

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 donors but a compilation of field realities for the purpose of sharing and action. The News Letter is for academic purpose to understand Human Resources and Skill Education.

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Peace Trust

**Near Police Housing Colony
Trichy Road, Dindigul-624005,
Tamil Nadu, India**

Ph:0451-2410021; Fax:0451-2410372

Mobile&WhatsApNo:8667265272

Email:info@peacetrust.in,chairman@peacetrust.in

Website:www.peacetrust.in

Edited By: Dr. J. Paul Baskar Ph.D.

Assisted By: Er. P. Ruba Balan, Mrs. C.Sangeetha, Mrs. Chitra

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Migration

Indian Immigration Conundrum:

On the divergence in the U.S. between the needs of visa-holding aliens and undocumented migrants:

A group of approximately 800 Indian-Americans gathered on Pennsylvania Avenue outside the White House last weekend to march in favour of U.S. President Donald Trump's immigration policies. Apparently, there are some Indian-origin persons who do support Mr. Trump's harsh rhetoric on securing America's borders, not only through the southern border wall with Mexico, but also stricter enforcement of controls over legal migration. How could this be, given that migration is the engine that powers the globally aspirational Indian of today? And as, historically, Indians have always been a vibrant immigrant community on distant shores, consistently maintaining deep familial and professional ties across the world?

In part the "protest" may have stemmed from the fact that the head of the group that organised it is Shalabh Kumar, the Illinois-based Indian-American businessman who claims to have close ties within the Trump team. Any demonstration of support to Mr. Trump's agenda could be politically beneficial to Mr. Kumar.

However, to an extent the views of those protesters in Washington may represent the divergence between the needs of visa-holding "aliens" such as H-1B tech workers from India, and those of undocumented migrants to the U.S., a 11.4 million-strong population. Undocumented workers seek the unrestricted right to enrol in educational institutions, work, marry, and own property, as well as access social security, health insurance, college tuition support, and other such welfare benefits that the federal government is required by law to provide to U.S. persons.

On the other hand, non-immigrant workers are focussed on attaining a higher level of access to and integration into their adopted home. They seek to convert their alien status into permanent resident or citizen status. They worry about getting their visas extended and lengthy green card queues; about what the fate of their children will be once they reach the age of 21 and cannot claim dependent status; and about the options available to spouses of H-1B visa-holders, H-4 visa-holders, to seek gainful employment and escape facing social isolation and professional atrophy after years of productive career growth in India.

These aspiring migrants, who consider themselves to be on the "merit" side of Mr. Trump's immigration paradigm, also separate themselves from the "family-based migrants," who seek to immigrate legally to the U.S. based on the status of close family members and not work-related qualifications. They take to heart the words of Mr. Trump, who in his State of the Union speech last month vowed to crack down on "chain migration" and end the visa lottery system, and move toward creating an immigration framework geared more toward "merit-based" migration.

Yet the hope of visa-based temporary foreign workers that this government will not turn upon them eventually may be belied. The rhetoric coming out of the Trump administration, including an executive action last summer that called for stricter enforcement of laws regulating H-1B visa entry, appears to have thus far put both forms of legal migration in its cross hairs as much as it does undocumented migration

Trump's SOTU speech: End chain migration

Proposes Four Pillars of Reform, Pushes for Merit-Based Immigration

Washington: President Donald Trump on Wednesday called for a merit-based immigration system that would benefit IT professionals from countries like India, but sought an end to "chain migration". In his first State of the Union address, Trump tried to shed his polarising image that has thwarted his ability to pass a bipartisan legislation on immigration reforms, calling upon Democrats to join him to work together for the benefit of Americans. Trump proposed four pillars of immigration reform that include a pathway to citizenship for almost 1.8 million illegal immigrants known as 'Dreamers' who were brought in the US by their parents at a young age, border security, ending the visa lottery programme and limiting family-based migration.

"It is time to begin moving towards a merit-based immigration system one that admits people who are skilled, who want to work, who will contribute to our society, and who will love and respect our country," Trump said in his 80-minute address. Democrats, many of whom brought 'Dreamers' as guests to the president's speech, booed and hissed when the president mentioned his plans to slash the number of people who immigrate to the US through family connections a practice Trump has decried as "chain migration".

Trump said that his proposal should be supported by both parties (Republican and Democratic) as a fair compromise one “where nobody gets everything they want, but where the country gets the critical reforms it needs”. The second pillar includes building a wall on the Southern border with Mexico. “Crucially, our plan closes the terrible loopholes exploited by criminals and terrorists to enter our country and it finally ends the dangerous practice of ‘catch and release’,” Trump said.

