various schemes offered by banks, procedures and documentation required for processing credit.

Child rights

Being Nirbhaya's Mother

Asha Devi Pandey, a barely literate woman from a small Uttar Pradesh village, did not know what to say when mikes were thrust in her face the first time five years ago. Her daughter was brutally gang-raped and left to die. The nation was repulsed and jolted. Thousands took to the streets to demand justice, forcing the powers-that-be to rewrite the law against rape. And the trial of her daughter's attackers began. Something snapped. From another faceless, voiceless migrant whose home and family was her universe, Asha Devi became Nirbhaya's mother. "I never imagined my child would be taken away from me like this," she says. "Right after the incident when my mouth would be dry, when I felt I had no voice, the media came to talk to me. I opened my mouth and the words just tumbled out. Now, it is no longer so difficult. I speak my mind no matter who is on the stage."

That hard-won courage was in evidence when she recently took on former Karnataka DGP HT Sangliana for his misogynistic remarks at a Women's Day event in Bengaluru. The ex-top cop commented on Asha Devi's physique, saying he could well imagine how beautiful her daughter must have been. He capped his speech by saying that when overpowered, one must surrender to save one's life. In an open letter, Asha Devi tore into Sangliana. "You have not just insulted my daughter's sacrifice but also our struggle to get justice. You are suggesting that my daughter should have surrendered and she could have lived. Then why don't we ask the Army jawans on our border to surrender so that they can stay alive?" she asks. The voice is louder now but five years have done little to numb the raw pain in it. But Nirbhaya's mother is now the symbol of every woman's fight against discrimination, injustice and the humiliation she must face to bring her assaulters to book.

Nirbhaya too is no longer just her daughter, an average 23-year-old paramedical student chasing her dreams. That girl is now in some corner of the house, packed into a box with her clothes, books and belongings. Nirbhaya is now a symbol of all that is wrong with society, and her mother must carry on the battle the young woman fought from her hospital bed to bring her attackers to justice. In her home in Delhi's Dwarka, a poster showing a flame is pinned in the backdrop, helpful for media interviews. There are certificates and plaques displayed in a glass showcase in the living room.

Asha Devi and her husband, Badrinath, have shared the stage with presidents, prime ministers, foreign diplomats, Union ministers, policemen and civil society activists. They have spoken to packed halls, received awards to honour their daughter's memory and given away awards in their daughter's name. Nearly every month there is a "women's empowerment" function that the two end up attending. The functions go little beyond felicitations, but the couple rarely refuse an invite. "If I don't get on the stage and speak about my daughter's case, people will forget her. They have already forgotten her..." Asha Devi's voice trails off.

Within days of Nirbhaya's gangrape inside a bus on the night of December 16, 2012, arrests were made. Men, women and children in various cities took to the streets to demand a stricter law, even capital punishment for rapists. Consequently, a more stringent anti-rape law was passed and a government fund established to improve the safety and security of women. The protests sparked books, poetry, art, and a searing documentary featuring the rapists.

"No one knew me, no one knew my daughter but so many people came to protest. I was so hopeful that something would change. Surely my daughter's death would not be for nothing," says Asha Devi. Now, she's not sure. Of the six attackers, a juvenile has already served his three-year term and been rehabilitated. One committed suicide in prison and the remaining four have recently filed a petition in Supreme Court seeking review of the death penalty. "They are still alive and their families can meet them. It is our fate to wait," she says.

“When you face difficulty, you tell yourself there is some good at the end of it. That hope makes you move ahead. But now I can see the truth. There is no hope, there is only disappointment,” she says. And it is not just about her daughter, it is about the Nirbhayas across the country.

Asha Devi repeatedly mentions the recent rape of an eight-month old in Delhi. “Things are just getting worse.” It is this lack of hope that keeps her up on many nights. But this is something only she knows.

Both Badrinath and Asha Devi receive calls from parents of young girls who have been molested, raped, killed. Often, the parents have no clue about who to complain to, have no resources to pursue cases or have been stalled by the police and authorities. “Mothers call me... They think because I have gone through this, I will understand what they are going through,” Asha Devi says. The months spent inside police stations and outside court rooms have helped create a network of lawyers, cops and NGOs that she can use. A phone call from her ensures that an abduction complaint pushed aside gets the station officer’s attention or a rape trial that has been pending gets legal representation. This week, a 15-year-old girl from Jharkhand who was working as a domestic help was found hanging at her employer’s residence in Delhi. The teenager’s parents called Asha Devi, who approached the Delhi Commission for Women and helped get the case registered.

