

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, Thiruvavur District Tamil Nadu and Karaikal District, Puducherry.
- o Peace Trust also provides training for Quality Teacher Education and gainful employment to young women from resource poor families in Dindigul and Karur District.
- o Peace Trust has also been broadcasting Pasumai FM community radio.
- o Peace Trust is actively engaged in building the capacity of youth aspiring for Government, Public Sector, Bank job
- o Peace Trust is providing guidance for higher studies to 17 + youth.

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

The Skills for Freedom e-newsletter is published by:



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Migration

HC bats for migrant workers' welfare

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court today directed the Central and the Tamil Nadu governments to implement a series of suggestions made by an advocate for the welfare of migrant workers.

The suggestions include a comprehensive law for all unorganised labourers, particularly inter-state migrant workers, PAN and Aadhaar cards for them, group insurance and education facility for their children. A bench of Justices S Vimala and T Krishnavalli forwarded the suggestions made by advocate Jeya Karthick to the Labour and Employment department of the central and state governments for a follow-up action.

The advocate, who made the suggestions while highlighting the plight of migrant labourers, also wanted the Labour department to maintain a register of migrant labourers containing details, including their terms of the employment. It was closing a habeas corpus petition filed by Hari Prasad Malgam of Madhya Pradesh, seeking to set free five of his relatives allegedly in the illegal custody of their employer running a borewell company in Cumbum in the neighbouring Theni district.

A habeas corpus petition is filed to ensure that a person, allegedly under illegal detention, was produced in the court and set free. The bench noted that though there was an Inter-State Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act 1979, it had no provision for the protection of individual employee. The petitioner Prasad alleged that his relatives were under the custody of their employer since March 12, 2018 and were beaten up by the latter's henchmen.

During the hearing, the employer alleged that the petitioner had taken a huge amount agreeing to work along with his relatives. He had also taken away cash and articles worth Rs 3 lakh from the employer and a police complaint was lodged in this connection. It was, however, withdrawn after a compromise was worked out and hence the petition was not maintainable. The court then said the HCP was liable to be dismissed with heavy cost, but in view of the poor economic condition of the labourers, it was sparing them the penalty.

It said the suggestions made by the petitioner's lawyer were well-taken and directed the governments to implement them, as they would give legal benefit to the migrant workers.

Child rights

Supreme Court asks high courts to fast-track POCSO cases

The court order came as it was told that 112,628 cases under POCSO Act were pending before trial courts across the country, with Uttar Pradesh leading the list at 30,883.

NEW DELHI: With an aim to provide speedy justice to children who are victims of sexual assault, the Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a slew of directions pertaining to cases filed under the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked all high courts to ensure that cases of sexual assault of children are fast-tracked and are decided by special courts. It also asked the HCs to ensure that the proceedings in such cases are conducted in "child-friendly" atmosphere in the courts. The Bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, further directed the high court to set up a three-judge committee to monitor and regulate the trial of cases under the POCSO Act. The apex court further asked the high court to instruct the trial courts not to grant unnecessary adjournments in cases under the POCSO Act.

The bench also instructed the Directors General or Commissioners of Police in the states to set up Special Task Forces so that the investigations in such cases are carried out expeditiously and witnesses are produced in court on the date of their appearance. The order came after the bench was informed that a massive 1,12,628 cases under POCSO Act were pending before trial courts across the country, with Uttar Pradesh topping the list at 30,883. With these directions, the SC disposed of a PIL filed by advocate Alakh Alok Srivastav, who had approached the top court after an eight-month-old girl was allegedly raped by her 28-year-old cousin on January 28 in a locality near Netaji Subhash Place in northwest Delhi. Srivastav in his PIL filed in January sought provision of death penalty in such cases and framing of guidelines that investigation and trial of cases involving rape of children below 12 years of age under POSCO Act be completed in six months from the date of registration of the FIR.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Pinki Anand informed the court that the government had amended the law to provide for death penalty for the rape of children younger than 12 years. The Centre's move came following public outcry over the gang-rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl at Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Justice and redemption

When a child faces brutality, in or outside the family, society's contract with its own spirit is violated. Judicial hearing in the Kathua rape and murder case has been shifted out of Jammu and Kashmir, where the incident occurred, to Pathankot in Punjab. This has raised the hope that justice will be served. However, it is worth examining what justice means in cases where the victim of a heinous crime is a child. After each case of rape, including the rape of small girls, the demand for justice is raised. This demand is, of course, right. In the media, one often hears and reads that the victim's parents want justice to be served without delay. In many cases, people are known to have come out on the streets to demand police action and justice. Now that an ordinance has been issued to enable the judiciary to award the death penalty to rapists of small girls, we can expect quicker protests for demanding justice.

The meaning of justice

In general, the idea of justice does not sit well with childhood, which is a formative but also vulnerable period of life. These two characteristics make the delivery of justice to a child victim difficult. Sexual abuse during childhood presents a particularly hard case. It has been recognised all over the world that nothing is tougher to leave behind than sexual assault in early life. Justice in such a case usually means public identification of the perpetrator, followed by adequate punishment. When rape has been committed by a person who enjoys fame and power, justice may bring the victim a sense of vindication. This seems to have happened in a recent case where a girl went through a prolonged legal struggle against a famous 'godman'. Her victory at the level of a local court is impressive, and one hopes that it will be sustained through the legal battle at higher levels of the judiciary.