Trump said the third pillar ends the visa lottery a programmed that randomly hands out green cards without any regard for skill, merit, or the safety of Americans. Immigrants from any one country may not receive more than 7% of diversity visas issued annually through lottery. Trump has been against visa lottery system as he believes that this does not attract the best and the brightest to the US. Given that there are hundreds and thousands of Indian IT professionals waiting in queue to get their green cards because of the current country quota, the relocation of diversity visa numbers to green cards is expected to hugely benefit them.

The fourth and final pillar protects the nuclear family by ending chain migration, he said, ruling that under the current broken system, a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited numbers of distant relatives. “Under our plan, we focus on the immediate family by limiting sponsorships to spouses and minor children. This vital reform is necessary, not just for our economy, but for our security, and our future.” The end of chain immigration would make it difficult for green card holders to sponsor their family members.

Sri Lankan refugee alleges harassment

A Sri Lankan Tamil, a resident of Mandapam camp, has moved the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court against the alleged harassment of her family by Q Branch police. Justice S.S. Sundar, hearing the petition on Monday, directed notice to the Special Deputy Collector, Mandapam Camp, and the Inspector of Police, Q Branch CID, Ramanathapuram.

The petitioner, who was running a small canteen at the camp, alleged that officials were demanding bribe from her. She further alleged that when she refused to pay the money, she and her family members were threatened that they would be implicated in false cases and would be subjected to strict surveillance. She said that she had now closed the canteen and was without any economic support.

Trafficking

NIA to probe human trafficking cases

NIA would receive financial aid under Nirbhaya Fund for safety of women in order to set up a cell for investigating human trafficking

Government officials say that in order to empower the NIA to probe trafficking cases, the National Investigation Act, 2008, will have to be amended.

New Delhi: The apex anti-terror body National Investigation Agency (NIA) will be the nodal authority for probing cases of human trafficking after the government approved a proposal in this regard, according to an official. The union cabinet on Wednesday okayed the draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, which also proposes a punishment of life imprisonment for repeat offenders, the person in the know said.

According to officials of the ministry of women and child development, the NIA would receive financial aid under Nirbhaya Fund for safety of women in order to set up a cell for investigating human trafficking. Government officials say that in order to empower the NIA to probe trafficking cases, the National Investigation Act, 2008, will have to be amended. The draft bill divides various offences into “trafficking” and “aggravated trafficking”.

The former category of crimes would carry a jail term of seven to 10 years and the latter would carry a punishment of at least 10 years in jail, which can be extended to life imprisonment. Aggravated offences will

include forced labour, bonded labour, forced surrogacy, use of narcotics to induce forced labour, trafficking in the garb of marriage and those that lead to a pregnancy or grave illness such as HIV/AIDS.

The draft bill also moots three years in jail for abetting, promoting and assisting trafficking. The proposed law recommends a national anti-trafficking relief and rehabilitation committee which would be headed by secretary of women and child development ministry. It also suggests setting up of a rehabilitation fund and prescribes a process to be followed for repatriation of trafficked persons.

Skills

320 get job offer letters

47 private companies, over 1,400 applicants take part in the fair

A total of 320 youths received their offer letters from various private firms at the second Mega Job Fair 2018. The event was conducted by the Department of Employment and Training, here on Saturday. Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management R.B. Udhayakumar, Minister for Labour Nilofer Kafeel and Collector K. Veera Raghava Rao inaugurated the event.

The Revenue Minister encouraged the candidates by stating that skill and training were important factors when it came to clinching jobs. With a nuanced understanding of necessary requirements, everyone could get jobs, said Mr. Udhayakumar. The fair which took place at Tirumangalam's Government Girls Higher Secondary School saw the participation of 47 private companies and over 1,400 applicants from across the district.

Popular brands like TVS Motor Company, TVS Logistics Services Limited, JK Fenner, Aravind Eye Hospital, Meenakshi Mission and Apollo Pharmacy were key recruiters at the fair. N. Mahalakshmi, Deputy Director of Employment, said that the response from students and unemployed youth had increased exponentially.

"We have conducted 14 other 'Micro Job Fairs'. Students, including those with class 8 pass certificate and those in pharmacy, nursing, engineering, trading and textile sector, participated in the job fair. Diploma and degree holders look forward to the job fairs we organise with the hope of securing a position in these companies," she said. She said that training and skill development workshops would be regularly conducted by the department.

Skill development to get leg-up

With poor employment generation being a major concern, the skill development ecosystem is keen that the Union Budget should have adequate allocation to help complete the plan to set up model training centres in all districts, and special schemes to support skilling of women and the disabled. The Budget is also likely to have an allocation to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), sops including interest subsidies to boost skilling in 'difficult' areas, including the hilly States and those affected by left wing extremism, as well as financial incentives for corporates to engage more apprentices, according to sources in the skill development ecosystem.

Model training centres

Pointing out that the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship envisaged establishing 650 (one in each district) 'model training centres' or 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras' (PMKKs), Jayant Krishna, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, National Skill Development Corporation, said that so far, allocations had been made for setting up 527 PMKKs covering 484 districts in 27 States. These allocated PMKKs would cover 406 Lok Sabha constituencies.