The battle has just begun, Nirbhaya’s parents know. Even for those ready to fight for justice, harassment, indignity and humiliation awaits in the neighbourhood, at the police station and numerous court hearings. Hope or no hope, there is only one way to go about it. “They say...samaj kya kahega? Mein kehta hoon, kya kahega? Humne kabhi aankh nahi churayee, aur na churayenge (Parents say what will people say? I tell them, what will they say? We have never backed down nor we ever will),” says Badrinath.

Environment

New system to measure air quality

To be jointly developed by the U.S. and Finland to forecast pollution levels

India is tying up with the United States and Finland to develop a pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at a greater resolution than what is possible now. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be coordinating this exercise and the plan is to have a system in place by winter, according to Madhavan Rajeevan, secretary, MoES.

Currently, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, serves as the apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It generates a likely air quality profile, a day in advance, for these cities. IITM is an organisation under the MoES.

The new system, to be jointly developed with expertise from the Finnish Meteorological Institute and the U.S.’ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, will use a different modelling approach as well as computational techniques from that employed in the SAFAR model.

Better resolution

“SAFAR will continue to be the backbone [for pollution forecast] but this system, which will require our scientists to get special training, will use a different method of analysis. This could mean better resolution and more accurate forecasts,” said Mr. Rajeevan.

This refers to the partially-burnt straw and chaff from fields in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, when farmers are preparing their fields for the sowing season. “We hope to develop the system before this winter,” Mr. Rajeevan added. Last week, the Union Environment Ministry released a draft of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) that aims to improve air quality monitoring in India by increasing the number of pollution monitoring stations and, incorporating it into pollution forecast system.

Round Table Consultation on ICPS

April 10 2018

Prayas JAC Society

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) was launched in 2009 with the objectives of tackling child rights violation, enhancing infrastructure for protection services, provide financial support for implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, increasing access to a wider range and better quality of protection services, and increasing investment in child protection. With almost 10 years of its implementation and the amendment of the JJ Act, it was felt important to revisit the Scheme, contextualizing it to the current challenges and needs of the children.

On February 15 2018, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI called for comments and suggestions on ICPS. It stated: “Recently the cabinet has approved 8% increase on the maintenance charges per child per month availing services in the Child Care Institutions. Honorarium of the CWC and JJB members has also been increased from Rs 1000/- to Rs 1500/- per sitting However, we are still getting requests from stakeholders for revising the CPS scheme to provide better child protection services to children. It has been decided to review the Scheme comprehensively.” Comments and Suggestions were sought on the following:

- Scheme Design
- Funding Pattern
- Institutional Care Services
- Non-Institutional care services such as sponsorship, Foster Care and After Care
- Staff related matters
- Performance based rating of Institutions
- Track child/ Khoya-Paya
- Emergency Outreach Services- Childline
- Any other issue pertaining to CPS

The Consultation was aimed at a focused discussion. Prayas presented an analysis of the Juvenile Justice Model Rules 2016 to conceptualize provisions that ICPS does not cover therein. Practical problems were brought to light under various heads of the scheme by stakeholders who work on the ground and difficulties faced by government departments.

Key Problems identified:

- 10% NGO share in running of CCIs and SSAs is burdensome for most voluntary organisations
- Need for rationalizing the JJ Model Rules 2016 with budget provisions under the ICPS
- Need for associating CCIs to Adoption
- Need for an overall increase in the budget allocated under the ICPS

Solutions:

- The NITI Aayog can be approached with the proposal of eliminating the NGO share in running CCIs
- The MWCD needs proposals from states to get parliamentary approval for increasing budget
- Gaps between JJ Model Rules 2016 and the budget provisions under the ICPS may be addressed in the new scheme

Dr J.Paul Baskar, Peace Trust, Tamil Nadu, Member, Standing Committee for CSOs, NITI Aayog



- ICPS must ensure institutionalised participation of CSOs at District level Planning
- Increase the salaries for Childline employees who are now being paid below minimum wage.
- Make advance payments rather than reimbursements. The advance payments can be made against bank guarantees etc.
- The DCPU should coordinate with all stakeholders and seek input on the District Action Plan so that realistic projections can be made for funds to be spent in the District rather than being returned unspent to the Centre.

NITI Aayoug-Institutionalization of Engagement of Service Delivery Civil Society Organization(CSOs)

The first meeting on the “Standing Committee of the CSO was held on March 16, 2018 under the chairmanship of Dr Rajiv Kumar , Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog.

CEO, NITI Aayog reminded the members that the purpose of constitution of the standing committee is to have a sustainable engagement with the Service Delivery CSOs to bring rapid transformation in all areas especially in the Aspirational Districts.