When rape is followed by murder, as in the Kathua case, the meaning of justice is quite different. No matter how long and strong the arms of law become, they cannot reach out to an eight-year-old who is no more. We can't even refer to her with dignity as the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has forbidden the mention of her name. Having failed in its job to protect this child, the Commission is trying to give her the dubious dignity of anonymity. Apparently, the rule it is applying is meant to protect the girl's parents. In all such cases, justice seems to mean little more than giving the satisfaction to parents that law will not forget their loss and grief.

For the rest of society, this meaning of justice carries two kinds of value. One is the value of deterrence. If the rapists and murderers of a child go untracked and unpunished, this might encourage the tendency to commit such crimes. The second value served by justice in such cases resides in the recognition of a child's right to justice. This value governs all rights granted under the United Nations' convention on this subject to which India is a signatory. This convention recognizes children as beneficiaries of universally applicable human and civic rights. By punishing those who rape and kill small girls, the judiciary posthumously imparts the significance to their lives that they ought to have received as children.

The social fabric

The experience of the child in Kathua, however, leaves a big question for us to address. No one will deny that with such violence, the social fabric has ripped apart. Children cannot grow up and become sane adults unless they feel secure and protected, and parents alone cannot protect a child. Safety and security during childhood is a responsibility that society as a whole shares with the biological parents. Therefore, when a child encounters violence, the protective fabric of society shreds. The responsibility to protect children is embedded in the very idea of society. When a child faces brutality, in or outside the family, society's contract with its own spirit is violated. Punitive justice cannot redeem this contract, although it may constitute the first step towards redeeming the contract and the collective spirit it signifies.

Redemption is a concept borrowed from ethics. It has several meanings, two of which are especially relevant to the application of justice in a society witnessing a steep rise in cases of previously unimaginable cruelty to children, especially girls. One meaning of redemption is the recovery of something damaged as a result of neglect or bad intention. The other meaning is to fulfil a pledge. The first meaning is specific to the kind of crime we are witnessing today. The rape of small girls on the scale at which it is currently taking place, especially in the north, signifies a breakdown of the ethical order of common living. Each incident of rape of a baby or small girl communicates that society is going through a change it does not understand. Fabric is an apt metaphor to refer to social relations, as they involve the tacit acceptance of a norm to govern the upbringing of children. Incidents of rape of small girls have been reported from cities as well as villages, suggesting a much wider crisis than traditional wisdom might be able to recognise. No simple analysis can help us grasp the factors that have enabled the crisis to deepen and erupt. There can be no doubt that these factors are rooted deep in culture, but they are also tangled now in the new technological environment. They are being nourished by an ethos marked by an acceptance of casual, collective frenzy.

The fear of the death penalty cannot restrain this kind of frenzy. Hatred for the weak and rejection of their right to be treated as fully human are ingredients of this ethos. In such an environment, society seems to have lost its collective self-awareness. Forgetting about its responsibility towards children everyone's children is a consequence of the loss of self-awareness. Can the state help society in such a dire moment? Of course it can, but first it must radically improve its own apparatus to serve children.

Rapists of children under 16 years should get death penalty: NCPCR

Those involved in brutal rapes of even older girls—till 16 years of age-- should get the maximum punishment, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights feels.

NEW DELHI: Days after the government came up with an ordinance to notify changes in laws that prescribe death penalty for rapists of girls till 12 years of age, India's Child Rights' panel is set to push for the age limit to be extended till 16 years. Those involved in brutal rapes of even older girls—till 16 years of age-- should get the maximum punishment, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights feels. "We are of the view that the government has taken a commendable step by prescribing death penalty for child rapists but the age limit for children should not be restricted till 12 years," NCPCR member Yashwant Jain told TNIE.

"Those who brutally violate or mutilate children who are older till 16 should also be liable for death penalty. We will take up this matter with the Union Women and Child Development ministry and urge them to extend the age limit," Jain said. The NCPCR proposal is coming at a time when the WCC ministry has made it clear that the law will be made gender neutral and provisions of stricter penalties and capital punishments will also include crimes against boys.

Officials said that the WCD ministry had always wanted the changed laws to include male victims as the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences act is gender neutral but in its proposal, the Union Home Ministry which had moved the note to the cabinet included only girl children. "Now that there is a move to bring the boy victim in the purview of the changed law, the extended age can be included as well," Jain said.

The ordinance, brought in the aftermath of brutal rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl in Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir, was notified by the Centre on April 2. It paved the way for providing stringent punishment to those convicted of raping children by making changes in Criminal Laws pertaining to sexual assault on children below 12 and 16 years. With the notification, the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 have been amended.

As per the amended law, there is now a provision of death sentence for rapists of girl under 12 years, while in case of rape of a girl under 16 years, minimum punishment has been increased from 10 to 20 years, extendable to imprisonment for rest of life. The measure also provides for speedy investigation and trial. The time limit for investigation of all cases of rape has been prescribed, which has to be mandatorily completed within two months. The NCPCR, however, is yet to move the proposal to the WCD ministry formally and an official discussion on the matter is yet to happen.

Former child labourers make it big

Twenty six children who were once child labourers and rescued by National Child Labour Project have passed the Plus Two Examination.

