

SKILLS FOR FREEDOM

Newsletter from India

No: 29

November: 2017

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.

The Skills for Freedom e-newsletter is published by:



PEACE TRUST
Lifting up the least, the lost and the last..

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

Message on migrants on police radar in Kerala

The Town police have started probe into an incident in which three Hindi voice clips were recently circulated among migrant workers by unknown persons with a claim that the Kerala government has ordered the killing of all Hindi-speaking people in the State.

Investigation is now under way on the basis of a complaint filed by the Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association (KHRA).The KHRA approached the police as the voice clips, accompanied by disturbing pictures, resulted in many migrant workers leaving the city to their homeland.

In the complaint, they claimed that not less than 200 migrant workers left the district after the circulation of the fake message.The voice clips, lasting around two-and-a-half minutes, urged the non-Kerala Hindi-speaking labourers to return to their homeland.

To support the claims, photos of migrant workers' killings in other parts of the country were circulated.Muhammed Suhail, district president of KHRA, said hotel entrepreneurs faced an unexpected setback with the sudden exodus of migrant labourers.The message had wrongly influenced several persons as some of them connected it with the recent suicide of a migrant hotel labourer in the city, he said.

"We learn that the police are investigating the case very seriously as the voice clips blame the Kerala government," said Mr. Suhail. He claimed that it was the first time that such a baseless voice clip triggered an unexpected crisis.

Meanwhile, the Town police said they were yet to buy the argument of hoteliers that more than 200 labourers fled from the city as a result of the WhatsApp message. Though the Railway authorities were contacted to examine the trend of migrant workers' journey, there was no major change in the pattern as per booking records, the police said. Senior police officers confirmed that the source of the message would be probed as it had triggered fear among the non-Kerala workers. They quizzed a few workers who allegedly forwarded the messages.

Trafficking

84 Children Rescued, 120 Human Traffickers Arrested Across U.S., FBI Says

The FBI rescued 84 children from the grips of a multistate human trafficking ring and arrested 120 traffickers on Wednesday, the agency said in a statement.

Operation Cross Country: FBI Arrests 120 Human Traffickers 1:39

Operation Cross Country XI focused the attention of law enforcement agencies on a single goal: taking out "pimps" who run human trafficking rings."We at the FBI have no greater mission than to protect our nation's children from harm. Unfortunately, the number of traffickers arrested — and the number of children recovered reinforces why we need to continue to do this important work," FBI Director Christopher Wray.

A young person sits on a bed during Operation Cross Country XI. FBI."This operation isn't just about taking traffickers off the street. It's about making sure we offer help and a way out to these young victims who find themselves caught in a vicious cycle of abuse."The sting is part of a 2003 venture called the Innocence Lost National Initiative, which is responsible for finding and identifying 6,500 children since its inception.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, agencies "put an additional operational focus on pimps, particularly those involved in the human trafficking of minors," the FBI said in its statement. "Pimps who force or coerce adults to engage in prostitution are also committing acts of human trafficking."

Related: What Happens to Foreign Human Trafficking Victims in the U.S.?

The agency said human traffickers undervalue the lives of their victims, some of whom are infants. "During operations by FBI Denver's Rocky Mountain Innocence Lost Task Force, for example, a three-month-old girl and her five-year-old sister were recovered after a friend who was staying with the family made a deal with an undercover task force officer to sell both children for sex in exchange for \$600," the statement read.

The operation encompassed multiple stings over four days through Sunday. The FBI said 55 field offices, including 78 Child Exploitation Task Forces, were involved, along with 500 other law enforcement agencies across multiple states and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Human trafficking gang busted in Delhi, 6 girls rescued

NEW DELHI: A gang that had trafficked more than 100 girls from different parts of eastern India was busted by a joint team of Delhi Police and West Bengal Police and six girls were rescued from their clutches. The gang members would take up jobs at mobile phone recharge shops and jot down the numbers of their intended victims aged between 16 and 19.

The gang members would call the girls posing as admirers and complement them. Soon, they would either propose marriage or offer a lucrative job in Delhi. After a girl would sneak out of her home, she would be brought to Delhi and sold to middlemen employed by Pinki. The gang leaders, a couple, would sell the girls for prostitution in Delhi, Agra and Meerut. The kingpins, Pinki and Radhe, were operating from a house in east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar. They were found in possession of at least six SIM cards bought using Aadhaar cards of the trafficked victims.

