

Editorial

Imphal Wednesday, February 1, 2017

The neglected sector

Education - an enlightening experience, so says the experts. In our society mired with deep rooted beliefs and traditions, the one means of lifting the veil of superstition and bringing the public to their senses turns out to be enlightening the common people to the realities of the present world. The role of education cannot be emphasized enough in bringing about a change in the mindset of the people. Yet, and as we have been experiencing it, the critical role of education has been missing, leading to a slow progression and a hindrance to the fast paced race for development in the present world. In a welcome move by the present minister who is in charge of education, various changes have been mooted- and many have been implemented. Yet the fact remains that the system is still in need of a holistic overhaul- not so much for want of regulations as it is for want of an effective implementation of the various policies and programs drawn up to boost the quality of education being dispensed at present in the state. In what can be termed as a mass malpractice of reformation, the present practice of substituting local individuals in connivance with the appointed teachers to take their place in various far flung places is becoming an accepted way of escaping the harsh realities of the actual hardships that comes with the trade. An undeniable fact that has been conveniently overlooked- the end result felt only by the students. Promises have been made to make state run educational institutions an ideal place of study- a brave attempt to challenge the monopoly of private educational institutions. Though the move is a welcome one considering the exorbitant fees being levied by these private educational institutions of which there has been such a hue and cry about, the fact remains that almost every parent or guardian still prefers to enroll their wards in such private schools. Isn't it then reason enough for the state agencies and concerned authorities to delve deeper into the matter to find out the reason behind all these fiasco? What has the so called "model schools" become? What are the checks and balances that have been put in place to ensure such model schools perform to their optimum? How are the teachers, selected after much hype and controversies performing? Or are those selected teachers really performing their entrusted duties to the best of their abilities? Questions only those in the know of things can give a definitive answer to. Yet the undeniable results showed otherwise. It is time to question the facts and admit the lapses to bring about the desired result. The open secret of the surrogate teachers needs to be busted in time to prevent the decaying rot in the education system in the State. The media is ready- is the Government ready to take the fall?

Dhaka cafe attack: Four militants arrested

Dhaka, Feb. 01: Bangladesh Police today said they have arrested four militants belonging to a banned Islamist outfit who carried out the country's worst terror attack at a popular cafe in Dhaka that killed 22 people, including an Indian girl. The militants belonging to the Neo-Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested during a raid last night from a house in Jatrabari area where they were staying as tenants under a fake identity, a Rapid Action Battalion spokesman told reporters. He said the four operatives, inclined to the Islamic State terrorist group, carried out the deadly July 1 cafe attack in Dhaka. One of the militants was an IT expert of the outfit, he added. A brief RAB statement later said the four belonged to the Sarwar-Tamin group of JMB and of them Ashfaq-e-Azam was in charge of maintaining websites and providing technical support to the outfit. RAB said they seized two pistols, 21 bullets, four sharp weapons, gun powder and bomb-making materials from the scene. The development came two weeks after police said they have arrested one of the masterminds of July 1, 2016 attack at Holey Artisan restaurant in Dhaka's upmarket Gulshan area. Police at that time said the captured militant's name was Jahangir Alam but was known in the outfit as "Rajib Gandhi", adding that he was a major recruiter and planner of the group. A breakaway faction of JMB constituted the Neo-JMB which was behind the terrorist attack on the Dhaka cafe in which 22 people, including 17 foreigners, were killed. An Indian girl was among those killed in the attack.

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Developing an Institutional Framework for Capturing Services Trade Data – Challenges & Opportunities

By : Dr. Dipankar Sinha

India's service sector has been a major driving force in the growth of the economy. In 2015, India's trade in services was valued at \$277 billion, with \$155 billion worth of export and \$122 billion worth of imports. With a share of 3.3 per cent in world export and a share of 2.7 per cent in world imports, India was ranked the 5th largest exporter and 6th largest importer of commercial services.

Compilation of Services Trade Data
Following the entry into force of GATS in 1995, the demand for detailed and comparable statistics on trade in services significantly increased. Several developed countries such as USA, UK etc. have developed a fairly robust system of collection of data on trade in services. These countries have an institutional framework for services trade data collection supported by appropriate regulations, procedures for regular collection of data from administrative sources, regulators and other partner countries (mirror data) and periodic surveys of enterprises engaged in international trade.