As of January 25 this year, 356 PMKKs have been established in 24 States and two Union Territories and work is going on at 124 additional sites for setting up of these centres. "To cover the remaining unallocated districts/parliamentary constituencies, proposals from market were invited through request for proposal, released on September 12, 2017, covering the remaining 185 unallocated districts/parliamentary constituencies," he said. "There could be a push [in the Budget] to complete [the setting up of] PMKKs in the coming fiscal in the remaining districts..."

Then, there would be complete assessment of the PMKKs by around mid-2018, when the placement data would be available, Mr. Krishna said. There was also the expectation that the Budget would have some measures to take forward the Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) and Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) programmes, he said. The SANKALP has a \$250 million loan assistance from the World Bank to the Government of India to boost the National Skill Development Mission.

The programme provides specific incentives to the States to help skill disadvantaged populations through innovative models, with focus on women and persons with disability. The STRIVE — a \$425 million Central scheme, with half of the outlay as World Bank loan assistance — incentivises ITIs to improve their performance by involving small and medium firms, business associations and industry clusters, Mr. Krishna said. The Centre is

also likely to make the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) more attractive by increasing the overall allocation for reimbursement of 25% of prescribed stipend (subject to a maximum of 1500/- per month per apprentice) by it to all employers who engage apprentices.

The future of jobs: Why India must embrace the new era of artificial intelligence, blockchain and robots:

The ancient Chinese game Go, which has a very high number of possible moves, was considered almost impossible for a computer to beat humans two years ago. Last year Alpha Go (a Go programme designed by two Go players) beat the best professional Go Player Lee Sedol in a five game match. Machine learning had breached even the bastion of strategic thought.

Impossible Foods, a fourth industrial revolution technology company, makes a plant based food that smells, tastes, looks like real meat. It threatens the future of the \$90 billion meat industry. If only 20% of world population switches from eating real meat to alternative proteins it would free up 12% of total fresh water, free 400 million hectares of land and 960 megatonnes of CO2 emission.

Traditional manufacturing and service oriented industries are being disrupted in a manner we have never seen before. The first industrial revolution was triggered by the invention of the steam engine, which led to mechanical production. The second industrial revolution, catalysed by electricity and the assembly line, made mass production feasible and was catalysed by the discovery of electricity and assembly line. The third industrial revolution, from the 1960s onwards, was driven by computers, digital technology and the internet.

The fourth industrial revolution is being driven today by ten technologies that are transforming industrial production: autonomous robots; simulation; big data and analytics; augmented reality; the cloud; cyber-security; additive manufacturing; horizontal and vertical integration; the internet of things and artificial intelligence (AI). These technologies are impacting the entire production value chain from design to productivity, speed and quality of production.

There is widespread concern over the potential impact of the fourth industrial revolution on employment. A vast range of jobs are at risk of extinction and rapid scaling could lead to accumulation of job losses. The other fear is that new technologies would lead to increase in inequalities and lack of social cohesion. Elon Musk has stated AI represents an essential threat to humanity and has suggested tight regulations. Bill Gates has said that robots need to be taxed to compensate for greater efficiency compared to humans and suggested the pace of automation should be slowed down. A McKinsey report estimates that 400-800 million people around the globe could be displaced by automation and will need to find new jobs by 2030, for which they will require new skills. There will be considerable need for re-skilling and training.

Let us look at what new technologies could do to enable India to technologically leapfrog. The two indicators holding ease of doing business in India back are enforcement of contracts where India is 164th, and registering property where India is 154th out of 190 countries. About 3 crore cases are currently pending in Indian courts. Two-thirds of all civil cases in district courts relate to registering land. Blockchain based smart contracts could radically reduce litigation, bring transparency in land registry and eliminate corruption relating to land. India has a billion biometrics on Aadhaar. We have a unique opportunity to leverage our public identities to have many applications on a blockchain network.

According to a PwC report, AI will contribute as much as \$15.7 trillion to the world economy by 2030. Given India's strength in technology, favourable demographics and structural advantages in availability of advanced data India can be an AI pioneer. AI has the potential to add \$957 billion to India's economy by 2035, lifting it by 15% (Accenture report). India's data diversity is a big draw for global AI implementers. AI can be a game changer in government where "scale" and "quality" need to be addressed simultaneously.

What does India need to do to embrace technology, create new jobs and meet the requirements of the changed scenario?

Firstly, we must realign India's education system to emphasise skills rather than mere degrees. We must move away from the Anglo-Saxon system of education with emphasis on academic degrees, toward hands on learning in practical subjects. A beginning has already been made by Atal Innovation Mission. By 2018 end, nearly 2000 schools will have Tinkering Labs with robots, 3D printers, additive machinery, Internet of things and mentors so that children from class 6 onwards can build and experiment rather than only imbibe.