Thagata Basu, additional SP, south 24 Parganas, said that the mobile phone shop owner would be paid Rs 1,000 for every number he shared with the traffickers. A team from special operations group of south 24 Parganas police, officials from NGO Shakti Vahini and cops from Geeta Colony police station nabbed Pinki during a raid. She admitted to having trafficked more than 100 girls to north India through a network of middlemen in south Bengal. Rishi Kanth from Shakti Vahini said that the middlemen would lock the girls in dingy rooms somewhere in east or central Delhi. They would be paid Rs 20,000-30,000. "The conversations between the traffickers, middlemen and the kingpins were conducted through prepaid mobile numbers bought using the Aadhaar cards of the survivors," he added.

LATEST COMMENT

The girls would be "groomed" in Delhi and even raped by the middlemen. Later, they would be sold in Agra or Meerut and employed at dance bars. Police got a tip-off about the racket by a girl who managed to call them from the mobile phone of a customer. She informed the cops that five other girls were being held forcibly along with her. Cops in Bengal had earlier busted a gang of 12 traffickers, who led them to Pinki and Radhe. The couple had spread their racket to parts of UP and Haryana as well.

Skills

Tamil Nadu board to introduce guides for schoolteachers

CHENNAI: With a significant curriculum revamp in focus, the state will soon roll out its first ever 'How to Teach' handbooks for state board schoolteachers. This means that from next year on teachers will be able to go through detailed lesson plans for every lesson -from trigonometry to magnetism -by using a guide that will help break down each chapter. According to senior officials in the school education department, this will be made

available for all the classes chosen for the first phase of the syllabus shift next year, classes I, VI, IX and XI. "Along with new textbooks for students, the subject and language teachers will also get detailed guides that will help them adapt to the new syllabus," said a senior official. Class-wise and subject-wise guides will be made available and will contain several components that will help the state board teachers formulate a proper teaching methodology. From concept mapping, lesson planning, class activities to framing tests, they are expected to cover the whole spectrum to help teachers wean off the "rote learning" method that the state board has become infamous for. For instance, a guide for physics textbook will point out which concepts need visual representations, while which lessons need trivia.

Untrained teachers can now access training material

Fifteen lakh untrained school teachers have enrolled for a training course with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, to get themselves trained by 2019 to be able to retain their jobs. This has happened just after Parliament passed an amendment to the Right to Education Act to offer them a last window to acquire proper training, something seen as essential to the provision of quality education in government and private schools.

The highest number of applications has been received from Bihar over 2.8 lakh followed by Uttar Pradesh (1.95 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (1.91 lakh), West Bengal (1.69 lakh) and Assam (1.51 lakh). The NIOS has designed online courses to enable them to acquire a Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed).

Students' right

"Quality education is the right of students... NIOS has developed the course for upgrading the professional competence and information and communication based capacity building for teachers," HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said at the launch of the course.

"The course will be offered through 'Swayam', a platform for online education, imparting knowledge through Dish TV. This is for the first time in the world that such high number of applications has been received for an online course." Of the 14.97 lakh applicants, 12.29-lakh have already made the payment. The payment window is open till October 5. "Among the over 12-lakh untrained teachers who have enrolled for the course, 9.25-lakh are from private schools and 3.53-lakh are employed in government schools," NIOS Chairman CB Sharma was quoted by PTI as saying.

Facing a big job crisis, government launches push to expedite flagship initiatives:

NEW DELHI: The job crisis may be the most visible distress sign in India's growth story and that is one of the reasons the government has decided to loosen restrictions on funding of development schemes beyond the 12th five-year plan and has streamlined procedures to ensure the continuation of ongoing public-funded flagship programmes.

The 12th five-year plan 2012-17 had aimed at a growth rate of 8 per cent with faster, inclusive and sustainable developments across sectors. A letter from the Department of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance reviewed by the *New Indian Express* shows that instructions have been issued to the ministries to get the approval of the competent authority by October 31, 2017.

The letter has been marked to the Prime Minister Office and the Cabinet Secretariat. The letter said most ministries are in an advanced stage of concluding the approval process of their schemes and many have already obtained the approval of the competent authority.

“For schemes where the Expenditure Finance Committees (EFCs) has already been held and the total project outlay is Rs 1,000 crore or less, further interim extension of one month time up to October 31, 2017, is granted for completion of the approval of the competent authority. For schemes where the EFCs have been held and the budgetary outlay involved is more than Rs 1,000 crore, further interim extension of two months is granted up to November 30, 2017, to obtain the approval of the competent authority,” the letter said.

