



Contact: 097418 69722

17 November 2018

Daily News Pedia

Aadi Mahotsav

Theme: A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine and Commerce”.

The Mahotsav will comprise of display and sale of items of tribal art and craft, tribal medicine & healers, tribal cuisine and display of tribal folk performance.

Tribal artisans, chefs, folk dancers/musicians from 23 States of the country shall participate and provide glimpse of their rich traditional culture. The festival will feature exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings, fabric, jeweler and much more through 100 stalls.

Over 200 tribal artisans and artists from different States creating a Mini-India will be participating in the festival.

Source: PIB.

Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO)

The 26th edition of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) Conference was organized by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) was held in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.

COCSSO is an annual conference which provides a platform for the Central and State statisticians to exchange views and discuss common issues relating to statistical activities.

The theme of the 26th Conference was “**Quality Assurance in Official Statistics**”.

A number of papers related to theme were presented by Central Ministries/Departments at the conference. A number of recommendations were made during the conference on the issues of ensuing and enhancing quality of data brought out by Central and State Governments.

Source: PIB.

13th East Asia Summit (EAS)

The EAS consists of 10 ASEAN nations (Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the U.S. It was formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity. India has been participating in the EAS since its very inception in 2005. PM Modi reiterated India’s commitment to a balanced Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The RCEP, involving 10 ASEAN members as well as China, Japan, Australia, India, New Zealand and South Korea, would cover about half the world’s population and a third of its GDP.

Source: The Hindu.

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 applies to establishments employing 10 or more than 10 persons in Factories, Mines, Plantation, Shops & Establishments and other entities.

The main purpose of this Act is to regulate the employment of women in certain establishments for certain period before and after child birth and to provide maternity benefit and certain other benefits. The Act was amended through the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 which, inter alia, has increased the paid maternity leave to women employees from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.

Ground Reality of Implementation

- While the implementation of the provision is good in Public Sector, there are reports that it is not good in Private Sector and in contract jobs.
- There is a wide perception that private entities are not encouraging women employees because they may have to provide maternity benefit to them, particularly 26 weeks of paid holiday.
- It is not rare when the employers come to know that their women employee is in the family way or applies for maternity leave, the contracts are terminated on some flimsy grounds.
- The extended maternity leave has become a deterrent for female employees who are asked to quit or retrenched on flimsy grounds before they go on maternity leave.

Source: The Hindu.

There can't be a ban on use of word 'Dalit' in media: PCI

The Press Council of India has recently decided against issuing a directive to the media prohibiting the use of the word "Dalit".

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory to all private satellite TV channels, urging them to refrain from using the nomenclature 'Dalit' for people belonging to Scheduled Castes in compliance with a Bombay High Court directive.

The PCI, which regulates the media in India, however noticed that a blanket ban was neither advisable nor feasible". The PCI added that it had to be adjudicated on case-to-case basis.

In an earlier order on March 15 this year, the Ministry of Social Justice too had issued a similar advisory to all the State governments and Union Territories that in all official transactions, the constitutional term "Scheduled Caste" should be used instead of the word "Dalit".

The Press Council of India was first set up in the year 1966 by the Parliament on the recommendations of the First Press Commission with the object of preserving the freedom of the press and of maintaining and improving the standards of press in India.

The present Council functions under the Press Council Act, 1978. It is a statutory, quasi judicial authority functioning as a watchdog of the press, for the press and by the press. It adjudicates the complaints against and by the press for violation of ethics and for violation of the freedom of the press respectively.

Source: The Hindu.

Editorial

To read

Skill India is ailing

The vision for vocational training is on its last legs. Those in-charges have forgotten to take education into account, indulge in petty turf wars.

Remember the fanfare and optimism over the launch of Skill India in July 2015, and the roadmap for skilling 400 million people by 2022 (World Youth Skills day)? Today, Skill India looks like a patient who, after having their treatment diagnosed as successful, has relapsed into a condition worse than before and is on their last leg.