Secondly, we must constantly upgrade skills. There is a severe shortage of skilled manpower. India needs massive upgradation programmes in new technologies. Our IITs and IIITs must redefine themselves as institutes driving cutting edge technologies for the fourth industrial revolution.

Thirdly, we must create a highly flexible, resilient and adaptive workforce which is multi-skilled and has the capacity to undertake digital tasks from anywhere rather than a fixed location.

Fourthly, we must initiate measures to ensure that Indians are fully prepared to embrace the new era of AI, blockchain, additive manufacturing and emerging technologies. India cannot afford to bypass this revolution. This requires a new mindset. Our policies must drive this change.

Fifthly, we must work across disciplines and institutional boundaries. We must break silos. Medical data is an example. Life saving opportunities can be utilised by sharing large sets of genomic data across different health providers and research organisations.

Sixthly, our focus must be on social sector – education, health, nutrition where new technologies will enable us to improve the quality of life and enhance our human development index. These are also the sectors where maximum jobs will be created. Countries are still navigating the early stages of this new industrial revolution. Can India jumpstart this transformation?

Served by Indians: For India to be a services superpower, diversify beyond IT to medical services

I have spent most of my early years, growing up in rural India, around farmers. I cannot recall, looking back at those years, a single example of a farmer becoming financially secure. We are still a rain based economy. No rain, no crop, no money; too much of rain, no crop, no money; adequate rain, bumper crop, prices drop, no money. It is only a matter of time before a farmer goes bankrupt. Even though farming contributes only 13.7% of GDP, it is responsible for 50% of employment. By contrast, only 2% of US jobs are from farming. The conclusion is inescapable: we need to look at alternative jobs for farmers' families. Contrary to popular perception, the health sector at \$8 trillion is the world's largest industry (IT is \$3.4 trillion, oil \$2 trillion, automobiles \$2 trillion). In the US and UK the health sector is the largest employment generator today. UK's National Health Service is the world's fifth largest employer.

India's iconic manufacturer Maruti directly employs only 13,500 employees for a revenue of Rs 66,500 crore, while Narayana Health directly employs 15,500 employees for a revenue of Rs 1,878 crore. Thus the health sector creates disproportionately higher number of jobs for companies' top line, especially for semi-skilled and unskilled youth which is the need of the day. In Mangalore there are agencies that recruit and provide "40 day ladies" to take care of new born babies and their mothers; they earn Rs 55,000 for just 40 days of work and their only qualification is that they were once mothers themselves. These jobs which have flexible schedules are ideal for women from rural India. Let's assume that only 10% of Indian expectant mothers can afford this service, and we are talking about a few lakh well-paying and flexible jobs. To scale this up we just need short term training, and an interactive portal to promote and monitor.

For optimum care, behind every doctor there are four nurses, four technicians and five administrators. Most of them require a licence to practise, restricting supply. According to the US bureau of labour statistics, out of the 20 fastest growing US occupations nine are in healthcare. Unfortunately, none of the nine training and licensing systems exists in India. Recognition by the statutory body is important for skill building. The greatest challenge to training the rural poor is the cost of training. There are at least 5,000 hospitals across India capable of training home health aides. But government or donors must reimburse the cost of training the rural poor by grants or educational loans.

India needs two million nurses and the rest of the world nine million. The nursing profession is not attracting talent in India because of lack of career progression. In the US 67% of anaesthetic procedures are done by nurse-anaesthetists. In India a nurse who has worked in intensive care for 20 years is legally not allowed to prescribe even a pain killer. A 25-year-old nurse intensivist can easily earn a lakh rupees a month in India. All it requires is regulatory changes to make healthcare delivery inclusive and not the exclusive domain of doctors.

According to the World Bank there will be a demand for 80.2 million health workers across the world in just 13 years. Healthcare jobs are not attractive for people from wealthy countries. We should train rural youth to become doctors, nurses and paramedics for the world. There are 45,000 doctors and nurses from Cuba working in Central America earning about \$8 billion a year. Philippines receives \$29.7 billion in remittances, mostly from its 1,50,000 nurses and 18,000 physicians working abroad.

We should convert 600 district hospitals as medical nursing and paramedical schools to train 5 million doctors, nurses and paramedics for the global requirement. They can remit about \$100 billion of precious foreign currency every year over a period of time. It doesn't cost Rs 400 crore to build modern medical schools. There are 35 medical schools in the Caribbean region training doctors for the US. These medical schools occupy about 50,000 sq ft rented space in shopping malls, where most of the teaching is done by Indians. We can start by converting 60 district hospitals in "Naxalite" affected regions as medical schools with less than Rs 50 crore investment to train doctors, nurses and paramedics. They should be trained primarily to pass the entrance exams of the US and UK. It's important to train children from poor families to become doctors because outstanding doctors across the world with magic in their fingers generally come from deprived backgrounds.