Shri Rakesh Ranjan, DDG (DMEO), highlighted the following issues:

- The human development indices (HDIs) of the country are not commensurate with the current high growth trajectory that the country is experiencing.
- Concerted efforts are required in ‘pockets of underdevelopment’ especially in the 115 Aspirational Districts, to push up the HDI’s.
- There are inter-district and inter-state variations in the development indices. A district focused approach is needed to bring about the changes.
- Some states in the country are doing better in terms of HDIs whereas some are in bad condition. To improve condition in those states where conditions are bad we need to move with focus and as team.
- In terms of nutrition status, 201 districts have been identified where conditions are not satisfactory. These are in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Gujarat. These states need attention to transform rapidly.
- With respect to education, NAS Score suggests that reading comprehension is consistently low in Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The annual status of Education Report (ASER) 2016 learning outcomes for class V also pose a grim picture.
- Regarding health indicators like Infant Mortality Rate(IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate(MMR), Doctor Density and bed density, the performance of these states has not been satisfactory.
- The identified Aspirational Districts are those which are responsible for pulling down the average performance not only of the states but also the entire country.
- The strategy proposed for these districts is a focused program on Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusions and Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure.
- The strategy also includes identification of key performance indicators and real time monitoring to encourage competition amongst these districts.

Dr.Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog and Chairman of the Standing Committee made the following observation:

- There is a need to replace the archaic law for CSOs and there will be surely some progress on the issue before the next meeting of this committee.
- The registration process could be improved using DARPAN
- Self regulation of CSOs and establishing accountability are important factors that would help government in making CSOs ‘Development Partners’.

Mr.Amitabh Kant CEO, NITI Aayog made the following observations:

- The government’s focus is the development of rural areas. Enhancements of the HDIs in the Aspirational Districts would provide a big push in this context to make visible changes in the country.
- The list of identified Aspirational Districts shows that within the same state there are some districts which lag behind others. The real issue is the issue of governance and the same has to be fixed to bring changes in these districts. The strategy adopted to enhance the development indices in the backward districts is by creating a sense of competition amongst the districts through real time monitoring of data and placing them in the public domain. This is expected to open up competition and enhance quality of governance.
- Government need to work with credible and delivering NGOs in all areas for transformation. District Collectors have been advised to identify such NGOs.
- The 48 indicators identified by NITI cover Education, Health, Nutrition, Agriculture, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development and Infrastructure at the district level.
- With appropriate and constant monitoring things are expected to improve faster.

Dr. J Paul Baskar highlighted the issue of Trafficking as Inter State Migrant Workers (both skilled and unskilled), mostly coming from states like Bihar/Odisha into Southern States like TamilNadu are vulnerable to issues of abuse and forced/bonded labour. There is no registration mechanism for migrant workers also Inter State Migrant workmen Act, 1979 is not suitable and should incorporate challenges of current migrant workers and ensure decent employment condition

The CSO want the Educational Institution and Universities under CSO head has to be taken to a separate list and only CSOs have to be listed under portal.

Srilankan Visit

A Srilankan team called Social Architect visited Peace Trust on April 4th and they discussed about all our activities and projects. They visited the young workers project and they praised the vision of the project. They also shared about RTI.

Steering Committee IWG Meeting:

The First Steering Committee meeting of IWG (Interim Working Group) was held in Delhi on 9th April, 2018 and being a steering committee member Dr.J.Paul Baskar attended the meeting and discussed on trafficking. This Inter Working Group on Trafficking Tamil Nadu, consisting out of around thirty civil society organisations working to end trafficking and exploitation Although there is a lack of transparency on the current Bill IWG discussed the need to already start taking action in creating awareness and capacitate people, so that knowledge on trafficking and the content on the Bill exists when it may come out. The meeting further discussed how to get the bill to be taken up, including issuing a list of non-negotiables and how to make use of (social) media. The IWG decided to create a write-up for all participants which would include not only a policy-brief but also a question form to use for contacting MP's and the list of non-negotiables. Furthermore, the need to include survivors of trafficking as advocates was discussed. In order not to re victimize survivors it was decided to organize training for NGO staff who could further train survivors in how to share their stories. The IWG against Trafficking is important in not only sharing knowledge but also in addressing the issue of exploitation with joined forces. The IWG will continue to meet and work towards ending all forms of trafficking.