Unlike these countries, Indian services trade data is currently based primarily on International Transaction Reporting System (ITRS) in which foreign exchange transactions channelled through banks are reported to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The reporting of foreign exchange transactions is mandated under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.

Dissemination of services Trade data & its limitations

The monthly RBI Bulletin provides aggregate level data following the standard classification as stipulated under the IMF's Balance of Payment Manual, Version 6, for categories like Travel, Transport, Telecommunications, etc. However, information by partner country, by categories and sub-categories of services as prescribed in the negotiating list W/120 and by mode of delivery of services is not available from the RBI data. This

severely restricts study and analysis of the impact of liberalization commitments on bilateral trade and pursuing services negotiations with different countries and trading blocks.

Services Trade Data & the Role of Department of Commerce (DoC)

Given the lacunas in the existing framework, the DoC has been working relentlessly to develop a robust framework for collection of statistics on services trade. The following initiatives of the DoC deserve a special mention:

Expert Committee in Central Statistics Office (CSO) & Technical Group on Services in DoC

Amongst the important recommendations made by the Expert Committee and the Technical Group are designating a nodal agency with a mandate to collect, compile and disseminate services trade statistics, integrate some of the data requirements of DoC on external trade in services with the Annual Survey on Services to be launched by CSO, capture information on exporting units in the Sixth Economic Census to be used for conduct of future surveys and undertake more pilot or methodological studies in areas identified for creation of services database.

Implementation of Recommendations of the TG

DoC, on 30th September 2015, designated DGCI&S as the nodal agency to collect, compile and disseminate services trade statistics.

On the request of the DoC, provision was made for collection of some basic information on international trade in services in the 74th Round of NSS survey launched in August 2016.

After the pilots in health and education sectors, several new pilot studies were taken up by DGCI&S with the approval of DoC in sectors like Tourism, Telecommunication, Audiovisual, Logistics, Computer & IT services, Professional services etc. Report of the pilot study on audiovisual, logistics, professional and telecommunication sectors, conducted in partnership with

ICRIER was released in June 2016.

Services Trade data for IT, ITes
Since bulk of IT exporting units are located in STPs and SEZs, arrangements for transmission of data from SEZs to DGCI&S have been put in place to publish quarterly estimates of exports from SEZs from April 2016. A few issues regarding coverage are being sorted out with STPI before the quarterly data on export of IT & ITes from STPIs can be released.

The code structure for compilation of IT & ITes data adopted by various stakeholders has also been reviewed in the DoC and a new code structure developed in consultation with DeitY, STPI, NASSCOM and RBI which is likely to be notified by RBI soon for adoption in SOFTEX form.

Medical Tourism

To promote medical tourism, GOI has a proposal to build up a databank of available resources in the field of medical & wellness services and develop mechanism to disseminate such information.

As a part of this effort, DoC has launched a Medical Tourism survey in June 2016 with a view to collecting information on export earnings/import expenditures by country, distribution of number of non-residents by country of residence and export of health services by discipline. The survey report will be released in April 2017.

Tourism

With inputs from Bureau of Immigration and the Ministry of Tourism, Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) Kolkata is currently working with DGCI&S on developing a model for generation of quarterly estimates of export earnings from the tourism sector.

Education

Two pilot studies had been conducted by the DoC covering Higher Education services and undergraduate courses. With the survey instruments already in place and the list of institutions which had enrolled foreign students available from the HRD Ministry, preparatory work for launching a pan India survey for this sector is currently in progress.

Strengthening data collection mechanism to reduce non response

Non-response is a serious issue in the successful conduct of any enterprise survey. An appropriate administrative set-up to strengthen the data collection set up of DGCI&S is currently under examination in the DoC in consultation with MOS&PI.

Trade data Classification

Trade negotiators require disaggregated statistics as a guide for future negotiations of specific commitments and for evaluating and monitoring their economic impact in respect of each type of service. CSO in 2010 had developed the National Product Classification for Services Sector (NPCSS) for non transportable goods based on the Central Product Classification (CPC) (Version 2.0) which has been subsequently updated by DGCI&S on the basis of CPC Version 2.1 released by UNSD in August 2015. The new Services Classification (NPCSS 2016) has 1277 services instead of 1842 appearing in the previous version of NPCSS. The updated classification will facilitate the category and sub-category-wise data collection in services trade as well as ensure international compatibility.