Two of them, R. Priya of Tiruthangal and R. Muthukumar of Sivakasi, have scored 1,068 and 1,011 respectively. Born with two sisters, Priya, along with her elder sister, Mareeswari, was found making paper rolls at home in 2009. "The family was in utter poverty. The father had ill-health and could not support the family. Hence, the children could not be given education and they were helping their mother," said a volunteer Teacher of NCLP, M. Ramalakshmi.

The girl was put in NCLP school along with Mareeswari. "I studied upto 12th and then dropped out due to family economic condition," said Mareeswari. She wants to pursue a degree course and join the police force.

Muthukumar, who was also a former NCLP student for five years, could not celebrate the joy of having secured 1,011 marks as his father Ramamoorthy passed away few days back. He had been preparing for the examination by following his lessons on a daily basis. "My father always encouraged me to study both in the mornings and evenings," he said. His mother, who works in a fireworks unit, and elder brother, who has turned into a driver, have promised to educate Muthukumar. After completing B.Com., he wants to become a bank officer.

Environment

Indore the cleanest city, followed by Bhopal and Chandigarh: Swachh Bharat survey

Indore was the cleanest city last year as well but that survey was conducted only for around 430 cities.

Indore emerged as the cleanest city, followed by Bhopal and Chandigarh in the government's cleanliness survey.

The results of Swachh Survekshan 2018, which aims to estimate levels of cleanliness across cities in the country, were announced today by Minister of State for Housing Hardeep Singh Puri on Wednesday. Jharkhand was adjudged the best performing state in the survey followed by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

Compared to the previous surveys, this year's exercise allocated substantial weightage to the feedback from citizens based on their daily experience. Indore was the cleanest city last year as well but that survey was conducted only for around 430 cities. This time it was conducted for around 4,200 cities.

The names of the worst performing cities would be announced on the day the awards would be presented, Puri said.

Nirmala pats Virudhunagar

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman giving away benefits in Virudhunagar on Thursday. R. Ashok

Minister says the district has made progress in education and health

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said Virudhunagar district had made progress in various areas under the aspirational districts programme of Niti Ayog.

Addressing reporters here after a review, Ms. Sitharaman said the district had taken up various steps on the education front to improve the outcome among students. "All children are going to school and they are passing out of class 8 and class 10. But we found that their proficiency in mathematics and languages was lower than expected," she said.

However, after the review meeting held in January, the administration took special efforts to impart knowledge using various techniques. Teachers were being given special training. Besides, there were issues of teachers⁵ and

doctors not willing to work in backward areas such as Tiruchuli and Narikudi. “If doctors do not go to remote areas, patients have to travel all the way to Virudhunagar town for medical treatment,” she said.

But now the administration had taken “out of box” steps to make temporary appointments using locals to sort of the issue. Also, the issues pertaining to non-disbursement of compensation under the crop insurance scheme had been resolved. On Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, 36 villages that had 75% or more Dalit population had been identified in the district to ensure proper implementation of Central schemes, the Minister added.

Collector A. Sivagnanam said Rs. 32 crore compensation for paddy crop loss and Rs. 82 crore compensation for loss of maize crop had been received recently. Under the free cooking gas connection scheme, 97% of the eligible population in the identified villages had been covered. Achievements in other schemes were as follows: affordable LED bulbs for all (68%), opening of Prime’s Minister’s Jan Dhan Accounts (97%), Prime Ministers’ Jeevan Jyothi Bima scheme (88%) and PM’s Suraksha Bima scheme (96%) and vaccination of infants and mothers under Mission Indra Dhanush (100%).

Minister for Dairy Development, K.T. Rajenthra Bhalaji, Nodal Officers for Aspirational Districts Praveen Kumar and Santosh Babu and Srivilliputtur MLA Chandra Prabha were among those who were present at the review meeting. Earlier, Ms. Sitharaman opened a new building of Virudhunagar Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the presence of its president V.V.S. Yogan and Secretary V.R. Muthu.

The portraits of founder president V.V. Ramasamy and founder secretary S. Vellaichamy Nadar were unveiled on the occasion. BJP State president Tamilisai Soundararajan and party State secretary R. Srinivasan were present.

Skill Development

Programme for skill development

Seeking to provide job opportunities for educated unemployed youth in rural areas, Collector S. Natarajan on Monday launched an awareness programme on skill development training offered by Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC).

While Government Industrial Technical Institutes (ITI) in Ramanathapuram, Paramakudi and Mudukulathur offered regular skill development courses, TNSDC offered non-regular skill development courses to make youth employable and help them to start self employment. The administration proposed to take the training programme to the rural youth by roping in three ITIs and two TNSDC-recognised private technical institutions, he said.

A hi-tech LED publicity vehicle of the Department of Information and Public Relations would be utilised to create awareness. The TNSDC has proposed to offer skill development training under more than 12 heads including electrical, welding, plumbing, construction, two-wheeler and four-wheeler repair and CNC lathe operation. Those who joined the programme would be given an allowance of Rs. 100 a day during the training period and the amount would be directly credited into the bank accounts.

Government launches online portal - MSME SAMADHAAN to resolve problem of delayed payments

Government launches online portal - MSME SAMADHAAN to resolve problem of delayed payments

New Delhi, Oct 31 (KNN) Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Giriraj Singh recently launched the MSME Delayed Payment Portal MSME SAMADHAAN which will enable MSMEs to register cases related to the delayed payments by Central Ministries, Departments, CPSEs and State Governments.

The portal is expected to facilitate the monitoring of the delayed payment in a more effective manner. The information on the portal will be available in public domain, thus exerting moral pressure on the defaulting organizations.

