Editorial

Reconsolidation of partisanship

In these present times when the increasing reach and dependence on information technology for even the most mundane task is gradually effecting a radical change in the outlook and thinking of the progressive societies the world over, with information and knowledge on any subject matter can be had at the touch of a button, a contrasting and rather unfortunate scenario is unfolding in our corner of the world.

Even while the virtual world has shrunk to such an extent that anyone can receive and relay information on someone or something as it happens, anywhere in the world, leading to an unexpected broadening of one's views and opinions of other people, places, religions, beliefs and customs, a potent partisan force is sweeping across the region, threatening to implode and undone any and every development and progress grudgingly achieved so far.

The world as we know it is ever evolving and changing, and it is upto us to adapt and make the best of it. But just as everything that is continually changing, there emerges a breed of hardliners who are insisting on carrying on with the traditional way of life, and even thinking. While the concept of preservation of culture and tradition for posterity, and more importantly, for the preservation of one's own identity and those of the community is without doubt, a vital part of our responsibilities to the future generation, yet the insistence on keeping up and following the traditional way of thinking, to restraint ourselves to the set dogmas and beliefs of a bygone era is nothing short of denying ourselves the freedom to grow- spiritually and intellectually, to think and use our rationality and to pursue our dreams.

It is basically denying ourselves the freedom to life as we see fit, so long as our beliefs and practices does not infringe on that of others. Change is inevitable, and the sooner we accept and embrace it, the better will we be prepared to face the future, uncertain and unpredictable as it will be. Resisting change and attempting to cling on to the old ways of thinking would prove futile and even regressive. Our way of life changes with the changing times. What was once a necessity, like the caste system which was vital for preservation of communities and races, becoming more rigid to keep the increasing intruders and invaders from mingling and diluting a particular race, has now become a major roadblock in the effort to integrate the nation, which is intrinsic to its progress.

The time to walk the line without questioning the rationale behind the diktat is well and truly past. It is time to develop and encourage a scientific temperament which questions and provides a reason for the things we do.

Tolerance and understanding other's point of view, while, at the same time, retaining the liberty to follow and practice one's beliefs and principles will pave the way for a more inclusive society bounded by trust and understanding. How one lead one's life should not be a subject of discussion, it should rather be an accepted personal judgement that needs to be respected. There are more important and pertinent things to occupy our minds and collective concerns in these volatile times. Progress is not made by adjusting the changes to suit our needs and beliefs but through accepting facts and adjusting ourselves to the best we possibly can to these changes.

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Progress Made by the Nation with Regard to Divyangjan During the Last Three Years

By : ThaawarchandGehlot

Constitution of India guarantees rights of freedom to all citizens including Divyangjan with regard to freedom, equality and justice. But in reality, Divyangjan are facing stigma, discrimination and neglect due to socio-psychological and cultural reasons. Disability when compounded with discrimination doubles the quantum of disability.

There is a wide spread underestimation of the abilities and potential of persons with disabilities due to general public perception and prejudices, thereby creating a vicious cycle of under achievement. This in turn results in inferiority complex among them which further harms their growth. It has taken a long period of time to educate ourselves to demystify the meaning of disability and fight myths and misconceptions of disability. We need to keep these new ideas alive everyday so that the old negative attitudes and perceptions do not assert themselves.

Since Independence there was not much focus on the issues of rights of Persons with Disabilities till the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted. It was, therefore, a legal framework providing measures to continuously work for their welfare and rehabilitation. This Act focused on accessibility, reservation in jobs, health, education and rehabilitation.

In order to give focused attention to Policy issues and meaningful thrust to the activities, aimed at welfare and empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities, a separate Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on May 12, 2012. The Department has a vision to build an all-inclusive society in which equal opportunities are provided for the growth and development of Persons with Disabilities; so that they can lead productive, safe and dignified lives.

With the twin objectives of harmonising the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and also to ensure better implementation, the Central Government enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which came into force w.e.f 19.04.2017. The Act provides the measures to ensure full and effective inclusion of Persons with Disability by way of promoting inclusive education, adequate social security, employment and rehabilitation.

Under Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP) Scheme Grants-in-aid of Rs. 465.85 crore was utilized in the last three years benefitting 7.60 lakh beneficiaries through 5624 camps. Under the Scheme, 3730 motorized tricycles have been distributed to eligible Divyangjan across the country which includes 248 Mega Camps/Special Camps covering 27 States for distribution of aids and assistive devices under the ADIP Scheme.

For overcoming hearing disabilities in children, 172 Hospitals across the country have been empanelled, for the purpose of cochlear implant surgeries among children with hearing disability. As on date, 839 cochlear implant surgeries have been successfully completed and their rehabilitation is underway.

Under educational empowerment, Government is implementing five Scholarship Schemes, namely, Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme, Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, Top Class Scholarship Scheme, National Fellowship for PwDs and National Overseas Scholarship Schemes covering students from Class 9 to M.Phill/Ph.D Level and studies abroad.