Why this relapse? The fatal flaw the surgeons committed was in forgetting all about education. In all successful countries — Germany, the UK, Japan or even China — skills and education remain closely knitted. We somehow missed the bus in 1977 when 10+2 was introduced by D S Kothari, the then UGC chairman, with vocational education as the central objective in accordance with the recommendations of the Education Commission Report (1964-66). Unfortunately, there were few takers for vocational education, primarily due to deep-rooted social prejudices against working with one's hands as it is considered lowly and demeaning. As a result, over the years, the budgetary provisions for skills in schools dried up and today it exists in a silo as a scheme of the Ministry of Skills and Entrepreneur Development (MSDE). The dream of streaming 50 per cent students into the vocational side never materialised. The challenge now is how to make a U-turn and kick-start it all over again.

An attempt was made in 2010-13 when the two major stakeholders — the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) — buried the hatchet, so to speak, and jointly notified, with the approval of the Union Cabinet, the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).

NSQF is a framework under which skills are mainstreamed into the education system at the national level. There are several advantages to NSQF, over the modular courses offered by the MSDE. First, it streams students according to their aptitude and capacity into the general or vocational line from Class IX itself. Whereas the certificates and diplomas granted by the MSDE and others are terminal in nature, NSQF can lead a student to a bachelor's degree in vocational education (B.Voc). Second, it seamlessly provides pathways between education, skills and the job market, thereby de-stigmatising vocational education by making it part-and-parcel of the school and university system. General education subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic and basic science provide the necessary glue. NSQF also recognises prior learning, through which an estimated 20 million school dropouts can get a second chance.

The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 also highlights the importance of NSQF and the need for linkages between skills and education. Unfortunately, this has been totally lost in translation. This disconnect is due to the nature of the institutional architecture that has emerged with the MSDE as the centrepiece and a false understanding of its role. MSDE's success as a ministry depends largely on its capacity to work closely with the other 18 ministries, the state governments and the industry partners, who are the real sherpas of Skill India.

It was because of this lack of understanding that the official advertisement and press note released by the MSDE at the launch of Skill India in 2015 made no mention of the MHRD as a partner, though it does in the case of other ministries. This disconnect continues and manifests in such retrograde decisions as the jettisoning of the pilot NSQF project started in Haryana and West Bengal schools in 2013. The National Council on Skill Development headed by the PM

could play a crucial role in ensuring that the true spirit of NSQF is kept in mind by all, especially the coordinating ministry.

Skill India has also been afflicted by insufficient industry partners and the failure to attract genuine skill knowledge providers. At present, with the chase to meet targets, the space has been taken over by fly-by-night operators raising serious ethical issues. The Apprenticeship Act, which has enormous potential, has also failed to enthuse industry. There are no figures available on actual placements but some estimates indicate figures as low as 5 to 10 per cent.

The university system can bring in uniformity throughout the country in terms of enforcing the National Occupation Standards and NSQF. Skill universities have started to spring up in many states, and before it is too late, we need to have an apex body to ensure standardisation across the country. If need be, the government must not hesitate to create a National Skills University which could do the same path-breaking work that IGNOU did in the 1980s for Open and Distance Learning (ODL), which today has grown to become one of the largest ODL systems in the world.

The MSDE is finding it extremely difficult to tackle the mind-boggling target of skilling 400 million (though officially, the claim is 250 million till end 2017). If skills had remained a part of education as envisaged in 1977, it could have ridden piggyback on the wave of massification of higher education that is taking place in the country. The target of achieving 30 per cent GER by 2022, which seemed impossible in 2008 (it was 11 per cent then), is now well on its course to being achieved. The present target would have been less daunting with the MHRD's capital and human resources of more than 900 universities, 6,000 technical institutions, 3,200 polytechnics, 36,000 colleges and 1.55 million schools, compared to the MSDE's 10,000 ITIs.

Are we, then, not barking up the wrong tree? Is the MSDE prepared to play second fiddle to the MHRD in the area of skills now that we have created a new ministry for good? Or is the Ministry of Finance willing to make a much larger allocation to a ministry other than the MSDE in the name of Skill India? Why are we failing to get the cooperation of genuine industry partners on a viable scale?

Having identified the "monster in the mist", we now need to be bold and implement 10+2 in its original spirit, along with NSQF, and not fall into the trap of the petty turf games which ministries and bureaucrats are so prone to playing.

Mains Question

Q. What is "Moscow Format"? Do you think it is in line with India's ambitions of 'Afghan-led and Afghan-owned' peace process? Critically analyze.