Speaking at the launch event the minister said that MSME sector is the backbone of the Indian economy. The sector accounts for 80% of the total job opportunities in the country but possesses only 20% of the total capital.

Highlighting the policies introduced by MSME ministry like Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM), ZERO defect zero effect, he said that due to delay payment many MSME industries get converted to NPA .

In an attempt to tackle this concern, the government has come up with the samadhaan portal to empower the MSMEs which will ensure the payment within 45 days of filing the complaint.

He encouraged all the MSMEs to register on the database portal which will benefit and empower them to grow and expand. (KNN/AG)

Despite record allocation, 57% MGNREGS wage dues remained unpaid in April

For the financial year 2018-19, the central government's fund allocation for MGNREGS increased 14.5% over the previous year to Rs 55,000 crore, the highest ever

MGNREGS wages: From Bihar to Uttar Pradesh, poorest states see no hike

Centre released Rs 516 billion to states under MGNREGA in 2017-18

A broken guarantee

Amid agri crisis, pain for rural India as Modi govt chokes MGNREGS funding

Ramsajeevan Prajapati, 42, started working under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in 2005 to support his family of nine. He was promised he would get paid every eight days. However, he said, he has not received wages in six months, or the Rs 2,000 due to him from the preceding year.

Prajapati, who previously worked as a labourer at the local market in Mavai village in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, has been taking loans to get by. When he complains to officials about delayed wages, he is asked to continue working so that his pending wages get paid, he told IndiaSpend. Often, there is just five days' work in two months, and MGNREGS wages have not increased his overall income, he said.

Millions of MGNREGS workers share Prajapati's predicament-57% of wages due to workers were unpaid at the end of April 2018, as per government data.

This is the second of their three-part series on India's vast rural jobs guarantee programme, part of the investigation of key government schemes' performance in the run-up to the 2019 elections.

Delayed wages are routine

For the financial year 2018-19, the central government's fund allocation for MGNREGS increased 14.5% over the previous year to Rs 55,000 crore, the highest ever. Yet, the percentage of wages unpaid was 57% in April 2018.

At the beginning of April 2018, as many as 99% of total fund transfer orders (FTOs) were delayed. By the end of the month, however, the authorities had cranked up the payment system to ensure a 42-percentage-point drop in unpaid wages to 57%, after the central government released funds on April 10, 2018, NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, an association of MGNREGS activists, told India Spend. Nevertheless, the preponderant majority of wages, 57%, remained unpaid.

Although the government claimed in an October 2017 statement that 85% of wages due to MGNREGS workers for the year 2017-18 until September 15, 2017, were paid on time, an independent study has shown this is not true. Conducted across 10 states from April to September 2017, the study found that only 32% of payments were made on time.

MGNREGS wage payment delays have been a long-standing issue-19 state governments had stopped payments in October 2017 primarily due to lack of funds, which in some cases was because states' audited reports of financial statements had not reached the central government in time to receive funds, India Spend had reported in November 2017. Nearly 85% of the central government's allocation of Rs 48,000 crore had already been spent when the article was written, leaving wages amounting to Rs 3,066 crore unpaid at that time.

As of April 12, 2018, these 19 states' status, as per data from the scheme's website, is as follows:

In West Bengal, where payments had been frozen since September 2017, 100% FTOs were pending since November 2017. Eight states had 100% FTOs pending since February 2018. Assam and Kerala had FTOs pending since January 2018. Six states had FTOs pending since March 2018. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim, three states whose data were unavailable previously, also had FTOs pending since March 2018. Of the 19 states, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh had fewer delayed payments.

Flawed definition of delay

Under the scheme's provisions, workers should receive wage payments within 15 days of the 'muster roll' (attendance register) being closed, that is, after their work is done. If not, they are entitled to compensation at a fixed rate of 0.05% of the unpaid wages per day from the 16th day of the muster roll being closed, for the entire duration of delay.

The procedure followed to calculate wage payments is explained in a November 2017 IndiaSpend article. Ideally, workers should be compensated for delays until the day wages are credited into their accounts.

However, the Management Information System(MIS) of MGNREGS, responsible for maintaining records on muster rolls, wages and material payments, only considers delays until the day the FTO is generated at the block/panchayat level (provided it has been generated 15 days after the closing of muster rolls) and sent to the central government. Any delay thereafter by the central government in crediting payments is not considered. As a result, workers do not get the entire compensation they deserve.

To understand the magnitude of this flawed definition, the Azim Premji University study is instructive.

Key findings

The study was conducted in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal, for the period April to September 2017, covering 4.5 million accounts.

Overall, 78% payments were not made on time in these 10 states, while as many as 45% payments did not include compensation for delayed payment because FTOs were generated within 15 days. The biggest difference between government claims and wages actually paid on time is in Chhattisgarh-the government claimed 94% wages were paid on time, when in fact 28% were. In West Bengal, the claim was for 87% timely payments but actually only 17% payments were made on time. In five of the states, more than 50% of payments did not include compensation for delayed payment.

When workers do not get their payments on time, they usually resort to borrowing money, and sometimes even food.

"It's been two months, we haven't been able to afford milk by ourselves," Sukhrani, 50, told IndiaSpend. She said the scheme owes her Rs 6,000, and she stopped working some four months back. "We scrounge and borrow to feed ourselves. We don't even have slippers. You have to take loans to afford things. I've borrowed Rs 150 myself."