The Government has setup Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), Okhla, Delhi. The main objective of the Centre is to develop manpower for using, teaching and conducting research in Indian Sign Language for the benefit of persons with hearing disabilities. Action is underway to prepare the Sign Language Dictionary of about 6000 words.

In order to meet the requirements of specific disabilities, Govt. of India has established seven National Institutes (NIs) in specific disabilities under the Department. These are engaged in Human Resource Development, providing Rehabilitation Services to the Persons with Disabilities and Research & Development. Four new Composite Regional Centres at Rajnandgaon (Chattishgarh), Nellore (Andhra Pradesh), Davangere (Karnataka) and Nagpur (Maharashtra) have been set up. In Aizwal, a Disability Study Centre is being set up.

Government has approved modernization of Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), Kanpur at a total cost of Rs. 286.00 crore, for production of modern assistive devices and to serve around six lakh beneficiaries across the country as against 1.57 lakh number of beneficiaries currently being served by the Corporation.

Among the new initiatives, the Govt. is focusing on facilitating establishment of the State Spinal Injury Centres to provide comprehensive management of Spinal Injuries at the state level. Under the scheme, a comprehensive rehabilitation centre attached to the District hospital of State Capital/ Union Territory with dedicated 12 beds shall be set up.The Govt. also proposes to establish 3 centres for disability sports viz. at Zirakpur (Punjab), Vishakhapatnam (A.P.) and Gwalior (M.P.).

The Govt. believes in involvement of all stake holders including participation of State Governments/ NGOs/Civil societies so as to enhance the outreach of the programmes/welfare schemes run by the Department to enable Persons with Disabilities to live in the society in an independent and dignified manner. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

The author is the Union Minister for Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India.

National & International News

Building crumbles in Mumbai; many feared trapped under debris

PTI

Mumbai, Aug 31: A three-story residential building collapsed in Bhendi Bazar area of south Mumbai today, with the civic officials fearing that many people are trapped under the rubble.

"Our disaster management cell received a call at 8.40 am about the collapse. We immediately rushed fire brigade personnel to the site to rescue the trapped people. We fear that several people are trapped under the debris," a senior Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) official said.

He said the exact number of people staying in the building and those trapped cannot be confirmed immediately.

Search and rescue operations are underway with the help of local residents.

It is also not known whether the building was on the list of dangerous structures under the MCGM limits.

The incident occurred two days after the city received torrential rains, which is suspected to have damaged the building.

A Mumbai Police official said the area near the building has been cordoned off. The fire department personnel and medical staff have reached the spot, he added.

Fallout of demonetisation on predicted lines: Jaitley

AIR

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has said the fallout of demonetisation was on predicted lines and the economy will benefit in medium and long term.

Addressing the inaugural session of India Summit in New Delhi today, Mr Jaitley said the fact that money got deposited in banks does not mean that all of it is legitimate money.

The Finance Minister said demonetisation prediction was that more and more people would come under the tax net and it will also help in increased direct tax in coming months. He said demonitisation was also widely politically accepted and it helped in bringing transparency in the system.

Mr Jaitley said third quarter when it was implemented there was no impact on GDP, it was fourth quarter which was slightly affected.

On the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Mr Jaitley said it is too early to estimate the gains from GST, but the gains would be significant. He said GST will have a multiplier effect on direct tax a little later. He said manufacturing may have suffered as people were clearing their stock due to GST.

Mr Jaitley said one GST rate for such highly disparate population would not be equitable. He said goverment expect two standard GST rate converging into one in the future. Finance Minister said if compliance high, council may take a decision on convergence of gst rates.

On Index of Industrial Production IIP, Mr Jaitley said IIP has not been very encouraging in the past few months. He expresses hope prevention of corruption act will be ratified by Parliament soon.

Mr Jaitley goverment have now started opening defence sector only for private players. He said this will help boost defence manufacturing in India.

EU, India agree to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation

AIR

New Delhi, Aug. 31: India and the European Union have agreed to strengthen cooperation between their security and intelligence agencies to combat the threat of terrorism and check terror financing.

During the 10th India-European Union Counter Terrorism Dialogue in New Delhi yesterday, the two sides deliberated extensively on combating terror financing and challenges posed by radicalisation and violent extremism.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said, both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It said, they underscored the need for deepening cooperation to combat terrorism in a long term, sustained and comprehensive manner.

The MEA said, the two sides exchanged views and assessments on prevailing terrorist threats in their respective regions including state-sponsored, cross-border terrorism in the Af-Pak region.

The ministry said, both sides agreed to strengthen institutional linkages between Indian agencies and their European Union counterparts including Europol for closer interaction and cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.

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Shri Khumukcham Mangi Singh,
Retd. Dy. Commandant, 1st IRB
Govt. of Manipur
(Expired on 23/8/2017)

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