The schemes which have financial implications of more than Rs 500 crore have been given extension up to December 31, 2017, to complete the appraisal and approval process. Namami Gange was a new initiative during the 12th five-year plan. It was launched in 2014-15 at an estimated cost of Rs 21,272 crore. Ministries have been also told to customize the programmes to meet the goals envisaged at the UN Conference held in June 2012 on sustainable development at Rio in Brazil that came out with a blueprint in July 2014. This includes end of poverty in all forms everywhere, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

A government document on the appraisal of the 12th five-year plan said: “It is required to put in place a mechanism to monitor progress with respect to each goal, and related targets accepted. The indicators being evolved to achieve these goals and targets at the national and state levels need to be firmed up expeditiously.”

“The success in the implementation of national policies for the attainment of sustainable development goals not only requires better-coordinated efforts of all the stakeholders but also a robust monitoring mechanism. This would also require that the policy formulators and statistical establishment work in close coordination,” the draft cabinet note said.

Four ministries — Agriculture, Water, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Urban Development — have been tasked to ensure all men and women, in particular, the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and access to financial services. According to the Cabinet note, the Ministry of Skill Development and Human Resources would handle relevant skills, including technical and vocational, for jobs and entrepreneurship. Redefining economic models to get them in sync with the technology-accelerated age is the need of the hour.

We are in the midst of the most transformative age in human history where technological leaps could make possible a world of limitless food, water, and energy. Although we have attained the ability to produce any resource at any speed or in any quantity, human capital requirement is on a steep decline owing to the advent of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics.

While five high-technology firms find themselves among the list of the top seven most valuable companies in the world, with a cumulative market capitalisation of almost \$3 trillion, it is distressing to note that they employ just under 700,000 people among them. The inevitable widespread adoption of next generation technologies indicates a future of mass unemployment, and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few enterprises capable of providing minuscule job openings.

Today’s primary challenge is the optimal allocation of copiously produced resources among an increasing population with dwindling wage-earning opportunities. Taking cue from these trends, several progressive political outfits across Europe have started demanding legislation favouring reduced working hours with no cuts in pay, three-day weekends, and the introduction of a universal basic income.

Even if new models built around the reduction, sharing, and diffusion of work and the provision of a supplementary income can sustain employment levels and living standards in wealthy nations with a steady, declining, or ageing population, with most of them plugged into the formal economy, it will be impractical in countries like India. The Indian scenario already looks grim with the Labour Bureau stating that India added just 1.35 lakh jobs in eight labour-intensive sectors in 2015, against a backdrop of almost 1.5 crore annually entering the job market. Conditions are ripe for the creation of a plenitude of frustrated people who would be easy prey to the sway of radical nationalists and populists.

Nevertheless, the informal economy employs more than 90% of our workforce. Efforts to structure the informal sector, by encouraging them to adopt modern-day tools and best practices, and by giving them adequate access to capital for expansion, would stimulate the economy and the job market.

India has massive basic infrastructural capacity requirements. Focused government planning and spending, along with the creation of an environment that would encourage private investments into these potentially large-scale projects, could create immediate openings for millions in sectors like construction, India's second largest employer, providing jobs for over 44 million. If leveraged to create essential and permanent assets, employment-guaranteeing schemes like MGNREGA would also effectively absorb a large slice of job seekers. Redefining the existing economic planning, employment and resource-allocation models, to get them in sync with this technology-accelerated age, are the need of the hour.

Strategies to create jobs in India: How to reap the dividend gifted by demography

When the number of cell phones sold in India touched the billion marks in 2013, India manufactured very few cell phones. Mindful of the growing mobile phone market in the country, the government increased the import tariff for mobiles in 2015 (making the import of finished mobile devices more expensive than producing it locally – an exercise known as correcting the inverted duty structure). The reform, along with a few structural changes, made India one of the fastest growing mobile manufacturing economies in the world with more than 42 plants set up in the last two years, generating direct and indirect employment for over four lakh people.

By next year, the number of unemployed job-seeking individuals in India will reach 18 million. Promising interventions, like the one that spurred job creation in the mobile manufacturing industry, need to be adopted more widely. According to a FICCI 2016 report, there are opportunities to correct inverted duty structure in six other sectors: capital goods, cement, electronics and electrical, rubber products, minerals and textiles. Knowing what induces job creation, while keeping the macro reality of India in perspective, is a crucial step towards ameliorating the current situation.