Lack of funds, new system, compulsory Aadhaar linkage causing delays Ram Naresh, 38, a resident of Banda district in central Uttar Pradesh, started working under MGNREGS 11 years ago, when the programme began. However, he has had no work under MGNREGS since May 2016. Inadequate funding has driven daily MGNREGS wages lower than the minimum agricultural wage in 28 of India's 36 states and union territories. The difference is as much as Rs 104 (roughly a third) in Gujarat, where agricultural wages are Rs 298 and MGNREGS wages Rs 194 during the current fiscal year, according to this April 2018 article in The Indian Express.

MGNREGS wages are revised every year as per a consumer price index for agricultural labourers (CPI-AL), which reflects a 35-year-old consumption pattern. As a result, in 10 states, MGNREGS wages have not been revised upwards since 2017-18. In a few states such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, where MGNREGS wages are higher than the state's minimum wage, MGNREGS wages have increased by Rs 2.

Another reason for delayed payments is states' failure to send audited reports of their accounts on time to the central government, Ankita Aggarwal of NREGA Sangharsh Morcha told IndiaSpend in January 2018.

Yet another possible culprit is the National Electronic Fund Management System (Ne-FMS), the central government's payment system introduced at the beginning of 2016-17, which gives the central government the sole authority to make wage payments using the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. Funds go from the central government to a state's Employment Guarantee Fund, and then to a worker's account.

Before Ne-FMS, states could use their own funds to make payments during delays and seek reimbursement from the Centre later, Aggarwal said, but not any more.

In the study quoted above, six of the 10 states were under the Ne-FMS system when the study began, and these performed no better or worse than those using the previous system. "In our analysis on delayed payments, there wasn't any significant improvement seen in crediting wages on time to labourers [through Ne-FMS]," Narayanan said.

"Though it is possible that more FTOs are being generated within 15 days, crediting the amount still takes a long time," Narayanan said, "The excessive centralisation of payments under Ne-FMS has meant that the baton of accountability is being constantly passed around by the field functionaries of [MGNREGS]. One will often hear field functionaries of NREGA say that they have generated the FTO, but the Centre has not released payments."

While various agencies pass the buck around, workers such as Gulaab Rani, 65, are disillusioned. "The money gets transferred to the bank. But if it doesn't even reach the bank, then where are we expected to get it from?" she said, adding, "If they aren't going to pay me, what's the point of working at all?"

No Literature Nobel this year as sex scandal stink kills credibility

The decision was made at a weekly meeting in Stockholm on the grounds that the academy is in no shape to pick a winner after a string of sex abuse allegations and financial crimes scandals.

For the first time since World War II, no Literature Nobel will be awarded this year. The Swedish Academy that selects the laureate took the big decision as it found itself engulfed in a sexual scandal that shattered its credibility. Other annual Nobel prizes will not be affected since the academy only awards the Literature Nobel.

The 18-member academy has promised to clean itself up and offer the award next year to two winners. The current crisis began in November last in the wake of the global #MeToo campaign, when Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter published testimonies of 18 women who claimed they were raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Jean-Claude Arnault, whose wife is academy member Katarina Frostenson. Some of these shocking incidents reportedly happened at the academy's properties in Stockholm and Paris.

Other allegations against him include groping Sweden's crown princess Victoria. Arnault, an influential figure in the art world and a close friend of a bunch of academy members, denied all the charges. Within the academy there were calls for Katarina's resignation. When its permanent secretary Sara Danius ordered a probe, she was eased out of her position, which triggered a fresh round of anger. Later, six of its members, including Sara, quit.

The 'resignations' paralysed the academy as its meetings need a quorum of 12 but it had only 11 active members since one had already been inactive for over a couple of decades. The problem also lay with the academy structure. Till this week, there could be no resignations as all appointments were for life. Those who quit could only be termed inactive. All that is now changing, with King Carl XVI Gustaf, the academy's patron, tweaking the structure to let members inactive for two years resign and induct new ones. "We find it

necessary to commit time to recovering public confidence in the Academy before the next laureate can be announced,” the academy’s interim permanent secretary Anders Olsson said.

FANSA(Freshwater Action Network, South Asia) SDG Briefing on Water & Sanitation:

The FANSA(Freshwater Action Network, South Asia), Tamil Nadu branch meeting was held at Tiruchi on 8th May. During the discussions it was pointed out by Dr. M. R. Seetharaman, National convener of FANSA(Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement) Mysuru highlights the participants that the need of the hour was to ensure achievement of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 (access to water and sanitation) and all aspects connected with this, from grass root level (Panchayat) through District National and Global Level in the field of achieving the goal on water and sanitation.

Water and Sanitation was cross-cutting and indivisible subject and to achieve the SDG by 2030 convergence of all stakeholders was vital. Economic, social, environmental considerations should be focused and integrated.

SDG unlike MDG was not a top to bottom approach. It was a program arrived at a participatory manner from the grass roots to International level, FANSA had to review the existing scenario and should have a mechanism to monitor, evaluate at regular intervals to make course correction if and wherever necessary so that the target could be achieved by 2030. The five principles to be observed are People, Proper planning, Prosperity, Peaceful approach and Partnership for Universal benefit. The motto is “Leave none behind”.

