

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 issue since 1999.

- o Peace Trust's Skills for Freedom is the only solution to end Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu. It is a joint effort for enhancing the employment opportunities of rural youth in Dindigul, Karur, Tiruppur Districts.
- o Reduce the risk for Young Workers - Beginning of this month Peace Trust has launched a new 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.

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

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MIGRANTS

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 194 IN MIGRANT SHIPWRECK OFF EGYPT

Twenty-five bodies were recovered on Tuesday from a boat that sank in Mediterranean waters off Egypt last week with hundreds of migrants aboard, raising the confirmed death toll to 194, rescue workers said

Twenty-five bodies were recovered on Tuesday from a boat that sank in Mediterranean waters off Egypt last week with hundreds of migrants aboard, raising the confirmed death toll to 194, rescue workers said.

The boat capsized off Burg Rashed, a coastal village where the Nile meets the Mediterranean, on Sept. 21. Rescue workers and fishermen said they had rescued at least 169 people, but uncertainty remained over how many might still be missing.

The spokesman for the Beheira regional governor said the shipwreck had been hoisted out of the depths and was likely to contain dozens more bodies. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said on Tuesday it believed at least 450 people were aboard the vessel and that about 300 likely perished in all.

“It is one of the worst tragedies of this year, but not the worst,” IOM spokesman Joel Millman told a briefing in Geneva. “We are concerned about what this says for the rest of the season as the weather turns cold and seas get more difficult.”

Egyptian security sources initially said there had been almost 600 migrants aboard. Officials said the boat was carrying Egyptian, Sudanese, Eritrean and Somali migrants, and that they believed it was heading for Italy. Four members of the crew were arrested.

TRAFFICKING

SOFTWARE LAUNCHED BY NGO ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING WILL REUNITE VICTIMS WITH FAMILIES

Emboldened by the success of the software in several northeastern states, Impulse recently launched the software in Siliguri town West Bengal.

A non-government organisation (NGO) dealing with human trafficking has launched an online platform to reunite victims with their families. Named “Impulse Case Info Centre Software” (ICCS), it offers a platform to people and authorities to communicate and collaborate to prevent human trafficking effectively. Emboldened by the success of the software in several northeastern states, Impulse recently launched the software in Siliguri town West Bengal.

Emarine Kharbhih, a consultant working with Impulse, said most cases of human trafficking are reported from Indo-Nepal border.

“We have already launched in northeast, it is working perfectly fine in Sikkim, Nagaland, Mizoram, and now we are here in for the first time, because we really need to see and make people understand that Indo-Nepal border is so free and people are being trafficked. And that is why this software is very important in north Bengal,” said Kharbhih.

Twin earthquakes that struck Nepal in April and May 2015, which killed almost 9,000 people, left hundreds of thousands of families homeless and many without any means of income, led to an increase in children and women being trafficked.

More than 40,000 children lost their parents, were injured or were placed in precarious situations following the disaster, according to Nepali officials.

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing transnational organised crimes in India.

Thousands of people, mostly from poor rural areas, are taken to cities every year by trafficking gangs who sell them into bonded labour or hire them out to unscrupulous employers.

Traffickers often take advantage of impoverished communities, luring girls and young women and girls with promises of jobs as maids or nannies in wealthy households in the cities. Impulse has been working on human trafficking for the past 23 years in northeast region of India.

The web based software has been incubated by the IIT (Institute of Information and Technology) Guwahati of India’s northeastern Assam state.

‘KUNG FU’ NUNS BIKE HIMALAYAS TO OPPOSE HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This is the fourth such journey they have made, meeting local people, government officials and religious leaders to spread messages of gender equality, peaceful co-existence and respect for the environment.

Clad in black sweatpants, red jackets and white helmets, the hundreds of cyclists pedaling the treacherously steep, narrow mountain passes to India from Nepal could be mistaken for a Himalayan version of the Tour de France.

The similarity, however, ends there. This journey is longer and tougher, the prize has no financial value or global recognition and the participants are not professional cyclists but Buddhist nuns from India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet.

Five hundred nuns from the Buddhist sect known as the Drukpa Order, on Saturday complete a 4,000-km (2,485 mile) bicycle trek from Nepal's Kathmandu to the northern city of Leh in India to raise awareness about human trafficking in the remote region.