The agenda of the meeting was

- Discussion on Thematic Consultation
- Feedback on membership from uncovered states

- Feedback on annual action plan
- Discussion on the versions of the Bill

ETI Consultation-South Indian Ethical Trade Platform

The ETI consultation meeting was conducted at Bangalore on 25th April which was attended by the stakeholders of TamilNadu Alliance members. The discussion was related to the 2020 strategy which proposes to promote the formation of local ethical platforms to support local members, trade unions, manufacturers and brands to adhere to global standards and to improve the living and working conditions of the workers in the global supply chain.

ETI proposes to establish a multi-stakeholder platform in India in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles(UNGP's) where ETI will encourage responsible companies to work with the industry, employers, suppliers, trade unions and government to build awareness and capacity of Business and Human Rights.

Young Workers Project Partnership Meeting by Freedom Fund/Geneva Global

GG Partnership meeting was held on 26th and 27th of April in Dindigul. Dr.Balamurugan, Dr. Thiripurasundari and Mr. Abdul Jaleel, Director of 13 NGOs from four districts Dindigul, Erode, Namakkal, Virudunagar and their project managers participated. The NGOs shared their Good Practices, Achievements, Learning and Challenges they faced. Each organization has spoken about the past 3 months events, challenges and the success achieved also the planning for the months to come. The programmes like legal awareness, livelihoods and Mental health which is to be conducted in the coming 3 months are also discussed.

They closed the meeting after filling their calendars and diaries full of activities and events for reducing the risk of young workers in textile mills.

PEACE ITI SKILLS FOR FREEDOM

Sinthanai Mandram:

This program was organized for the NCVT first year students and it induces the minds to think about our famous personalities and the awareness about the rainwater conservation which was very much essential in this period. A student from Electrical spoke about the famous personality Dr.A.P.J Abdul Kalam. The principal of ITI and other instructors gave some motivation speeches to encourage and make the students to think about good things



Special Motivation Programme:

The students of ITI were given special motivation programme by the Principal of ITI Mrs. Josephine Mercy and the instructors. The importance of unity among the students and the team work were taught with short stories and this boosted up the minds of all the students and makes them to understand “Unity is Strength”. The students were also given various group activities and they took as challenging and they finish their task by working as a group.



Online Live programme by TATA Motors:

An online live programme was conducted for the TATA Motors MMVT training students. All the students from that training attended the programme. This programme was like Entrepreneurship development programme to give details about the entrepreneur which was given by Mr. Sachin and Mr. John Paul from TATA Motors. The students after finishing their course without thinking that the only source is to get a job they can have another option of becoming an entrepreneur. For that they should have a basic idea and this programme becomes a wonderful starter for them.



Indiska Visit:

Mr. Rajiv Choudhary, Manager Quality & Social Responsibility (CSR) from Indiska Magasinet Sweden visited the ITI campus. He visited the class room teaching and all the trades in ITI. He also visited the electrical, mechanical and tailoring labs. This visit was particularly arranged for getting a core support from the Indiska management. The instructors and all the students very well cooperated for this major visit and overall the result for the ITI in instruction in class room, practical given in labs, infrastructure, neatness and gardening was very good.



YOUNG WORKERS PROJECT

Community Support Group (CSG) Meetings:

The monthly meetings for the members of the community support group in all the target 40 villages regularly organized. 593 members from the community support groups participated in these monthly meetings. They have enthusiastically discussed the importance of educating the children, protecting the rights of the young workers. The community support group meeting, participatory village development planning done with selected communities for effective intervention in the target villages. Children who are about to drop out tap high school levels were identified and sent to their schools to continue their education



Community Support Group members and Parents:

Project has organized 40 meetings to members of the community support group and parents in the project villages. The members learnt more about child rights and present conditions of their situation, they realized that the poverty situations, lack of livelihood development opportunities were also found as the obstacles in realization of the child rights. The members were committed to eliminate child labour and also to protect their rights which are linked to the development of the children. Stressed about the women empowerment, which is the key to strengthen their participation in the decision-making for socio-economic development.



World Anti Child labours Day

During this reporting period, World Anti Child labour Day was celebrated on 30th April in 40 villages in the project area. This programme highlighted the inequalities faced by the child labour in the society, issues of the child marriage and appealed for protecting the rights of the girl children. Purpose of observing the day was well explained among the adolescent girls who were all participated in the celebration. Ensuring safety and security from all kinds of violation of children's basic rights. All the students and staffs attended the meeting.

Finally, a solemn affirmation was taken among the students against the child labour. This awareness programme against child labour has kindled all the students to dedicate themselves for ensuring the safety and security from all kinds of violation of children's basic rights. 1232 children participated in this programme.