Unfortunately, Indian medical education has become an elitist affair. By creating a parallel medical education predominantly for the Western market we can demonstrate high quality affordable medical education, at the same time making a big impact on our rural economy. We should make India the service provider for the world, as China has done for manufacturing. Remuneration for overseas health workers is significantly higher than most other professions. A 24-year-old nurse from Kerala, working at our hospital in Cayman Islands, recently took her parents on a holiday to Disneyland. India, with over 2 million beds, can easily train the global requirement of health workers just by changing our policies governing medical and nursing education.

Like 'Make in India', our slogan should be 'Served by Indians'. We missed the Industrial Revolution, let us not miss the healthcare revolution which doesn't need money. It just needs youth with passion and compassion, which we have in abundance.

Child rights

Child worker rescued by special team

A child worker was rescued here on Thursday evening by a special team constituted by the district administration.

Official sources said that M. Gopalakrishnan was found employed at a grocery at Veliyangadu area. The number of child workers rescued in the district during the first seven months of this calendar year was almost double the children rescued for the entire 2009, sources added.

The majority of the children rescued since the formation of the district were from units that constitute the textile manufacturing chain, according to the statistics with National Child Labour Project.

Spurned, man sets Tamil Nadu schoolgirl on fire

MADURAI: A 14-year-old schoolgirl from Naduvakottai village near Tirumangalamin Madurai district was doused with petrol and set ablaze on Friday evening by a relative whose proposal for marriage she had rejected. Her mother, who was passing by in an autorickshaw, and the vehicle's driver put out the fire and rushed the girl to hospital. M Chithra Devi was admitted to the Government Rajaji Hospital with more than 70% burns, mostly above the waist. Police are looking for Balamurugan, a spinning mill daily-wage worker, who had been harassing the girl and her family. Chithra's parents had approached the police a few times complaining of harassment and a case had been registered. The victim's brother said the harassment continued for more than six months.

'Man had suicidal tendencies' Based on a complaint from the girl's mother M Petchiyammal, 35, a case was registered in Tirumangalam AWPS against Balamurugan under sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) in September 2017. However, he was not arrested. Police sources said the man had suicidal tendencies. The case is pending in court.

A close relative of Chithra, R Mokkasamy, told reporters that the school was hardly 2km from her house. As she missed her bus at 4.30pm, she was looking for an autorickshaw when the Balamurugan followed her with a plastic can full of petrol. The girl's mother could see her being set ablaze from a distance, he said. Mokkasamy said that in the hospital Chithra could speak a little. She said the accused should be punished sternly. She also wanted to thank the autorickshaw driver for the timely help.

Chithra's elder brother M Iyyappan, a plus one student, said Balamurugan had been harassing the family for more than six months to get the girl married to him. He even came to their house once armed with a sickle and a rope. "He threatened to attack us. He also attempted to hang himself in our house," he said. Police sources said the accused had come on a two-wheeler with a two-litre plastic container full of petrol. As soon as he set the girl afire, he left his bike and ran away. The girl was taken to the nearby Tirumangalam government hospital, from where she was referred to the GRH. A case was registered with the Tirumangalam taluk police station under IPC 307-attempt to murder and a few sections of the POCSO Act. Police sources said the accused too sustained injuries on the hand. Meanwhile, Judicial Magistrate II K Sakthivel visited the hospital and recorded the victim's statement.

'Watchdog panels ineffective in stopping child marriages':

TRICHY: Expressing displeasure at the number of child marriages going unreported in the district, Childline, nodal organisation of Trichy on Saturday blamed the ineffective functioning of the village watchdog committee for such violations. Going by the data released by the organisation, the anonymous calls to Childline helpline 1098 prevented 62 child marriages in Trichy from April 2017 to January 2018. In 2016-17, 52 child marriages were stopped. Yet, the incidences of child marriages continue in some places and go unnoticed because of the new tricks being employed by the family members of the minor girls and also the bridegroom. According to Childline, about 20% of the child marriages could not be stopped because of lack of coordination from the village level committee. Village watchdog committee consisting of members such as panchayat president was entrusted with the task of preventing child marriages and other violations. In Trichy, around 200 villages out of the total 404 had formed the committee while the remaining haven't.

"Village watchdog committee should educate the villagers about the consequences of child marriages and prevent them from taking place. Unfortunately, the committee requires awareness which we are planning to provide," said director of the nodal organisation, J Godwin Prem Singh. While child marriages were prevalent in Uppiliyapuram, Thuraiyur and Thathaingarpettai areas in 2016-17, areas like Manapparai, Vaiyampatti, Marungapuri witnessed the high number in 2017-18, according to Childline.