"When we were doing relief work in Nepal after the earthquakes last year, we heard how girls from poor families were being sold because their parents could not afford to keep them anymore," 22-year-old nun Jigme Konchok Lhamo told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"We wanted to do something to change this attitude that girls are less than boys and that it's okay to sell them," she said, adding that the bicycle trek shows "women have power and strength like men."

South Asia may boast women leaders and be home to cultures that revere motherhood and worship female deities, but many girls and women live with the threat of violence and without many basic rights.

From honor killings in Pakistan to foeticide in India and child marriage in Nepal, women face a barrage of threats, although growing awareness, better laws and economic empowerment are bringing a slow change in attitudes.

"KUNG FU" NUNS

The bicycle trek, from Nepal into India, is nothing new for the Drukpa nuns.

This is the fourth such journey they have made, meeting local people, government officials and religious leaders to spread messages of gender equality, peaceful co-existence and respect for the environment. They also deliver food to the poor, help villagers get medical care and are dubbed the "Kung Fu nuns" due to their training in martial arts.

Led by the Gyalwang Drukpa, head of the Drukpa Order, the nuns raise eyebrows, especially among Buddhists for their unorthodox activities.

"Traditionally Buddhist nuns are treated very differently from monks. They cook and clean and are not allowed to exercise. But his Holiness thought this was nonsense and decided to buck the trend," said Carrie Lee, president of Live to Love International, a charity which works with the Drukpa nuns to support marginalized Himalayan communities.

"Among other things, he gave them leadership roles and even introduced Kung Fu classes for the nuns after they faced harassment and violence from the general public who were disturbed by the growing shift of power dynamics," she said.

Over the last 12 years, the number of Drukpa nuns has grown to 500 from 30, said Lee, largely due to the progressive attitudes of the 53-year-old Gyalwang Drukpa, who was inspired by his mother to become an advocate for gender equality.

The Gyalwang Drukpa also participates in the bicycle journeys, riding with the nuns as they pedal through treacherous terrain and hostile weather and camp out in the open.

“PRAYING IS NOT ENOUGH”

The Drukpa nuns say they believe they are helping to change attitudes.

“Most of the people, when they see us on our bikes, think we are boys,” said 18-year-old nun Jigme Wangchuk Lhamo.

“Then they get shocked when we stop and tell them that not only are we girls, but we are also Buddhist nuns,” she said. “I think this helps change their attitudes about women and maybe value them as equals.” South Asia, with India at its centre, is also one of the fastest growing regions for human trafficking in the world.

Gangs dupe impoverished villagers into bonded labour or rent them to work as slaves in urban homes, restaurants, shops and hotels. Many girls and women are sold into brothels.

Experts say post-disaster trafficking has become common in South Asia as an increase in extreme events caused by global warming, as well as earthquakes, leave the poor more vulnerable.

The breakdown of social institutions in devastated areas creates difficulties securing food and supplies, leaving women and children at risk of kidnapping, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Twin earthquakes that struck Nepal in April and May 2015, which killed almost 9,000 people, left hundreds of thousands of families homeless and many without any means of income, led to an increase in children and women being trafficked.

More than 40,000 children lost their parents, were injured or were placed in precarious situations following the disaster, according to Nepali officials.

The Drukpa nuns said the earthquakes were a turning point in their understanding of human trafficking and that they felt a need to do more than travel to disaster-hit mountain villages with rice on their backs.

“People think that because we are nuns, we are supposed to stay in the temples and pray all the time. But praying is not enough,” said Jigme Konchok Lhamo.

“His Holiness teaches us that we have go out and act on the words that we pray. After all, actions speak louder than words,” she said.

US-BASED CHARITY TARGETS MILLS IN INDIA, BANGLADESH TO END SLAVERY IN FASHION INDUSTRY

As consumers and investors become more socially aware, they are demanding ethical manufacturing and weighing companies on human rights records.

One of the most effective ways to curb forced labour in the garment industry is to target cotton spinning mills, where workers can provide valuable information about the source of material in the fashion supply chain, an anti-slavery charity said on Friday.

The apparel industry has come under pressure to improve factory conditions and workers' rights, particularly after the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex in Bangladesh more than three years ago, when 1,136 garment workers were killed.