Job creation is a consequence of two broad phenomena: creation of new enterprises and expansion of existing ones. Employment friendly policies like promoting investments, regulating international trade, making ecosystems conducive for businesses and managing labour markets, eventually lead to one of the above two phenomena. However, the theory has unique exceptions in the Indian context.

Enterprise creation in India has not traditionally translated to creation of proportionate new jobs. More than 66% of non-farm enterprises in the country – a little over 30 million, most of them MSMEs – function without a single hired worker. The government's Startup India Policy, aimed at boosting enterprise creation while generating employment, is a step towards solving the problem. But the minuscule coverage of enterprises under the policy (2,865 as per the latest report) remains a potential hurdle.

Also, with 98% of total VC funding going to startups located in just six cities, the regional skew in the number of new jobs created is high, leaving the potential of an otherwise vast nation almost untapped. Nonetheless, with the vehement implementation of the Startup India Action Plan, it is not impractical to expect a redressal in the medium term. The inability of a large number of enterprises to grow and create jobs also indicates that enterprise expansion is non-aspirational in India. Research states that the lack of emphasis on innovation, coupled with byzantine regulations, are two prime reasons. Poor fund allocation in R&D (less than 1% of India's annual budget, as compared to 3-5% by countries like the US and China) inhibits innovation, and hence prospects of job growth. A programme like the 'Small Business Innovation and Research' (which provides enterprises with competitive R&D grants), proposed in a Niti Aayog Expert Committee report, can be a game changer.

For larger firms that can afford to innovate and grow, a totally different kind of challenge limits their job creation potential. The unit cost of capital has fallen to less than 0.6 times the unit cost of labour – a 16x drop from the unit cost of labour in the early 1980s. Chasing higher productivity at a lesser cost is the prevailing industry norm and recent developments in automation and artificial intelligence pose a daunting impact on the job market.

Apt policies aimed at tempering the impact of rapid technological build out and striking a balance between productivity and labour employment need to be conceptualised. New age sectors like defence and aerospace, education and healthcare, and burgeoning green sectors like solar energy and wind, present another massive opportunity to identify ‘upcoming jobs’ and prepare talent accordingly. India’s ambition to create more than one million new jobs in the green energy sector by 2022 is encouraging.

Large-scale job creation is the government’s most formidable challenge presently. Prudent strategies based on actual lay of the land will determine India’s growth trajectory and pronounce the quality of life our citizens will lead once we grow old as a nation. Not reaping the dividends of demography is not an option. The time to act is now.

Environment

India’s greenhouse gas emission up by 4.7% in 2016

However, most major GHG emitters, including the U.S. and China, witnessed a slump, says report by Dutch environmental assessment agency. Trends in global CO₂ and total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions show that India’s emissions have gone up by 4.7% in 2016, according to the latest report by PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. For most major GHG emitters in the world, the emission figures have gone down, barring India and Indonesia. The Dutch strategic agency’s report shows that emissions in the U.S. saw a fall of 2%, the Russian Federation 2.1%, Brazil 6.1%, China 0.3%, and, within the European Union, the United Kingdom 6.4%. The report’s data is based on the Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR) produced by the European Union.

Non-CO₂ emissions

In 2016, the five largest emitting countries and the European Union accounted for 68% of total global CO₂ emissions and about 63% of total global GHG emissions. Most of the emissions consist of CO₂, about 72%. But methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and fluorinated gases (F-gases) also make up substantial shares of 19%, 6% and 3%, respectively. Over the past two years, total global greenhouse gas emissions, excluding those from land use change and forestry, have shown a slowdown in growth, reaching 49.3 gigatonnes CO₂ equivalent in 2016.

Over the past three years, non-CO₂ GHG emissions have continued to grow somewhat faster than CO₂ emissions: by 1.5% (2014), 1.2% (2015) and 1.0% (2016). CO₂ over the same period increased by a respective 0.8%, -0.2% and 0.3%. Globally, the combined share of non-CO₂ greenhouse gas emissions is about 28% in total GHG emissions, but it varies for the largest countries: 11% for Japan and 31% for India. China’s current share is estimated at 20%, that of the United States and the European Union at 23%, and Russia’s at 25%.