The entire water ecosystem should be taken into account and the basic right for water would include quantity and quality. There are 16 SDGs and all of them are interconnected and overlapping. One could even add a 17th SDG namely partnership. The CSOs should work jointly and share their experiences by networking so that the lessons learnt and success stories in all the 16 SDGs would be made available to all partners.

Dr. J. Paul Bhaskar , Chairman , Peace Trust and working committee member , NITI Ayog. (National Institute for Transformation of India- which has replaced the National Planning Commission) said that in the past the Planning Commission formulated various developmental schemes and the States and other agencies were asked to implement the same. Now the concept has changed fully. Planning is a participatory process from grassroot level in various sectors and the needs and challenges of the people could be taken to the NITI Ayog where experts would find solutions and ask the stakeholders their views and then formulate a plan which could be implemented far more easily and more successfully. For example, in the water sector, rainwater harvesting at the household, village, Panchayat Union, District, State and National and International level would be dealt with. Commercial exploitation of water will be banned. Similarly cooperative farming, New Technology, New Policies etc. will be formulated.

Mr. S. Kannan, Executive Engineer, Tiruchi City Corporation explained the new initiatives in the field of Sanitation, Water Supply, and Solid Waste Management etc., were discussed.

Dr. Seetharaman wanted to end water poverty to achieve SDG 6.

There will be an accountability mechanism to find any lacunae or difficulty in the implementation of the programs at regular intervals. Many studies have revealed that MDG implementation was not up to expectations and poor response from the Government, absence of accountability, poor coordination between various agencies and departments implementing MDG were stated to be the reasons. To overcome these mismatches and deficiencies a set of indicators will be identified, a High level political forum will be formed for necessary follow-up and implementation of the SDG activities. The countries, the states and ULBs and Village Panchayats will be asked to give their progress voluntarily instead of being compelled to give at any specific period of time. Accountability is an evolutionary process so that the gaps in implementation could be easily identified and corrected.

“VAADA NA CHODO” (Don’t break any promises) would be the slogan of each and every stakeholder. The positive experiences of all sectors at different levels should be communicated to all for replication and scaling up. All partners should remember that water and sanitation was a basic right, should integrate the SDG with SBM. The problems created by uncontrolled migration and urbanization should be analyzed in finding solution to SDG. A baseline target for SDG should be established, aligns to the maximum extent the programs of the stakeholders in SDG with the Government guidelines. Streamline data collection to ensure equity and inclusive delivery of

SDG benefits. Knowledge management, networking and sharing should be the basis on which all programs to achieve SDG is planned and implemented and monitored.

Mr. Annadurai of FANSA State Chapter welcomed the gathering. Mr. Muthupandi, APO, Mahalir Thittam, Tiruchi, Mr. Krishnan, State Convenor, FANSA, Karnataka, Mr. Roy, State Convenor, FANSA, Kerala, Mr. Putheri Babu of Hand-in-Hand, Mr. M. Subburaman of SCOPE, Mr. V. Ganapathy, ExNoRa Advisor and Retired Special Correspondent, THE HINDU, and over 20 FANSA members from different parts of the State participated in the discussions. Four groups discussed SDG implementation in Water and Sanitation sectors and presented their recommendations. An action plan was formulated.



Dr. J. Paul Bhaskar, Working Committee member, NITI Ayog (Chairman, PEACE Trust) delivering the inaugural address)



SDG BRIEFING ON DECENT EMPLOYMENT

A One day Workshop cum Consultation on Labour Code and Social Security of the workers was held on 02.05.2018, at at Johns Hotel in Madurai. Mr. Britto delivered the welcome speech. Dr. J. Paul Baskar spoke about the need of the meeting, the formation of Tamilnadu Alliance Migrant workers security and minimum wages. Mr. Karumalaiyan gave speech about Social Security and cleared the participant doubts. Dr. Bala explained Wage Code in detail. He also explained Make in India, Digital India, Skill India and ESAP. Mr. Britto explained Labour Code on Industrial Relations and its features. Mr. Christopher suggested forming Labour Supportive Group. Finally they planned for an Action Plan like Post Card Campaign, Generating Demand on Labour Code Issues and Letter to MP from 50 villages.



A One day Orientation on SDGs with particular reference to Goal No 8.7, was held on 17th May 2018, at Hotel Western Park in Madurai. Dr. J. Paul Baskar delivered a welcome speech and gave a brief introduction about the

labour codes, the Outcome of the workshop and formation of TAMILNADU ALLIANCE. He introduced the 6 founder members and their Networks. And how they join together and working for the labour issues and conducting labour code meetings, SDGs. Mr. Prithviraj explained how the natural resources ruined in the name of development, how can we achieve sustained development and SDG 8. Mr. Britto said about inter linked goals and how can we work in our areas related to these goals. Dr. Bala explained the Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals and differentiation between the two. Lawyer, Henry appreciated the Tamilnadu Alliance efforts on uniting 142 organizations and joining together to work for the labours. He simplified the SDGs and explained how it integrates with each other goals. He asked to do mapping with the 17 goals which are matching with working areas. Finally he said there is a chance to get changes in all over the world. After that Mr. Britto discussed with the participant and derived an action plan. He announced the core team working group meeting on 14th, 15th July and August 24th & 25th for the larger team.

One Month Diary of a volunteer at Peace Trust

By:

Irudhaya Mary.G, MSW student,

Patrician College of Arts & Science College, Chennai.