Following the tragedy, numerous initiatives were launched by global brands and charities to promote openness and safeguard employees, from ensuring the safety of buildings to providing better pay and working hours. But while most projects focused on farmers growing cotton in the fields or factory workers stitching clothes, few work with the spinning mills in the middle of the supply chain.

Run by the California-based charity As You Sow, the Responsible Sourcing Network (RSN) on Sept. 1 launched a project focusing on mills in India and Bangladesh that altogether employ hundreds of thousands of workers. "Located in the middle of the supply chain, spinning mills are uniquely positioned to identify cotton produced with forced labour and prevent it from entering corporate supply chains," Patricia Jurewicz, RSN's director, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"Our initiative targets the most opaque place in the supply chain, where yarn spinners blend different types of cotton together," she said. "They are the key to knowing if the cotton that gets spun and woven into our clothes was harvested under forced labour conditions."

Also, Jurewicz said thousands of young women are kept in bonded labour in spinning mills in southern India, where they have been lured from their homes with the promise of a good job but in reality work in appalling conditions.

A 2014 report by the Dutch Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) found women in mills were forced to work long hours for low wages with no contracts, no paid leave and little freedom of movement. The United States and Britain have adopted laws that ban the import of goods produced by forced labour or require companies to report action taken to address slavery and trafficking. As consumers and investors become more socially aware, they are demanding ethical manufacturing and weighing companies on human rights records.

RSN said its initiative, the Yarn Ethically and Sustainably Sourced (YESS), will train workers at spinning mills to identify forced labour and trafficking.

It also will help mills implement policies to improve worker conditions, assess their compliance and provide certification.

Major brands such as Adidas, Hudson's Bay Co., BJ's Wholesale Club and Woolworths Holdings Ltd. have expressed support and less than a week after the launch of YESS, a mill in India got in touch to ask how to become certified, she said.

"This demonstrates there is industry demand for this type of verification," she said.

CHILD LABOUR

PRESS 1 FOR CHILD LABOUR: GARMENT WORKERS USE CELLPHONES TO REPORT ABUSES

Two mobile services, both by US-based companies, encourage workers to call toll-free numbers to anonymously log violations they see around them.

Textile workers from Bangladesh to Turkey are using cellphones to report child labour, delayed wages and trafficking – a trend rights groups say shows the promise of technology in tackling abuses in the garment industry. Two mobile services, both by US-based companies, encourage workers to call toll-free numbers to anonymously log violations they see around them.

The idea is to give big brands early warning of problems at the furthest ends of their supply chains as they seek to comply with tougher legislation against labour exploitation and modern slavery.

"One of the big challenges for companies in locations far from their suppliers is: How do you hear from workers directly?" said Sarah Labowitz, co-director of the Center for Business and Human Rights at the NYC Stern School of Business in New York.

"When it comes to issues such as discrimination, harassment and abuse, workers have a role in flagging these problems. And as with a lot of social problems, we often look to technology for solutions," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The two systems, Labor link and Labor Voices, are similar. Workers call and answer simple questions, pressing 1 for "yes" and 2 for "no".

Questions are along the lines of: Are you being treated fairly? Are wages paid on time? Are fire exits locked? Have you seen a child worker?

An analysis of calls to Labor Voices from more than 5,000 workers in Bangladesh in the first half of the year showed almost a fifth of factories had a "high risk" of child labour, Ayush Khanna, a Labor Voices director, said.

"Mobile-phone penetration in developing countries is more than 90 percent today, so it's an obvious technology to use to increase the transparency and accountability of the supply chain," he said in a phone interview.

“The system gets around many of the limitations of traditional audits, which are slow, occasional and may be inaccurate because workers are afraid.”

Bangladesh, which ranks only behind China as a supplier of apparel to Western countries, relies on garments for more than 80 percent of its exports and about 4 million jobs. Workers earn a minimum monthly wage of \$68, compared with \$280 in China.

Low wages and poor working conditions have plagued the country’s \$26 billion garment export industry. Bangladesh had one of the worst industrial accidents in 2013, when more than 1,000 people were killed in the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex.

In May this year, three workers were killed in a fire at a textile factory near Dhaka.

Since the Rana Plaza disaster, legislation has been introduced for greater supply-chain transparency and improved rights and safety for workers. But progress has been slow.

The 5,239 workers who called Labor Voices in the first half of the year worked in 85 factories in Dhaka and Chittagong, which supplied more than 30 global brands including Walmart, Target, Zara, Adidas, H&M and Levi’s, Khanna said.