A sign of growth

“India’s rising emissions are only a sign of development,” said Karthik Ganesan, Research Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

“Emissions do hurt the environment, but then the EDGAR database that this report draws upon only looks at emissions from 1990 onward when the whole world woke up to the problem of climate change. CO₂ emissions

have a 100-year residence period in the atmosphere. So, if you include the cumulative emissions data from before 1990, every developed nation will outnumber India.”

‘Not doing enough’

Chandra Bhushan, Deputy Director General of Centre for Science and Environment, told The Hindu that developed nations weren’t doing enough to reduce emissions in keeping with their historical CO2 emissions. According to India’s own submission at the United Nations, its cumulative emission is 3 % of the global emission.

Save our rivers: India is heading for a grave water crisis; it must take remedial measures urgently

It is on the banks of its rivers that India’s civilisation and its cities emerged and were nurtured. Population pressures and developmental imperatives may have led to overexploitation of our rivers and groundwater, but poor planning and wilful neglect breaking the organic links between rivers, nature and people is no longer acceptable. India is heading for a grave water crisis and remedial measures cannot be postponed. Irrigation accounts for nearly 80% of water demand followed by drinking needs, industry and energy sector. On the demand side mitigatory steps like changing cropping patterns, curbing wasteful practices, and promoting renewable energy must be stepped up.

One clear indicator of strain is annual per capita water availability. This was 5177 cubic metres in 1951 which declined to 1545 cubic metres in 2011, against the international threshold for water stress pegged at 1700 cubic metres. However, National Institute of Hydrology pegs India’s utilisable per capita water availability at just 938 cubic metres in 2010, and expects this to drop to 814 cubic metres by 2025.

Among the solutions proposed to rejuvenate rivers is their interlinking so that surplus in one river can be transferred to another. The science behind this is very dubious. Yet governments appear keen to pilot such expensive engineering feats. The Rs 18,000 crore Ken-Betwa interlinking project could destroy 10,000 hectares of forests, with nearly half of that in the Panna Tiger Reserve. Forests are of course critical catchment areas for rain-fed rivers. It’s best to avoid such schemes that could do more harm than good.

In safer waters, the Rally for Rivers campaign has proposed that a one kilometre wide belt along river banks be reserved for generating tree cover. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act will make Rs 6,000 crore available annually to state governments, atop a corpus of Rs 42,000 crore that went unspent for years. These monies could be devoted to firm up tree cover along the rivers, which would deliver environmental, social and economic benefits. Pollution of rivers through discharge of industrial effluents, municipal waste and generation of thermal energy must also be checked. The Centre’s Namami Gange programme must deliver results soon. Much onus is also on state governments as water is a state subject. Act now or prepare for desertification.

Child rights

Early marriages take away self-esteem, confidence of girl child: Supreme Court

Supreme Court of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has ruled that sex with a minor wife — meaning a girl under 18 years of age — is a crime. The judgment has clarified that it does not want to delve into the issue of marital rape. But it may have opened a Pandora’s Box. From now on, regardless of religion, a marriage cannot be consummated if the wife is a minor.

According to government data, 46 percent of women in India aged between 18 and 29 are married before the age of 18. It is also estimated that there are about 23 million child brides in the country. The Supreme Court bench expressed concern over thousands of minor girls being married at mass wedding ceremonies on Akshaya Tritiya and observed that child marriages could not continue just because the practice was assumed to be legal and has been going on for ages.

The ruling came on a PIL that NGO Independent Thought filed, challenging the validity of the exception clause in the rape provision. However, the government defended the provision, citing the prevalence of child marriages and the prospect of making husbands vulnerable to being booked for rape.

“Surely, the Union of India cannot be oblivious to the existence of the trauma faced by a girl child who is married between 15 and 18 years of age or to the three pro-child statutes and other human rights obligations. That these facts and statutes have been overlooked confirms that the distinction is artificial and makes Exception 2 to Section 375 of the IPC all the more arbitrary and discriminatory,” the court observed.

The NGO had argued that the exception was a violation of the fundamental right to life and equality of minors. Observing that early marriages take away the self-esteem and confidence of a girl child, the bench said, “Under no circumstances can it be said that such a girl child lives a life of dignity. The right of a girl child to maintain her bodily integrity is effectively destroyed by a traditional practice sanctified by the IPC.”

“Marital rape of a girl child is effectively nothing but aggravated penetrative sexual assault and there is no reason why it should not be punishable under the provisions of the IPC. Therefore, it does appear that only a notional or linguistic distinction is sought to be made between rape and penetrative sexual assault and rape of a married girl child and aggravated penetrative sexual assault. There is no rationale for this distinction and it is nothing but a completely arbitrary and discriminatory distinction,” it held.