I am here to say that, it is my great privilege to be here and get good opportunity and exposure from the Peace Trust. While as a trainee I came and asked the opportunity at once it is accepted by the chairman Dr. J.Paul Baskar and his team members. I thank every one of you for your heart and acceptance that you all showed me.

I had come across all of your projects and the service you do to the society is enormous. The vision and the mission are very challenging in the present society. Especially Peace Trust is to protect and promote the rights of the children against exploitations and to preserve the natural resources by educating the community.

1st May 2018

I attended the orientation session about the agency. I observed the various programmes undertaken. The office is situated in a peaceful atmosphere and the staffs feel very pleasant to work here. I have such a warm hearted people and this encourage outsiders to approach for everything.

2nd May 2018

I came to know about Reducing the Risk of Young Workers Project especially among mill workers and drop outs from the school. Good opportunity to read various rare journals and reputed magazines from Peace Trust Library.

I was informed about staff team and legal status and tie up with different government projects

3rd May, 2018

I attended meeting in Ayyampalayam with Community Support Group.

This group is encouraged and motivated by the field worker to access government projects. People are very good in their positive attitude. Man power is more. But they are not placed in such a income work. It is really very pathetic condition.

It is very dedicated work to uplift the remote people and society.

7th May 2018,

I went to Poothampatty village.

I along with field worker attended meeting with adolescent girls and young women. I learnt about their challenges in health level and unsafe work in textile industry.

I learnt various experience from Trustee and my Co-workeres about Vocational Training programmes, Capacity improvement activities, Legal Awareness programmes, Sensitization programme for mill management's representatives. National Environment awareness campaign on Environmen and Climate Change with NGO's in 18 districts.

11th May 2018

I interacted with faculty members and supervisor. Visited classrooms, teaching aids and equipments, came to know syllabus and specially (German) and teaching methods practically. I visited the local electricity station.

Teaching was amazing and great to study in ITI campus.

12th May 2018

I attended introduction festival of Sridhar's book about (Oodagatheni) the experience of this great legend in Media of our India. The title they have given this legend is very apt and suit.

I had learnt how media is introduced to public for their use and access by Dr.Sridhar, a Community Radio Pioneer. The meeting was so informative and learning.

17th May 2018

I got good opportunity to attend this meet in Madurai.

I came to know about SDG (Sustainable Development Goals). Resource person Dr. Henri enlightened the mind of everyone. There are 17 goals set by open working group as (SDG). I clearly understood about no poverty, zero hunger, good health, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth etc.,

Trainee had a good time to read remaining of the goals. Discussion with resource person helped to know many areas about government and legal system to approach in a positive way to implement these goals.

Special learnings

- Good exposure to learn
- Free approachable persons.
- Ready to teach and welcoming attitude
- I was so grateful to be in this institute to get this amazing exposure
- Really it will help my work and surroundings.
- I thank Dr. J. Paul Baskar for giving this wonderful chance and his co-team.

PEACE ITI SKILLS FOR FREEDOM

Sinthanai Mandram:

Sinthanai Mandram programme was organized in Peace ITI where all the students participated. Girls spoke about the famous personality Kalpana Chawla and about the current situation of agriculture and also food adulteration. This programme captivated the minds of all the participants and gave awareness in the need of protecting the agriculture and food adulteration. Mrs. Josephine Mercy principal of ITI gave a special speech which induces the minds of the students to have good aim in their life to achieve.

Online Live programme by TATA MOTORS:

Online live programme were conducted twice by TATA MOTORS on behalf of MMVT (Motor Mechanic Vehicles Trade) on the topics of Occupational Safety and Environment Education. More than five ITIs participated in this online programme. The students of all trade from Peace ITI also participated. This programmes made to get valuable education of a resource persons from somewhere but sitting in front of a computer.



SPSC- VEEF CENTRE, NAGAPATINAM

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (**DDU-GKY**) is the skilling and placement initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India. Peace Trust - SPSC VEEF Centre got the project for 3 years to train the students in the trade on basic automotive servicing for 4 wheeler. This year the third batch had attended the placement and out of 96 youths 89 were placed in 6 reputed companies in Chennai, Melvaruvathur, Nagapatnam etc., . This year also more than 90% of the underprivileged youths got the job and they are ready to take their career.

SKILLS FOR FREEDOM YOUNG WORKERS PROJECT

Community Support Group (CSG) Meeting:

In the 40 target villages, meetings are held monthly twice for the CSGs. The members in the CSGs discuss the roles and functions of the ABGs and AGGs. CSGs act as significant tools in safeguarding the rights of the women in villages. The village level special programs for the adolescents are carefully noticed by the CSGs and the beneficiary measures reach the adolescents through CSGs. These CSGs function with the aim that the standard and status of the beneficiaries should be uplifted.



Adolescent Girls Group (AGG) Meeting:

With a total of 1647 members, 85 AGGs function successfully in the target villages. The members gather once in a week to discuss the common problems faced by women, the Government schemes and the expectations of them. The main objective of the meeting is to discuss the Education, Skill training, Health issues and the safety of the women workers in Cotton mills. The solutions for the problems are also argued in the meetings and are executed through CSGs. Through “Film Curriculum Development”, the adolescent girls are educated about Life Skills.

‘Call me Priya’ entertained as well as educated the adolescents about problems in life and the ways to tackle them. The great success of the AGGs is that the school drop outs rate is considerably reduced.