Labor Voices is also tracking abuse of Syrian migrant workers in Turkey’s garment industry, seeking evidence of forced labour and trafficking, Khanna said.

Labor link has reached more than 500,000 workers in 16 countries from China to Colombia, the company says.

But while technology can help flag abuses in the supply chain, it cannot single-handedly solve them, Labowitz said.

“Calls from workers is a good system to have, but it is not a substitute for audits and checks,” she said. “You need both to tackle the issues in the supply chain.”

MIGRANTS

OVER 5,600 MIGRANTS RESCUED AT SEA IN SINGLE DAY: ITALIAN COAST GUARD

At least 5,650 migrants were rescued on Monday as they tried to reach Europe on about 40 boats, one of the highest numbers in a single day, Italy’s coast guard said.

A spokeswoman said at least nine migrants had died and a pregnant woman had been taken by helicopter to a hospital on the Italian island of Lampedusa, halfway between Sicily and the Libyan coast.

One coast guard ship rescued about 725 migrants on a single rubber boat, one of some 20 rescue operations during the day. Three were still under way and the spokeswoman said the number saved could reach 6,000 by the end of the day.

About 10 ships from the coast guard, the navy and humanitarian organisations were involved in the rescues, most of which took place some 30 miles off the coast of Libya.

Monday was the third anniversary of the sinking of a migrant boat off Lampedusa in which 386 people died.

According to the International Organisation for Migration, around 132,000 migrants have arrived in Italy since the start of the year and 3,054 have died.

Data being collected on migrant workers

The East Police have started collecting information about the migrant workers in its limit.

During the mission started one and half months ago, details of around 800 workers have been collected so far. The details collected include, name, age, address, finger print and details of work site.

The process is part of preparing a data bank of migrant labourers, said Sub Inspector Lal Kumar.

The police have given notice to construction sites, business institutions, and hotels in this regard. The contractors, who supplied workers at the construction sites, were told to give the details of the workers, the police said.

Information

The other police stations also started collecting information of the workers.

The drive was against the backdrop of increasing crimes involving the migrant workers, the police said. Lack of details about the workers, made the investigation difficult in many cases, the police said.

‘WORSE THAN HELL’: WITH SHATTERED DREAMS, INDIAN MIGRANTS RETURN FROM SAUDI

They left India for Saudi Arabia with big dreams, but have returned with only harrowing tales after an oil price slump threw the economy into turmoil, leaving thousands of poor migrant labourers stranded.

The workers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines were left destitute, without enough money to get home or even to buy food after losing their jobs.

This week, around 40 workers from the Bihar finally arrived home with stories of being “left to die” by their employer Saudi Oger, the once-mighty firm led by Lebanon’s billionaire and former prime minister Saad Hariri.

The company, which at one time had some 50,000 workers on its payroll, was hit by a drop in income from its core construction business after Saudi Arabia delayed or cancelled projects in the face of plummeting oil revenues.

“They closed down the mess (canteen) suddenly. For three days, we did not have even water to drink. There was no power either,” electrician Imam Hussain told AFP after landing in New Delhi this week.

Read | Gulf labour crisis: Is India prepared for the returning NRIs?

“I was even arrested because my identification documents were not renewed by my employer. The situation there was worse than hell,” said the 27-year-old, who was working on the renovation of Saudi King Salman’s palace in Riyadh.

Hussain was among millions of poor Asians working in the Gulf states, where human rights groups say many suffer exploitation and abuses with no channels for redress.

Under the kingdom’s kafala system, most foreign workers are barred from moving to a new job without their boss’s consent before their contracts end, leaving many trapped.

It has been criticised by rights groups as a form of bonded labour or even slavery.

Hussain and his fellow migrants had spent several days in Delhi as they waited to go home to Bihar, sleeping on mattresses on the floor of a budget hotel’s garage and eating on a filthy, open terrace. But their huge relief at coming home meant they barely noticed the discomfort.

“We are just so relieved to be back home finally. All we want is to see our family and start our lives afresh,” said Santosh Singh, a low-wage construction labourer as he waited to board a train to his native village.

‘Dreams shattered’

Saudi Arabia is the favored destination for Indian labourers, with nearly three million working mainly in the construction sector.