“Civil society can do so much for preventing such child marriages but eventually it is for the government of India and the state governments to take proactive steps to prevent child marriages,” the bench said.

Slogans must be backed by focused implementation: Supreme Court

Welfare schemes and “catchy slogans” are excellent for awareness campaigns but they must be backed by focused implementation programmes and remedial action for the betterment of the girl child, the Supreme Court said.

Children should not get into politics or violence: Satyarthi

Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi said here on Monday that “children should not be, or get, involved in politics”. “Children need love and compassion to fulfill their dreams. I am against every form of violence. The children should not resort to any form of violence,” said Mr. Satyarthi, who launched his Bharat Yatra, a campaign for child rights, here.

‘Past is past’

Refusing to comment on issues of pellet-hit minor victims and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, he said, “Past is past. I have come here to fight for child rights and will knock at every door for the children of Kashmir. They are like my own children.”

He expressed the desire to meet the pellet-hit victims. “An injury to a kid sends pain through the entire humanity. The innocence of the children gives us lot many lessons about the simplicity of life and all sections should protect their innocence,” he said.

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti accompanied him. “All sections of society should play their role in protecting their childhood, which unfortunately gets disrupted due to uncertainties or political turmoil,” Ms. Mufti said.

She said the issues faced by the children of Jammu and Kashmir were bigger than those of their counterparts elsewhere. "Unfortunately, children have become victims of violence and uncertainty, robbing them of their innocent childhood," the Chief Minister said.

Make child marriages void: Court

NEW DELHI: Terming child marriage a social evil that endangers the life and health of the girl child, the Supreme Court on Friday said such marriages should be declared void and stringent punishment prescribed for those who promote such practices.

Although the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) bars child marriages, these are held to be valid unless challenged by the minor, virtually giving legal approval to the institution of child marriage till its validity is challenged.

Only Karnataka has amended the Act and declared any marriage of a child, a female aged below 18 years and a male below 21 years, as void. Favouring amendment in the law to declare child marriage illegal, a bench of Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta said that other states must follow Karnataka's example.

LATEST COMMENT

"It would be wise for all the state legislatures to adopt the route taken by Karnataka... and thereby ensure that sexual intercourse between a girl child and her husband is a punishable offence under the POCSO Act and the IPC," the bench said. SC also suggested that penal provisions should be made stringent to punish members of a family who force a child into a matrimonial alliance. It said the punishment under PCMA was not sufficiently punitive and observed that PCMA was being misused as women promoting child marriages were kept out of the penal provision.

'Want 1cr people to pledge to fight against child abuse'

Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi, who is on a countrywide march, Bharat Yatra, to raise awareness against child sexual abuse and child trafficking, was in Lucknow recently. He spoke to VIJAY CHOPRA on his yatra, his efforts to sensitise people to the menace of child abuse. Excerpts:

How did the idea of Bharat Yatra originate?

I was very impressed with the yatras of the past in India, right from Shankaracharya to Mahatma Gandhi. I learnt from them that if you want to empower victims of any sort of evil, one should take the initiative to gather public support for the cause. And what better way to do this than a march. We organized three big marches—in 1993, 1995, and 1998—to combat child labour. We demanded amendments in the child labour laws and that was done.

What do you hope to achieve through this yatra?

Every other day there is news of young boys and girls being sexually abused. Child sexual abuse is a moral epidemic, which is turning our country sick. Talking about sexual abuse is still a taboo. But we need to speak up. This has compelled me to go for an all-out war on sexual abuse and child trafficking.

How has the response been?

It has been unprecedented, both in terms of sensitization and mass mobilization, and also in terms of policy announcements by chief ministers. Even chief justices in some states have offered to ensure speedy trial in cases of child abuse. So far, over 8 lakh people have marched with me in Bharat Yatra. It's amazing to see how the issue of safety of children can unite the nation.

How do you plan to continue this campaign after Bharat Yatra ends?

In most places, students and people have pledged to form small clubs or groups to continue crusade against child abuse. We aim that at least 1 crore Indians take the pledge that they will continue to fight against this crime. We

will try to make such groups a sort of safety net for children.

What are your views on the harassment of a girl on BHU campus and the violence that followed?