City coordinator of Childline, S Thiyagarajan spoke about the clandestine ways adopted by the people to hide child marriages. “There were incidences of minor girls being made to live in the house of the bridegrooms without solemnising the wedding. They come to light through village health nurses (VHN) only after the girls become pregnant,” said Thiyagarajan. Childline has also planned to put up posters about the awareness about the child marriage, child sexual abuse and other violence against the children in the educational institutions.

Work load forced minor girl to end life in Vedasandur mill hostel’

Fact-finding team says officials failed to handle the case properly

A fact-finding team that investigated the death of a minor girl worker from Kalkudi near Viralmalai in Pudukottai district in a mill hostel in Vedasandur in the early hours of Tuesday found that the girl took the extreme step of ending her life since there was no response to her complaint of being forced to work for long hours without a break.

Talking to media persons here on Saturday, one of the team members, S. Annadurai, said several girls from Manaparai, Seerkazhi and Natham came to the mill for work through agents owing to poverty and compelling domestic circumstances. The mill hostel that accommodated 56 female workers had not been registered under the Tamil Nadu Hostels and Homes for Women and Children (Regulation) Act, 2014.

The deceased girl had lost her mother, and her father was addicted to alcohol. She had quit Class VII and joined the mill through one of her relatives, Durai, four months ago. She had worked for 12 to 16 hours a day without a break. She had informed her father, other workers and mill supervisors of the work load and the pathetic condition prevailing there. “But, no one did anything to help her, and hence the girl took this drastic step,” Mr. Annadurai said.

Stating that the girl, born in 2004, was asked to work night shifts against government rules, Mr. Annadurai said Industrial Protection and Health Department officials did not investigate the case with due care. Officials of National Child Labour Eradication Programme too did not handle the case properly, he added. The government should ensure that no worker below 18 years of age were employed by mills, he said, adding it should also monitor whether mills implemented the Minimum Wages Act. Women workers should not be forced to work night shifts. All mill hostels should be registered and brought under the supervision of Social Welfare Board. Care and protection to all women workers should be ensured, he stressed.

A symbol of resistance, a votary of peace is gone

Noted **Pakistani lawyer Asma Jehangir**, who passed away on Sunday, was the country’s symbol of human rights and resistance and a fierce opponent of military dictators for over five decades. She was also a vocal advocate of India-Pakistan peace and was part of several ‘Track 2’ delegations to India. Born in Lahore on January 27, 1952, Ms. Jehangir had a prominent career both as a lawyer and a rights activist. After obtaining a law degree from the Punjab University in 1978, she started her career as an advocate at the judiciary.

She soon became a champion democracy activist and was subsequently imprisoned in 1983 for participating in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy against the military rule of Zia-ul-Haq. She also served as chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, and was widely respected for her outspoken criticism of the country’s militant and extremist Islamist groups. Ms. Jehangir also served as president of the Supreme Court’s Bar Association and was a UN rapporteur on human right and extrajudicial killings. She was once on Time magazine’s list of 100 most influential women.

In defence of minorities

She often defended minority Christians charged with blasphemy, an offence that under Pakistan’s controversial law carries the death penalty. She was repeatedly threatened by the country’s militant religious right whom she criticised loudly and often. Ms. Jehangir has also taken up cases of missing persons and fought in the courts for their recovery free of cost. She played an active role in the famous lawyers’ movement in 2007 to restore Iftikhar Chaudhry as the Chief Justice of Pakistan. The movement later brought the fall of then President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Of late, she had been critical of the Supreme Court for its ‘judicial activism’ and had also criticised the apex court for disqualifying Nawaz Sharif from the office of Prime Minister in July last year. She won numerous national

and international awards for her struggle for the oppressed including the highest civilian honours Hilal-i-Imtiaz and Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Ms. Jehangir is survived by her businessman-husband, Tahir Jehangir, a son and two daughters. Condolences poured in from within and outside the country. Leaders of all political parties paid rich tributes to her. President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi both expressed grief and sorrow. The President, in his condolence message, said that Ms. Jahangir played an unforgettable role in the upholding of democracy and human rights. Mr. Abbasi lauded Ms. Jahangir for her immense contribution towards upholding rule of law, democracy and safeguarding human rights. He termed her demise as a great loss for legal fraternity.

Government ignoring plight of children, says Supreme Court

The Supreme Court slammed the government for the “tardy if not virtual non-implementation” of juvenile justice laws and turning a deaf ear to the plight of “voiceless if not silenced” children of the nation.

In a 62-page judgment, the Social Justice Bench of the apex court of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta described the negligent attitude shown by the country’s power and authority circles to children, including pendency of cases of orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children , the “uncomfortable” conditions of life of children in observation and care homes, the increasing number of vacancies in juvenile justice institutions and the lack of initiative by legal services authorities despite the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and its new and improved version passed in 2015.