Motivation programme

Motivation programme was organized in Peace Trust Training Centre for 65 adolescent girls and workers support group members. The programme focused on inspiring the participants for girls' education and the speakers insisted the women to undergo skill training for gainful employment. Some of the adolescent mill workers were willing to join in the skill training courses offered by the vocational institutions. Adolescent girls and young workers participated in this programme.



VEC, PTA and VPRC involvement in prevention of drop out

Project staff members have got the opportunity to participate in the VPRC meeting held in the 12 panchayats and spoke on the activities of the project. Project has succeeded in linking 283 persons from 40 villages to various social protection schemes according to their felt need. As a result of this project has gained the trust and confidence of the people and built a strong support system for its programme.



Training for ICC group members

Mill workers Internal Complaints Committee Meeting in 10 mills Meeting on ICC & health and safety was organized in spinning mills such as DPN, Meenachi and Meera. The objective of the awareness sessions was to make the workers aware of safety measures. They were given training on ways of reconciling their problems facing them in and around mill. Still workers supporting group members shared their problems facing at mills.



Field visit in Kurumbapatty :

Dr.J.Paulbaskar chairman Peace Trust, Mr.Rajiv Choudhary, Manager Quality & Social Responsibility (CSR) from Indiska Magasinet Sweden visited the project area Kurumbapatty. The Team met adolescent girl mill workers, school going adolescent girl members and had a discussion with Village development activities. The adolescent girls and the women group explained very well about all the activities on going in the village and the awareness and the benefit what they got through this project.



Awareness on entrepreneurship development programme:

A one day programme was conducted at the Training Centre of the Peace Trust ITI by Young Workers Project. The schemes of the Peace Trust for imparting training in sectors such as sewing, Goat Maintenance, Textile shop, Petty shop etc. Financial Support under the schemes ranges Ten Thousand rupees were explained by the Chairman of Peace Trust Dr. J. Paul Baskar.



Gram Sabha meeting :

Field staff members have participated in the Special Gram Sabha meeting held in all the 10 Panchayats. Adolescent groups and community support group members from 40 target villages were also participated and submitted petitions to the local body leaders to pass resolution to end modern slavery in the villages. Members of the groups have also insisted the Gram Sabha to support the education for the children who are exploited by spinning mills. Staff members have spoken on the project intervention among the Gram Sabha participants.



Village level Interface Meetings

The Young workers project of Peace Trust conducted Village level interface meeting a discussion with the government officers in 6 cluster centre's of Malvarpatty, Thattarapatty, Nathapatty, Nagampatty, Chithur and Sriramapuram.at 40 villages with the VAO, Panchayat Secretary, Teachers, Anganvadi workers, Village Sanitary workers, Poverty Eradication Group members, SHG members, Adolescent girl's and boy's committee members and village people were participated in this conversation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss about prevention of child marriage, health and safety of the mill workers mill level and the villages. Enhancing the enrolment in school to prevent drop out and child labourers



Pasumai 90.4 FM

In the "Kalvichangamam" programme, guidance was given to the students who had completed 10th and 12th in the PSNA Mahal by some resource person and it was broadcasted as a live programme in Pasumai FM. The students got knowledge about various courses and the scope in the same. This programme was very much useful for the students and the parents who were in panic about the higher studies. This programme gave wide knowledge to many listeners.



The world book day on April 23 was celebrated by a special programme by getting an overview from the listeners about their reading. They were asked about their most read book, the books they like, the book they aspire to read and how the book takes it role in their personal life. Many listeners participated in great interest and shared and registered their ideas.

Radio Maths-Advisory Committee Meeting

An advisory committee meeting was held on 1st April for the Radio Mathematics programme to be started in the Pasumai FM. .Dr.R.Sreedher, NCSTC Nominee, Dr.K.Varadharajan, Chairman, Dr.J.Paul Baskar Co-Chairman, B.B.Rajaram, Media Member and Dr.Jayakumar, Principal Investigator have participated in this meeting. In general discussion, the meeting members suggested some ideas for how the programme's each episode should be to attract and impart Mathematical knowledge to the weavers group.



Launch of Radio Mathematics project:

Motivation from the Information and broadcasting committee and National Science and Technology of Indian Government, our Pasumai FM 90.4 is organizing the programme called "Radio Mathematics Project" was started on 15th April 2018. This programme should be exclusively developed for and by the weaver's community. This Radio Mathematics programme should impart the mathematical knowledge to the weavers and also should develop the economical status of them.

Initially a base line survey was conducted by our Pasumai FM team in 2017 among the weavers group to get an idea about this programme and the survey was submitted to the National Institute of Science and Technological Department of India.