The BHU incident has left me deeply saddened. However, I must say resorting to violence is not the answer. It's but natural that students are angry, but I appeal to them to stay away from partisan politics and violence. Rather, they should be united in building safer educational spaces and, in turn, a safer India. Educational institutes, too, should ensure safety of their students. Speedy and strict action should be taken in such cases, apart from remedial measures to prevent a repeat in the future.

Does being a Nobel laureate make it any easier to fight for social issues?

Nobel laureates are often treated like a celebrity. I have tried to show people that even a Nobel laureate can remain ordinary and fight for social issues.

Non Resident Tamil Welfare Board(NRT)

Proposed schemes

1. Accident death	-	Rs 10 lakh
2. Total disability due to accident	-	Rs 10 lakh
3. Disability due to Accident	-	upto Rs 10 lakh based on the percentage of disability
4. Natural Death	-	Rs 2 lakh
5. Medical Expenses for workers	-	Rs 2 lakh
6. Medical expenses for family	-	Rs 50,000/-
7. Pension	-	Rs 5,000/-
8. Family pension	-	Rs 3,000/-
9. Widow pension	-	Rs 3,000/-
10. Marriage Assistance (Worker/Two children)	-	Rs 10,000/-
11. Maternity(Two children)	-	Rs 10,000/-
12. Educational Assistance	-	UG Rs 5,000/- PG Rs 10,000/-
13. Vocational Education Assistance	-	Rs 15,000/-
14. Transportation of Mortal Remains	-	whole expenses (by consulate/NPT)
15. Legal expenses in abroad	-	whole expenses (by consulate/NPT)
16. Self employment for the returnees	-	Margin Money to bank loans with zero interest
17. Grievance redressal	-	To complain and obtain remedy, a grievance redressal mechanism to be established like MADAD
18. Recruitment	-	NRT shall establish a separate cell for recruiting workers for fair migration
19. Member Registration	-	A member shall be registered with the board before leaving the country on production of copies of passport and visa.
20. Source of Revenue	-	Collection of Cess 1% from the Remittance to Tamilnadu.

PEACE ITI SKILLS FOR FREEDOM

On 7/10/17 our ITI students participated in a special programme and an exhibition was organized at the Peace Bed college on the topic “The rights and the safety of adolescents” by Miss. Ina from Netherland who came as an intern for Peace Trust. School Children from villages near Vedasandoor and College students and many people participated and got awareness about the rights of the children. She addressed about the rights of the children and explained about the methods she used to express the rights which were portrayed by the children by themselves and placed in the exhibition. Later

Dr.J.Paul Baskar articulated the rights and the social problems of the children and gave awareness about it. Later our students visited the exhibition and shared by writing their known surrounding issues and messages to the world.

An awareness programme about child Rights and POCSO Act was given on 11/10/17. All the students were participated actively and they learn about child abuse and the strong act called POCSO. This programme was conducted for half an hour. The students were taken pledge to stop child abuse.

MGNREGS PROJECT LIFE-COURSE COMPLETION DAY

The basic sewing operation course (270hours) for 3 months has been completed on 10/11/2017. The students took a group photo as a record and they were happy that they had finished the programme.



YOUNG WORKERS PROJECT

Community Support Group meeting

The monthly meetings for the members of the community support group in all the target 40 villages regularly organized. 585 members from the community support groups from each village participated. They well understood the importance of educating the children, protecting the rights of the young workers. Members also discussed to celebrate the Gram Shaba meeting to conduct participatory planning with selected communities for effective intervention in the target villages.

Adolescent group meetings

Regular monthly meeting for the adolescent groups was organized. 1532 adolescent girls from 85 groups have actively participated in the health awareness programme. Health workers from the health sub-centre and primary health centre and Anganwadi workers from ICDS centre educated the adolescent girls.

Field staff members have participated in the Gram Sabha meeting held on 2.10.2017 in all the nine panchayats.. Members of the groups have also insisted the Gram Sabha to support the education for the children who are exploited by spinning mills.

Project staff members have got the opportunity to participate in the VPRC meeting held in the 9 panchayats and spoke on the activities of the project.