“No one has any doubt that it is time for the State to strongly and proactively acknowledge that even children in our country have fundamental rights and human rights and they need to be enforced equally strongly,” Justice Lokur, who authored the judgment, observed. The apex court quotes from South African leader Nelson Mandela’s speech in 1997 when he said “our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future. Those who abuse them tear at the fabric of our society and weaken our nation”.

Justice Lokur lashed out at the government, saying “our policy and decision makers need to heed this advice and warning (of Mandela) and appreciate that they are not doing any favour to the children of our country by caring for them — it is their constitutional obligation and the social justice laws enacted by Parliament need to be effectively and meaningfully enforced”. The implementation of laws meant to protect the fundamental rights of our children has so far been met with “continuing callousness” because children have “no voice in the affairs of the State”.

In a slew of directions, the court directed the Ministry of Women and Child Development and all state governments to ensure that positions in the national and state commissions for protection of child rights, Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees) are filled up expeditiously. The court requested chief justices of all high courts to register proceedings on their own for effective implementation of the 2015 Act.

"Finally, we request and urge the chief justice of each high court to seriously consider establishing child friendly courts and vulnerable witness courts in each district," the bench said. It said inquiries under the JJ Act and trials under other statutes like the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, trials in sexual offences cases were required to be conducted with a "high degree of sensitivity, care and empathy for the victim" by establishing dedicated child-friendly and vulnerable witness courts.

The apex court’s judgment came on a PIL seeking implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act and its rules.

PEACE ITI SKILLS FOR FREEDOM

Sinthanai Mandram:

SCVT student of our Peace ITI presented about our Tamil poem Thirukural since Thirukural touches all the dimensions of human life and she gave a beautiful presentation by highlighting some poems in Thirukural. Another important speech about environment was presented from the student side as it is very essential and unavoidable to prevent our environment from degradation. \

Both the SCVT and NCVT students participated in this programme and it induced the minds of all the students attended by making them to think about our culture and nature.



Pongal Day Competition –Prize Distribution:

The Farmar Festival “Pongal” was celebrated in the month of January. Various competitions like Kabadi, Volley ball, Rangoli, Speech about famous Personalities, Poems of Tamil poet Bharathi were held for the students of ITI. The prize distribution for the winners was done as programme in this month and distributed by the Principal of ITI. Overall 67 prizes were given to the winners of various activities.



Campus interview from MRF Company

MRF Company has organized a placement programme in our Peace ITI and prior to this programme invitation was published and circulated to various ITI institutions and broadcasted in Pasumai FM also. More than 50 ITI completed students had completed and got the exposure of this opportunity. Both written and some personal interview were conducted and assessed also their physical fitness was also checked and finally 6

candidates were selected for that reputed company. Even the rejected candidates also analyzed the way they presented and failures will be overcome in the future.



Volley ball competition:

A Huge Volley ball competition was held on 25th February in the ground of Peace ITI. The boys from various villages in and around Vedaasandoor organized and participated. Around 14 groups participated in the programme. The cash prize of Rs5001, Rs 3001 & Rs 2001 for First, Second and Third prize respectively were given to winners. The prizes were distributed by the Chairman Dr.J.Paul Baskar.



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 during this reporting period. 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.

Progress of the project at all levels have encouraged CSG members who share their ideas and views to develop effective strategies to involve workers and community members in the execution of project activities

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 101 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 PROGRAMME ON WORKERS' SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS ON WORKERS' RIGHTS, INDUSTRIAL LABOUR LAWS:

Members of these groups were given training on labour laws, minimum wages Act, Bonded labour Act, employment security to widen their knowledge of these acts and involve in actions. They were also trained on management of risks in cotton mills and safety measures to be followed.

The young workers were attended the training and aware of their rights such as eight hours of work, minimum and fair wages, better working conditions, occupational safety measures, registration as labours, child Labour abolition act, medical and maternity leaves, bonus, provident fund etc. The trainings for the young workers imparted them knowledge on labour Laws, rights of young workers and the means to have dialogues with their management.

MEETING FOR ICC GROUP MEMBERS:

The mill workers were trained during this reporting period. Participants were also given training on to protecting method, and where to approach for reconciling their problems facing at mills. They are also given direction to get ITI courses for their career growth. Mill workers Internal Complaints Committee Meeting in 2 mills Meeting on ICC & health and safety was organized in spinning mills such as L.K.Lakshmi and MRS. The objective of the awareness sessions was to make the workers aware of safety measures in their safe guards and its materials, and by taking balanced food.

ACTION RESEARCH MEETING:

First week of this month action research group meetings was held at the project Villages Kurumbapatty & Karupputhevanur and the group member's participated and prepared the one year plans for the Village level developments.