Adolescent Boys Group (ABG) Meeting:

The ABGs are regulated through weekly meetings. The importance of education, health issues and the role of men in safeguarding women are discussed in these meetings. At the village level, the ABGs act as guardians in protecting women from violence.



Block level Interface meeting with Child Stake Holders:

The CSGs, AGGs, ABGs joined hands with the Government officers who work for the Children’s rights and brought out many solutions for the issues. The Interface Meetings act as bridge between the people and Government to bring about solutions for the problems. The CSGs, AGGs and ABGs interact with teachers, health officers, medical officers, police inspectors, Panchayat members, PRI and SHG. The problems like Health issues, Safety issues faced by the adolescent girls are listed down by the AGG members. The officers promised that proper remedies will be taken on account of the problems. They also discussed the ways in which the problems can be dealt officially.



Life Skill Education

A total of 30 members participated in this Training. In this Life Skill Education (LSE), some of the basic Life skill training, self realization, interpersonal relationship, communication, problem solving etc., education were simply taught through games and real life examples. The essential good habits and manners to be practiced by adolescent girls were also taught in the training. Their doubts were cleared by the Young Workers. Finally leaflets about LSE were distributed to the beneficiaries.

Resource Centre:

More than 1647 students in the 40 target villages get benefitted out of the Evening Classes at Resource Centre's. The Resource Centres act as a platform to improve the education as well the discipline and skills of children. The teachers also report that the children who benefitted out of Research Centre's excel other students in various skills.



Linking with Social Protective Scheme:

In the target 40 villages, the beneficiaries as well as the family members of CSGs, AGGs, ABGs had been benefitted out of various Government schemes. A total of 102 members were linked with so many schemes to get ration card, community certificate, female children scheme and to construct individual toilets for 82 members



Action Research Group:

Peace Trust is one of the institutions that works with people's Action Research Group undertaken by IDS and PRAXIS. This scheme functions at two villages namely Karupputhevanur and Kurumbapatty. Debts and lack of Children Education are the two main problems of the areas. Meetings are held monthly twice and people come out with solutions for the major problems. The various solutions taken by people are repairing street lights, preventing entry of money lenders, reducing unnecessary expenses, stop child marriage & child labour asking for increase in wages through workers support group.etc.,



3E Workshops on 22nd & 23rd May 2018 at Madurai.

3E workshop for 2 days was held at Madurai covers the districts Dindigul and Virudhunagar and in each NGO 4 people participated. This workshop was organized by ALC-India. Discussion went on and shared about Micro enterprises, Business model preparation, entrepreneurs check list, District level skill gaps, Customer Relationships, Customer Segments, Value Proposition, Key Resources, Key Partners Channels, Cost Structure and Revenue Streams.



Action Research review cum capacity building meeting for 3 days (29-31st May) at Nala Hotel, Namakkal.

Action research review cum capacity building meeting for 3 days (29th & 31st May) was held at Namakkal. Dr. Balamurugan, Mr. Abdul Jaleel, Deny-IDS, Stanley Praxis, Pradeep Praxis and 6 NGOs from four districts Dindigul, Erode, Namakkal, Virudunagar and their Community members, Field coordinator and project managers participated.

The NGOs shared their Good Practices, Achievements, Learning and Challenges they faced. Each organization has spoken about the past 6 months events, challenges and the success achieved and also about the planning for the months to come. Debts and lack of Children Education are the two main problems of the areas. Meetings are held monthly twice and people come out with solutions for the major problems.

Training for ICC group members Mill workers Internal Complaints Committee Meeting;

Training for ICC group members Mill workers Internal Complaints Committee Meeting in 2 mills Meeting on ICC & health and safety was organized in spinning mills such as, Meenachi and Sinduja. The objective of the awareness sessions was to make the workers aware of safety measures. They were given training on ways of reconciling their problems facing them in and around mill. Still workers supporting group members shared their problems facing at mills



Gram Sabha meeting;

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



Legal awareness programme

GG Partners Participated in the Legal awareness programme on 19th May-2018 at Dindigul. A special lecture was given by lawyer Ms Akila and GG Programme managers, Dr.Balamurugan, Dr.Thiruppurasundari and Mr.Jaleel. NGO's from four District and 2 members from each NGO participated. In this programme discussions went on and shared legal caps, legal steps, fact finding report preparation, RTI, Legal materials preparation, Next one year plan and support legal trainings.

Peace Trust with Young Workers Team and District Service Authority in Ayyampalayam organized a Legal Awareness Programme. District Legal Authority Service Chairman and Sub Judge Mr.Vijayakumar inaugurated and gave his valuable legal awareness. Mr. Ramasamy Ex. Commissioner gave solutions for road problems and patta and follow up for the steps taken also given.



Pasumai 90.4 FM

In the Radio mathematics program which was started in April for the empowerment of the Weaver's community, a conversation took place in live through phone with that particular community. The views shared were related to the colour and shapes related to them. Many listeners came in line and gave their participation.



The biography of Dr. R.Sreedar, who is a member of CEMCA (Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia), was written by Ranimainthan in the name of "oodagatheni" was release on May 12th in VGS Mahal , Dindigul. It tells the life history and his radio experiences in detail. Mr.Rajaraman, the programme director of Madurai Rainbow FM gave special speech and Professor Muthaiah of Gandhigram gave the introductory speech of the book. The programme was aired in Pasumai FM.