A 2014 report by Amnesty said close to a thousand low-wage migrant labourers are provided clearance to travel to Saudi Arabia every day.

Bihar, which has some of the worst rates for poverty, malnutrition and life expectancy in the country, has the highest migration rates, according to a government report in 2007.

Many leave to escape an exploitation-ridden rural economy in the absence of any local enterprise or industry.

Migration offers an easy opportunity to the often semi-literate workforce to earn relatively good wages abroad.

“In Siwan district where I live, they used to make public announcements about overseas job vacancies with the beating of the drum,” said Zakir Hussain, who went to Riyadh in 2013 and was making some Rs 30,000 per month (\$450) before the problems began.

“I have 15 members in my family and it (going abroad) was my only chance at a better life.”

“But look what happened. I have not been paid since December. All my dreams are shattered. I just hope I will get back my dues some day,” he said.

In August, the Indian foreign ministry stepped in to repatriate thousands of Indian migrant workers who did not even have money to buy their tickets.

The Saudi government then took action, providing food and medicine to Indians staying in camps while promising to provide free passage to all those who wanted to go back to India.

Saudi Arabia has also said it will handle legal claims of the Oger workers in an effort to get their money back.

Sheikh Dilsher, who worked for Oger for 18 years, is still unable to come to terms with the sudden turn his life has taken.

“I slogged all my life for them,” he said, tears welling up his eyes. “But what did I get in return?”

“All my benefits which come to some 42,000 Saudi riyal (around \$11,200) have been withheld.

“I have no money and no hope now.”

ENVIRONMENT

THE ORGANIC FARMING CONUNDRUM

Without doubt, India needs to go forward with bio-safe agricultural practices, but the farmers need to be helped to make them sustainable

Reshma religiously mixes cow dung and manure in the soil in her farm, hoping for a better yield at least this time around. Reshma is a 22-year old smallholder farmer in a village outside Hyderabad. She is a part of the growing army of farmers in India who have recently taken the leap from conventional to organic farming with the anticipation of premium returns and healthy farms. In this transition, synthetic chemical fertilizers are replaced with natural and bio-materials, such as neem cake and cow dung, and chemical pesticides are replaced with neem oil and bio-pesticides. All this is done to compete in the global organic market, which is worth \$64 billion.

In a rude backlash, in the first year her yields dropped to half and her net income to less than a one tenth of what she made before making the switch. While the second year saw a marginal increase in yield, her net income has only improved to about a third of her previous returns. She is yet to claim the premium promised on her products as they do not fall in the “organic” category yet.

Inputs for organic farming, while cheaper, need dedicated guidance for implementation by novices like Reshma. A disillusioned Reshma today asks a pertinent question: “Of what use is organic farming and its claim of long-term sustainability to me, when I’m unable to bring home two square meals a day today?”

Organic farming promises a lot: it can reduce the detrimental effects of conventional farming while cutting input costs, fetch a premium price on produce, improve soil fertility, promote efficient use of water resources, and provide safe food for consumers. But having worked closely with 8,000 farmers like Reshma in different capacities, I know that the realities on the ground present a stark contrast to this Utopian picture.

While there may be a place for organic farming in India's future, it is not an economically viable option for the smallholder farmers who make up 80 per cent of the total number of farmers today in India. In fact, I believe that pushing these methods on such farmers can actually do much more harm than good.

Let's first address the claim that farmers will get higher returns with organic farming. These supposedly higher returns are a result of lower input costs and the realisation of premium prices. While the inputs in organic farming, including bio-fertilizers and organic manure, are often cheaper than their chemical counterparts, this claim masks the true cost and risks involved in switching to organic farming.

In the initial years, yields typically plummet. Farmers find the activity far less profitable due to decreased yields, and the lost income that cancels out the savings from cheaper inputs. In addition, after detoxing the soil, which takes up to three years, farmers have to shell out the equivalent of around \$450-600 a year to obtain organic certification. This is a sizeable investment for farmers like Reshma who aspire to take home something like \$100-120 a month. In this transition period, farmers are unable to sell produce at a premium because it is not yet completely "organic" by global standards.

