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Farmers up in arms against KIADB

**Srijit Ray
& Jesbin Sam Mathew**

BENGALURU: The proposal of the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) to acquire agricultural land at Devanahalli under the Haralur Industrial Development Project has sparked a massive protest by the farmers.

On Sept 23, at Freedom Park, in solidarity with the farmers of Devanahalli, members of the All India Students Association (AISA) protested against the land acquisition. The farmers have been fighting against the same for several months.

Crop-bearing lands of around 1800 acres will be acquired by KIADB, leaving 387 families homeless. This move will threaten food security and livelihood. The farmers said that KIADB is snatching the only means of livelihood they have and that they have been protesting at Freedom Park for days, away from their families. Despite being repeatedly harassed by the police for their protests, no minister has conceded to their demands, the farmers said.

Speaking to The Beacon, Aratrika, convenor of AISA, said, "The land they are trying to grab is quite fertile, and the crops grown there feed the entire city. This is a huge issue, and the farmers are fighting against it."

She added that the farmers are oppressed by the government and standing in unity with their protests on Jal-Jangal-Zameen is an integral part of climate activism.

Not just a resignation, but a revolt

Megha Mukundan

A higher secondary school teacher in Kerala sets off a change protesting gender discrimination by resigning from her position after she was harassed by the principal in front of students for not wearing the compulsory overcoat.

Rani Joseph, working in a CBSE school in Pathanamthitta, Kerala, said the school has made the overcoat mandatory only for female teachers. As her coat was under alteration, she couldn't wear it. She was constantly asked about the coat until it was pulled out of class and embarrassed.

"The school practices gender discrimination openly, of which this is just an example. There are different corridors for girls and boys, and teachers are instructed to make sure they don't cross their ways," Joseph told The Beacon.



Rani Joseph

The News Minute

She added that her resignation is not against the school, but the stereotypes that the authorities are following. Students are even harassed in front of their parents for mingling with their opposite gender. Girls will be slut-shamed while boys are suspended, with their names

being announced during the assembly. Joseph also revealed that she could easily connect with their trauma as she is an alumna of the school herself.

The unequal treatment extends to teachers as well. Male and female employees are treated differently, starting with the

clothing code. When the teacher first started working at the school, she was not told about the overcoat; instead, she was told to wear one the very next day. She reluctantly agreed to do it, but she did it nonetheless to follow the school's regulations.

When she inquired about it, she was informed that the regulation was in place due to students' vulgar conduct towards teachers. They never considered that sex education needs to be provided in schools rather than covering or protecting women or restricting their clothing choices. She even recalled an incident where a teacher yelled at a female student for using the front corridor, which was exclusively for boys.

"I am happy that I could ignite a change, as students told me the authorities made an inquiry about their concerns after my resignation," she said in a victorious tone. She believes other private schools in Kerala are experiencing a similar situation as she is being inundated with calls and messages of support after she gained 'notoriety'.

TN financial scheme benefitting some, not all

Sowmya A

Implementing schemes that benefit only one section of the society and not the other shows the discriminatory nature of the government, commented Aishwarya, a woman activist, on the 'Pudhumai Penn Scheme.'

On September 5, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, MK Stalin introduced the 'Pudhumai Penn Scheme,' which provides Rs 1000 to all female students to pursue their studies in undergraduate, IT and diploma. Government school students of classes 6 to 12 are eligible for this financial aid.

Criticising the government for excluding the students of the private institutions Aishwarya said the government knows that the number of students is more in the private schools than in government schools in the state and hence has kept them out.

Citing that Rs 1000 won't even suffice for their expenses like bus fare, textbooks and xerox, she asserted that the government has no real concern for students or their well-being. No financial assistance is offered for pursuing postgraduate degrees lest they raise questions on

issues like unemployment, she opined. This could be a reason why the government is aiding only the government school students and not private ones.

Vidya Padmanabhan, a professor, said that the Rs 1000 might be a good incentive for a family to enrol their wards in higher education but is not enough to bag a seat in the preferred course.

Though it might be a difficult task for the government to identify the poor students in private schools, it is appreciable that the government is trying to identify deserving government school

students. It is a little early to expect the government to assist postgraduate students as well, as the enrollment rate at the undergraduate level is only 50%, she said.

Initially, the scheme was called the Marriage Assistance Program but was later renamed as Higher Education Assistance Program. "That's a great change in perspective or a great change in the focus of how this social benefit is delivered to girls students," she said, appreciating the change. "Wherever the good ideas come from, it's great to adopt and implement them."

Spreading 'One Smile at a Time'

Ashish Bhandarkar

At a time when the country is marred by polarising issues here is a group that extends a helping hand to the needy. The NGO, Suraksha Dhama has been striving to make a difference in society through several initiatives.

It was initiated by Aman Rodrigues, 21, a law student from Christ (Deemed to be University) in 2020. It now consists of 12 students engaged in philanthropic work financed through external funding, currently active in Mangalore and Bangalore.

Initially started with collecting used smartphones and distributing them to the lower strata of society, it is campaigning against social evils like manual scavenging, domestic abuse, sexual assaults, and acid attacks and is creating awareness about LGBTQ rights.

Talking to The Beacon, Aman said, it was quite a process to get registered as it was not only expensive but also a tedious task and be taken seriously by the so-called privileged section of society. Now that the NGO has gained recognition, it has enabled us to make a dent at the grass root level, he said.

Breaking the luxury mould

Vanlalhuma

With inclusivity as the underlying value of Telfar, their viral shopping bag is made for everyone. "It is democratising fashion. Everyone has an opportunity to get them," said a fashion blogger.

Telfar Clemens, designer and founder of the label, Telfar has been advocating for inclusivity for years and is constantly breaking barriers as a queer black man in the industry. After years of alienation due to his race and beliefs, Telfar continues



Telfar shopping bags Telfar.net

to create and fight for a racial and gender-inclusive fashion world.

Years after their first release in 2014, the Telfar shopping bags are making

history. With their affordable prices ranging from \$150-\$257, the Telfar shopping bags became viral and gained a cult-like following. Telfar is aware of the high demand for his shopping bags. Therefore by making them affordable, every time their bags are restocked, they become sold out. The shopping bags eventually received the nickname 'The Bushwick Birkin' which verified its equivalence to the Hermes Birkin Bag in Paris, which sells for thousands of dollars.

Young minds to bring solutions

Anuja Jose

BENGALURU: Design thinking introduces children to solving problems in their surroundings, said Dr Savita Chakravarthy, director of 10X International School, exhibiting at her school for the first time.

Times of India held a school expo on the 24th and 25th of September, where nearly ten schools gathered under one roof which helped parents to have easy access to various educational institutions of their choice.

"Today, every school has

started to teach design thinking. As a school, we've been doing design thinking for a very long time, almost five years before everyone else," said Chakravarthy. The students are taken out into the community, engaging in conversations with neighbours, learning about the issues, and then brought back to the steam lab, where they are encouraged to come up with solutions.

"Parents map out the entire future of their children, whereas we focus on children getting to design what they want to accomplish," she added.