PRESS MEET:

A Press meet was organized for the fact finding report on the suspicious death of Girl child labour, Dharshini in Doller spinning mill, Vedachandur, Dindigul District on 10th feb 2018. Based on the media reports on the suicide of the girl child labour, Dharshini in Doller Spinning Mill, situated at Auyer madam, Vedachandur taluk in dindigul district ,a fact finding team, consisting of representatives from campaign Against campaign coolie system, Child Rights monitor, and Peace Trust Dindigul. Read, Erode, unorganised textile workers and young workers development project under took the work of finding the fact.



EXPOSURE VISIT FOR 3 DAYS

Three days Exposure visit to North India Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) for our project members was organized. This exposure visit is mainly to look and analyze the Team working in the Villages in North India and also other activities like their achievements were also notified. Their work with adolescent group, Parents of the adolescents, Focus Group meetings, SHG, NGO activities etc., were also analyzed. This visit gave a big exposure to our team to achieve and implement some successful methods that we analyzed in the visit.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS AND PARENTS:

Project has organized 10 meetings to members of the community support group and parents in the project villages. Overall 287 members of the community support group members and parents participated in the meeting programme. 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.

FILM SHOWS TO TRAIN THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The Adolescent girls in 40 villages were trained through film show in view of developing their leadership and functional skills in their groups. Group Formation, selection of leaders, setting norms and regulations for the groups were discussed and learnt following the film shows. The members were able to strengthen their existing groups. Games like Black Ribbon, expression of feelings, were played among the girls that helped them to learn overcoming the barriers in their life, to get rid of shyness, and grow with self-confidence, unity in the groups.



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TRAINING-SHORT FILM “PRIYA CALL ME”

A short film based Curriculum Development Training through the Short Film “Priya Call me” on young mill workers was shown to the members of the CSG members and, girls and Parents in 40 villages. viewers commented that the sexual harassment to the girls working in the mills, overtime work, low wages, lack of safety devices and toilet facilities really reflect more or less the same adverse situation and the helplessness of these girls. It was noted that the people happen to see this film would not send their children to mill work. Viewers appreciated that the whole film is more educative on the real problems of girls working in mills.



INTERFACE MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS:

- Project has also organized two interface meeting at Peace Trust Training Centre with the VPRC committee members. These members of the Mill Management committee including the Child Welfare Committee officer Mr.Sathivel also participated. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss about prevention of child marriage in the villages and enhancing the enrolment in school to prevent drop out and child labourers.

- Interface meeting was held with the representatives from the Mill management shared that they are concerned on the health and safety of the mill workers.



EXPOSURE VISIT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS:

Adolescent girls were interested to visit a vocational training institution to observe the courses offered facilities available and the scope for various courses. The adolescent girls participated in the exposure trip and visited Peace Industrial School at Vittanayakkanpatty. Participants have visited all the laboratories, course rooms, library etc and had interaction with the head of the institution, faculty members. Participants had very pleasure to see the facilities available in the institute which is offering courses affiliated to national council for vocational training. Another important thing participant observed was this institute has special curriculum for improving the foundation skills of the candidates which is very essential to get employment.

PEACE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Tamilnadu Teacher Education University and RVS College of Education have conducted sports meet on 2nd February in District Nehru Stadium. The Chief Guest Dr. V.P.B.Paramasivam., MLA Vedasandur gave a valuable speech about sports and healthcare. Our College Student have participated in all the sports events and they won prizes in the games like Running, relay, High jump, Long jump, Jawla. Our College student got overall championship also.



ELT MEETING (ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING)

A Skill Development Programme in the Topic of “English Language Teaching” was organized in **St.Mary’s Hr.Sec.School**. Our College students taken the role as judges in this function. A timely needed Programme for students in the topic on “English Language Teaching” has been arranged. All students eagerly participated in the Programme.

B.Ed PRACTICAL COMMISSION

Tamilnadu Teacher Education University Commission was started on 23rd Feb. Our vice Principal Mrs.M.Prema invited Convener Dr.Vellaichamy, Department of Education, Madurai Kamaraj University.

1. Dr.Vellaichamy. – Convener
2. Mrs.M.Prema - Member

In the First day of the commission “Lesson plan Teaching” was presented by all the students. Next day Viva was conducted. After that the Convener and member visited the student’s Teaching aids which they prepared during their teaching practises, and asked some questions about the Teaching materials what they have. Overall the commission ended with a good presentation and the quality outcome of the students of 2016-2018 batch



Pasumai 90.4 FM

In a special programme Mr.Selvaraj, the proprietor of Tanishq jewelers, gave a special talk about the economy of India and he also gave his interview to the listeners of Pasumai FM and the programme was broadcasted on 26th February.



Another programme for the students who are about to attend the public exams ie., 10th & 12th was broadcasted in the “Isai chaaral” programme. Some ideas and advises were given to the students and parents of this public exam attending students. An interview with the teachers Mr. Petha vanna Arasu and Mr.Venkatesan was also broadcasted since their tips and ideas would be more useful for the students during examination.