It is also clear that even if farmers were to recoup the initial investments, organic farmers are dependent on niche urban markets and export markets. This comes with additional complications, since accessing such markets typically requires contracts with large companies. This means the small organic farmer is not reaching those who pay more for organic products. If we are going to see smallholder farmers benefiting from their investments in organic farming, we need collective farming to bring economies of scale, financial support for small farmers in the initial years, and a better market for the produce. The government recently started offering support for the organic certification process when farmers group together, which is a good start. However, we also need to ensure farmers organise in a way they can enter into contracts and demand a fair price from global companies.

The second claim is that organic farming is inherently safer and healthier. The reality is that because the organics industry is still young and not well-regulated in India, farmers and consumers alike are not only confused about what products are best, but sometimes use products in ways that could harm themselves and their consumers. For example, since organic fertilizers are difficult to obtain on a large scale in India, farmers often use farmyard manure, which may contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals. Certain plant sprays, such as datura flower and leaf spray, have an element called atropine. If it is not applied in the right dose, it can act on the nervous system of the consumer and can even lead to cardiac arrest and paralysis. Unfortunately, how much and when to use it are not well-researched or regulated issues.

Encouragement needed

Right now, there is a lot we can do to improve safety in farming and reduce the impact on the environment without going "full organic". For example, we can educate farmers about "eco-friendly food" that will allow the use of limited and specified agrochemicals within the safe

levels specified by public health organisations. In addition, the encouragement that the government gives for organic farming should be supported by financial incentives during the first three years and market connections for small farmers.

Instead of pushing Reshma to risk it all by taking up organic farming, it is imperative that we strike a middle path to ease this transition period for farmers. We all want a world in which our farmers thrive while taking care of our environment and health. But we must also consider the timing and how we introduce new solutions. Only then can we secure a future devoid of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

IF YOU FIGHT LOCAL POLLUTION, YOU CAN EFFECTIVELY FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

In Paris, big companies saw the climate agreement gives them enormous opportunity to create new green jobs in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, smart transport using less fuel

In Mumbai to participate in a historic beach clean-up, Under Secretary-General of the U.N. Erik Solheim says he reposes ‘immense faith’ in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s political will to aggressively push the climate agenda to the domestic audience. Speaking to Sharad Vyas , he says, “Nobody needs to send an army to New Delhi to force implement the agreement.”

Excerpts from the interview:

There is a view that India’s ratification of the Paris accord talks extensively of Yoga and Gandhi more than the actual steps needed to cut emissions. Do you also feel India’s commitment is just a ‘collection of wishes’ and not a comprehensive road map?

First of all, of course, this is a huge positive step, especially doing it on the occasion of Gandhi’s birth anniversary is in the spirit of the Mahatma’s philosophy. Gandhi once said that change must start from within and in that sense India is being seen as the agent of change world over. The Paris Agreement is a start.

The strong encouragement I would like to give India is to see this as a business opportunity and not as a burden. This psychological change came at Paris as compared to the past when private players said climate change was expensive and difficult. In Paris, huge number of big companies admitted [that] this climate agreement gives them an enormous opportunity to create new green, interesting jobs in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, smart transport on less petrol etc.

If it takes this approach, India will move rapidly forward.

There is a strong sentiment here that developed countries must have greater obligation to combat climate change but that is not being pushed. How would you like to address those concerns?

No doubt the developed world has a greater responsibility to provide financial resources and technology to combat climate change. Basically, this approach is already turning things on its

head. For example, Germany has taken the lead and strongest possible efforts to protect the environment and at the same time push for growth. Some of the planet's most successful companies are based out of Germany, and yet the country has the lowest rate of unemployment and strong environment indicators. So, being firm on the environment has produced newer job opportunities in different sectors for Germany, without hampering the environment. Therefore seeing this as a stone on the feet is completely wrong; instead it has to be seen as an enormous opportunity by both developed and developing countries.

The Indian ratification has come with caveats: its climate pact will depend on 'predictable and affordable access to cleaner sources of energy'. What are the legal consequences of assertions and caveats since some developed nations also threaten the same?

At the end of the day, this is about politics. We saw when the planet's two main emitters and their presidents took the lead, China and the U.S., everyone followed, including India and Europe. Nobody will send a military force to push Beijing and New Delhi to implement the agreement. So this is about the political will. I am convinced Mr. Modi and other leaders like Obama have that. I am absolutely convinced these two nations and China will drive the agenda forward rapidly.

And you are convinced there is a strong political will in Asia?