Enterprise Surveys in Other Sectors

Preparatory work for launching of surveys in other sectors like Logistics, Audiovisual, Professional services as well as the Insurance sector in collaboration with the regulator IRDA is in progress.

Opportunities

The plan of action as envisaged by DoC will help to generate data by services category & trading partner as well as make data available on some of the categories like education and health not covered through ITRS. This data will provide vital inputs for various policy making decisions in the government and meet the long standing demand of researchers and analysts working in the area of services trade.

(Courtesy PIB Feature)

National & International News

Punjab twin IED blasts: 2 more children die of injuries, toll rises to 5

Chandigarh, Feb. 01: Two more children, who were grievously hurt in the high-intensity twin explosions that occurred during a political road show at Maur in Punjab's Bathinda district on Tuesday night, have succumbed to their injuries at the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana.

These deaths - which occurred early on Wednesday - have taken the toll in the suspected terror attack, ahead of the state's February 4 assembly elections, to five. Police identified the children as Jaspimran Singh (14) and Ritamdeep Singh (9).

Ten critically injured people are still undergoing treatment at government and private hospitals in Bathinda.

A team of forensic and explosive experts has reached Maur, where three people - including a Congress worker - were killed and nearly a dozen injured in the explosion that occurred around 8.30 pm on Tuesday. The road show was being taken out by Congress candidate Harminder Singh Jassi, after he had addressed a public meeting.

The three people who died last night have been identified as Harpal Singh, Jassi's personal assistant; Ashok Kumar, a beggar; and his 10-year-old daughter, Barkha.

The blast took place a few seconds after the Congress nominee's vehicle crossed an abandoned car in which the explosives were placed. Though shrapnel hit



Jassi's vehicle, he escaped unhurt. Jassi is a close relative of Sirsa-based Dera Sacha Sauda head Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh. The religious leader has been provided Z-plus security because he is on the hit-list of Sikh extremists.

An initial police investigation indicated that the twin IED (improvised explosive device) blasts were set off through remote control. The IEDs were planted in an abandoned car and a scooter parked near the election meeting

venue as well as the route taken by Jassi after the rally.

"Nothing can be ruled out. It's also possible that a pressure cooker was used to trigger the blast," a senior police officer said on the condition of anonymity.

A pressure cooker was found near the white Alto, which was ripped apart in the blast. Moments before the incident, announcements were made to move the car because it was disrupting traffic movement. "Both the vehicles sported fake

number plates. Even their chassis and engine numbers had been struck off," the officer said.

A close aide of chief minister Parkash Singh Badal told HT that it was presumably "an act of terror". The blast has kicked off a blame game, with the Akali Dal as well as the Congress pointing fingers at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

"We have been asking the Election Commission to take note of AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal mingling with extremists. This blast proves that our fears weren't unfounded. Radical elements have infiltrated Punjab in league with the AAP," said Sukhbir Singh Badal, deputy chief minister and Akali Dal president.

The Congress also expressed similar suspicions. "The situation here is volatile, with the entry of AAP-sponsored outsiders. What's more, the criminal gangs have been given a free hand by the Badal government to create mayhem during the polls," said party president Captain Amarinder Singh.

Mishap averted at IGI as IndiGo plane misses allotted runway

New Delhi, Feb. 01: A mishap was averted at the IGI Airport here this morning when a Visakhapatnam-bound IndiGo aircraft entered a wrong taxiway where a Jet Airways aircraft was already stationed but was timely alerted by the Air Traffic Controller.

Regulator DGCA has initiated a probe into the incident which took place around 05.40 hours and

impacted operations at the Indira Gandhi International airport.

IndiGo attributed the incident to "low visibility."

Many flights were delayed while some incoming aircraft were diverted due to the non-availability of runway 28 for over an hour, sources said.

"IndiGo flight GE 719 (New Delhi-Visakhapatnam) was given taxi permission through C lane and was

supposed to hold at Runway 28 but the aircraft commander crossed the runway and realised he was standing in W lane, where a Jet Airways aircraft was already stationed," airport sources said.

"Followings this, IndiGo was contacted to arrange push back toe but it took time and due to poor visibility, toe was guided by a follow-me vehicle.