Medical camp:

Medical camp was organized by young workers project, 103 participants such as young girls, students attended the medical camp and got benefit. Health check up was conducted for the girls for anemic conditions, worm infestation, underweight and general weakness, blood was checked for knowing the hemoglobin level. 13 girls found with anemic conditions of Hb level below 9 were advised to take iron tablets also advised to check their menstrual cycle and to intake more greens, fruits and germinated cereals

Legal Awareness Programme

Another Legal awareness programme was organized for students in Malvarpatty village on 26.10.2017. Mrs.K.Vanitha Head & Sub Judge for Veda sandur Taluk legal Committee, Veda sandur has given the presidential address on “Well Planned Family Programme, Child Care and their Rights”. Mr.A.Murugesan, Lawyers Association Veda sandur has given the special lecture about the “Job Arrangements and the Role of Information Gathering Act” to the students. Mr.R.Balamurugan, Lawyers Association, Veda sandur has given the special lecture about the “Property rights”. Dr. J. Paul Baskar, Chairman, Peace Trust, Mrs.Mercy Baskar principal Peace ITI ,has delivered the special lecture about the “Importance of Information gathering act and its present usages” to the students.



PEACE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

An education tour was arranged for the first year students to Kanyakumari and 45 students with 7 assistant professors started on 4/10/2017 at 10 PM. They visited Sunrise, Gandhi mandabam, Kamarajar mandapam, Kumari temple etc., . This tour gave more memorable and useful moments to the students.

On 7/10/17 a special programme and an exhibition was organized on the topic “The rights and the safety of adolescents” by Ms.Ina from Netherland who came as an intern for Peace Trust. School Children from villages near Veda sandoor and College students and many people participated and got awareness about the rights of the children. She addressed about the rights of the children and explained about the methods she used to express the rights which were portrayed by the children by themselves and placed in the exhibition. Later

Dr.J.Paul Baskar articulated the rights and the social problems of the children and gave awareness about it. The participants visited the exhibition and shared their view by writing their known surrounding issues and messages in the 'cloud'.

On 21/10/2017 a debate was organized by the Tamil students on the topic "Which songs was the best the old or new songs". Some games and dance programmes were organized.

An Orientation Programme for two year B.Ed programme was conducted in Madurai Zone (Mangayarkarasi college of Education, Paravai) on 27.10.2017 and 28.10.2017.

In the first Day of this programme, our college Asst. Professors, **Mrs. S.Karthikeyani,(Asst.Prof in Tamil)** and **Mrs. A.Valli (Asst. Prof in Education), Miss. S.Santhiya kamalal(Asst.Prof. in English)** and **Mrs.J.Baby(Asst.Prof.in Geography)** had participated in this workshop. **Dr.S.Thangasamy Vice-Chancellor** of Tamilnadu Teachers Education University has presided over this programme and had an interactive workshop on developing oral fluency in students by individual, pair& small groups method of language Teaching. Main objective of this workshop is to develop language fluency among students.

Notable thing that was discussed in this programme,

- ❖ Mini teaching (Form of Mini teaching practice and its format)
- ❖ Continuous and comprehensive Evaluation Record.
- ❖ Reflective Journal (It's a tool to reflect on what has been achieved during a lesson and its future efforts and support should be focused in the next session.
- ❖ Environment Education Record
- ❖ Skill development Record

Pasumai 90.4 FM

Some special programmes broadcasted in the month of October were:

Oct-2: In 'Sirappuparvai' on the occasion of Gandhijayanthi a special programme about the initiation of sathyagraha under the heading "Gandhi kanda Sathyagraham" was broadcasted.

Oct-14: Dr.Anitha, MBBS, City Health Officer, Dindigul gave a awareness programme about the Dengue".

Students of Alagappa girls higher secondary school, participated in a special programme on October 14.



Oct-15: A special programme was broadcasted on the occasion of APJ Abdul Kalam's birth day.

Dr. Selvarani, Medical Superintendent, St.Joseph Hospital Dindigul, gave a program for how to care a patient who is in the progressed stage of a disease.

Oct-18: On the occasion of 'Diwali' a special debate on the topic " Cultural songs gives joy to the family or the cinema sogs" was broadcasted. In 'kaviyarangam' programme the poets Parimaladevi, Thilagavathi and Kavitha presented poems and songs.



Oct 28: S.P.D Kanagasabai, The Pricipal, SMBM School gave a programme for the discussion about "How to create a student and the role of parent and teachers for that".



Oct 29: Vengatesh, Bavani, Jeeva , the teachers of the Anugraha school discussed about the "The role of teachers in the changing society".

Oct 31: A.N.Sukumaran, Proprietor of ANS Locks shared about the current position of the lock molding industry and the current opportunities available for the youth in this field.