Absolutely, China is now the main driver of this agenda, fighting climate change and pollution in the big cities of China is one process. And the same approach will be helpful in India. Since the Indian cities are the most polluted on the planet, and fighting pollution is the promise Mr. Modi has been making. All of this is related to the health issue, it is clear, and if you fight local pollution, you can effectively fight climate change.

India is walking a tight rope at home between environment conservation and the need for development. For example, there is a clamour from coastal States to relax development in areas falling under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms. How does India balance this?

India can start seeing this as one process and not two, not like first do development and start doing environment. As an example, most efficient and best mining operations around the world do not have any harmful effects. So if you have the best regulations in place, there is no choice between development and environment. Both have to be done at the same time.

What can India do better to face up to challenges?

Himalayas is a life-and-death issue for India and must be treated as an environment and development issue at the same time.

What are your concerns when thinking of environment in India?

Most immediate issue facing India is the effect of environment degradation on health. Garbage is an enormous health issue, air pollution is also a health issue. These must be addressed immediately.

IN INDORE, SEGREGATION NORMS GET DUMPED WITH GARBAGE

Very few Indore residents are following waste segregation norms laid down by the government even as a recent survey put Madhya Pradesh among top four states in the country in implementing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet Swachh Bharat initiative.

As per the recently amended Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Management Rules 2016, it is the responsibility of the generators to segregate waste into three categories – wet, dry and hazardous. The rule also has a provision to impose fine for non-segregation of waste at source.

But very few people in the city seem to be aware of it, forcing hundreds of waste pickers to spend hours in manually separating reusable materials from the garbage.

The lack of awareness about the rule is also affecting achievement of Swachh Mission goals by the city even as in the past two years it witnessed marked improvement in door-to-door collection of garbage in many areas.

The recent survey – conducted by citizen engagement platform LocalCircles – said Madhya Pradesh along with Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra showed the most improvement in garbage collection or cleanliness.

There are about 5,000 waste pickers in Indore, apart from 5,000 odd recognised sanitation workers, who separate about 250 metric ton of reusable waste every day.

They use their bare hands, exposing themselves to numerous diseases, to carry out the job.

The city generates about 900 metric ton of waste every day, and the municipal corporation spends crores of rupees on collection and transportation.

“People dispose both dry and wet waste in the same vat. They also dump syringes and hazardous waste there, posing threat to our health,” said a waste picker, Kamla Bai.

“With the introduction of door-to-door garbage collection in the city, the livelihood of these 5,000 waste pickers is at stake. The district administration or the civic body should provide them skill development training to sustain their livelihoods,” said Krishnarjun Burvey, a city-based social worker working towards better livelihood for waste pickers.

The civic body, however, did not consider these waste pickers as sanitation workers, he said.

Indore Municipal Corporation will be spending about `10 crore towards the Swachh Bharat awareness campaign this fiscal.

PEACE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION:

XTH BATCH INAUGURATION:

The first year B.Ed students numbering 100 has joined the course for two years 206-18. The Inauguration of the Xth Batch was on September 7th with Inaugural Address by Dr.Ma.Pa.Gurusamy Secretary Gandhi Museum Madurai who spoke on Gandhian ideals and quality Teacher Education. Dr.J.Paul Baskar chaired the meeting and welcomed the new and enthusiastic trainees young graduates and post graduates of both sex. Mr.Thangapandian a Soft Skill Trainer assured his support to the trainees throughout their stay women Peace College of Education.

Dr.M.A.Sudhir famous educationist of South India joined Peace College of Education as Honorary Advisor. The faculty has been motivated and new members joined the team to build the Institution and strengthen the programmes.

Dr.B.Walter Kennedy Guest Faculty on Environment Education, Mr.P.Subba Roa, Guest Faculty on Consumer Education, Advocate P.Balasubramanian, Guest Faculty on Human Rights Education were added to the regular Faculty Members. This year Dr.Irene Fernandez Endowment Lecture on Migration and Trafficking Dr.M.A.Sudhir Endowment on Education, Mr.Mohmed Idris Endowment on Consumer Education were added to the special programmes of the college.

Legal Awareness:

The Young Workers Legal Awareness programme of Peace Trust was conducted at Peace College of Education Campus for the B.Ed students on 21st September 2016. The Mr.Madhava Ramanujam, Sub Judge presided over the campaign on Legal Remedies for Young victims. Dr.J.Paul Baskar accompanied him in a meeting and field visits at KaruppaThevanur. The Peace Trust and Legal Service Authority will cooperate with each other for an effective judicial intervention for helping the young workers, migrants and trafficked persons.

PEACE PRIVATE ITI:

BLOOD DONATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Blood Donation Awareness Campaign was conducted for all students of our Peace ITI on 30.09.2016. This camp was presided over by the Chairman Dr.J.Paul Baskar in the presence of the Principal, Peace ITI. The team of Block Health Officers from Kovilur and Eriodu blocks Dr. Senthilraj, Medical Officer, Kovilur. Thiru. Borappan, Thiru. Nallendran, Health Inspector, Eriodu and Thiru. Sakkarai, Block Health Supervisor participated in the camp. The above special visitors explained the importance of giving blood to the needy, under the banner of "GIVE BLOOD, GIVE LIFE". In this camp 22 students volunteered to donate their blood and expected to be donated on 14.10.2016, in a specially arranged for blood donation. This generous attitude of students for donating their blood has been commendable for which appreciation certificates are to be issued. Mrs. Mercy Baskar Principal Peace Private ITI appreciated the ITI Students, who offered to donate blood.

SPSC-VEEF PROJECT:

WORLD TOURISM DAY & ONAM FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

This programme was organized to initiate the students in to the World of Tourism related hotel activities. The programs conducted by SPSC-VEEF on this day are as part of training.

The chief guests were formally received by the SPSC-VEEF Principal Mr.Pusparaj and the instructors at the Gate of the Institute. A warm welcome was given to the chief guests by SPSC students at Conference Hall.



Mr.S.James Stephoen inaugurated the function Chief guests saw the Onam folk arts done by the students

SPSC Principal Mr.Pushparaj then presented the salon address in which he expressed his gratitude to the Chief guests for grace the function, and the cooperation by his Hotel Clinto Park, Velankanni.



The Chief Guest Mr. James Stephen. In his speech, expressed his pleasure on the wonderful welcome by SPSC VEEF Trainee. He appreciates efforts taken by the SPSC students to conduct this programme in a perfect style.

In his speech he stated “From many colleges students come for employment in our hotel, but the students who came from SPSC-VEEF are showing real interest in learning the work. I like this attitude from SPSC-VEEF Students. So our Hotel is very much interested in giving

placement to SPSC-VEEF students. The Clinton Park Hotel is always open for your students always”.

Chief Guest Mr.Rameche Kumour General Manager of GS Resorts gave keynote address. In his speech he quoted “ The World Tourism Day was initiated in 1980 by United Nations Organization at Hong Kong. This year they are celebrating in Thailand. As a Hotel Management students, first of all you should know the special days of your land. For example everyone says Nagapattinam is special for Nagore Dhargah and Velankanni Church. Not only this much, it’s famous for Dhanish Fort at Tharangambadi, Vedaranyam, Salt March, Kodiakarai Wild life sanctuary etc. ”



Finally vote of thanks proposed by Mr.K.Ramesh Kumar. Internship certificates distributed by the Chief Guests to the students. ESDP Trainer, SPSC-VEEF Industrial School.

YOUNG WORKERS PROJECT:

Legal Support to Villagers

Peace Trust – Young Workers programme has conducted on 21st September 2016. This meeting Started 4pm the “Legal Awareness Programme” in Vedasandur along with Vedasandur Law Association and Panchayat Board. Field Coordinator. Mrs.V.Pavithra, has welcomed all the participants. Peace Trust–Young Worker Project Mr.Mathava Ramanujam Head& Sub Judge for Vedasandur Taluk legal Committee has headed the Meeting.

Mr. A. Srinivasan Programme Manager, Mr. Anthony Arokkiya Doss, Head Master, Panchayat Union Primary School. Mr. Alagar, Mr,Murugan ,and Chinnasamy, Ward member has spoken his on the meeting.

Mr. C.Pandiyan ,Mr,Murugesan, Mr.R. Ramadoss, popular all advocate s of Dindigul Bar about how to get the old age pensions government, free schemes, how to register and

receive the ration card and how to prepare a petition and to approach the government for legal namely. Mrs. T.Kohila, Field Coordinator has proposed vote of thanks.