

### LEAD STORY:

#### **Covid-19 and Challenges for Socio Economic Policies in North East India**

**T**he tsunami of the recent Covid-19 has been one of the worst negative shocks which the global economy is facing today. Nations have been compelled to curtail most of their economic activities making the investment and investment multiplier work in the reverse way. The global economy is experiencing rapid downward slide in the growth rate and the worst is yet to come. Policy makers are no more talking of an impending recession, but a severe depression seems to be a certain outcome. India which has become an important player in the global market in recent years, has not only been a victim of the contagion effect, but negative factors have emerged from within the country itself, due to the rapid intensity of the Covid-19 in the country, that the expected annual growth rate seems to be a far cry. The adverse impact is experienced much more in those countries and regions of a country, which had just taken a few encouraging and positive steps in their developmental efforts in the recent times, after long spell of extreme poverty

and backwardness. The north eastern part of the country is one such region, which will now have to travel some extra miles and overcome many unwarranted challenges to once again pick up its growth momentum.

Most of the sectors with which the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis is working have been adversely impacted due to the pandemic. This has compelled the Centre to have a relook at policy orientation of all the six sectors. The policies have to be much more socially responsible, with greater focus in raising the livelihood of those whose source of income during the current pandemic has totally dried up. The economic activities in most of the states of the region, which were taking the first few steps towards growth and development have received a rude shock. With the shrinking of economic activities, a significant percentage of the labour force have lost their jobs, with very little chance of creation of fresh jobs in the labour market in the near future. This in turn has resulted in a drastic decline in the generation of income and consequent fall in demand for certain category of goods and commodities. On the other hand the production and supply of essential goods and food items have also gone down, due to the spread of Covid-19. As a result, a steady and rapid stride in price rise has been recorded in the entire country and more so in the north eastern region of the country. Miseries of the poor has thereby increased manifold. Some sectors such as tourism and hospitality does not seem to have any immediate prospect of recovery. Though with some meticulously planned effort and support from the government, some extent of revival may be possible in handloom and the handicraft sector, huge amount of public investment in the logistic and BPO sector does not seem to be an immediate



priority of government expenditure.

A new policy orientation “especially for north east India is the need of the hour, so that before the situation worsens even further, the new policies can revive the economy of the states of the region, by confronting the current challenging situation in an innovative way. Local entrepreneurship has to be further incentivised, local demand has to be further capitalised for boosting up local production. Since there is a fear of the pandemic being spread from one place to another, no place including the north eastern region will encourage people, goods and other commodities from outside the region or even interstate movement of goods and services. This sentiment can be capitalised for developing indigenous products and consumption goods in the best possible manner. Government has no doubt provided some short term relief to some economic sectors and migrant workers who have lost their jobs. However, our policies will be expected to provide long term relief to the region and the workforce of the region who will be the main drivers of growth for the region in the coming years.

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

During the period the Centre has organized two capacity building training for the entrepreneurs of North Eastern India. The first workshop was organized at Tourist Lodge, Dimapur, Nagaland for the entrepreneurs of Nagaland on 21st January 2020 in collaboration with

Toka Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Dimapur. It was attended by 35 entrepreneurs from Nagaland.

The workshop was coordinated by Centre Manager Dr Bhaskar Kumar Kakati and Shri Sridhar Lakshman, the Managing Trustee of BASECAMP Social Research Foundation and the Secretary of Toka Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Mr K. Kathi Chishi took a session on marketing and financial management.

The Centre also organised a One Day Capacity Building workshop for the entrepreneurs of Arunachal Pradesh at Chongkham, Namsai in collaboration with Block Mission Management Unit, Chowkham and Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA), Assam. It was attended by 40 entrepreneurs of the State.



Photo - Participants of Capacity Building Workshop held at Dimapur





**Photo- Shri Sridhar Lakshman distributing certificate to the participants**



**Photo - Participants of Capacity Building Workshop held at Namsai**

Resource Person of the workshop was Sri Madhurjya Prasad Borah from SeSTA and workshop was coordinated by Centre Manager DrBhaskar Kumar Kakati and Block Mission Manager of Block Mission Management Unit, Chowkham Juspin Kerketta.



**Photo- Sri Madhurjya Prasad Borah is taking session at Namsai**



## AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Centre organised one awareness campaign at BSNL Hall, Dimapur for the entrepreneurs of Handicrafts, Horticulture, Handloom on different government projects and programmes. Research Assistants of the Centre delivered a lecture on dif-



**Photo- Awareness Campaign at Dimapur**

ferent schemes and projects of Government on different sectors such as Boishali Gogoi on Handicrafts, Hitesh Gamit on Handloom, Dr Bathsheba G Pyngrope on Horticulture, Simi Sharma on BPO, Ibadahun Khongwir on Tourism and Dr Kiran Sharma on Logistics. Centre Manager Dr Bhaskar Kumar Kakati coordinated the awareness campaign.

## CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON TOURISM

Centre Coordinator Professor Keya Sengupta attended the constative meeting on tourism organ-



ised by North Eastern Council on 13th February 2020 at NEC Conference Hall, Shillong. The meeting was organised to understand the scope of tourism in North East India and was attended by various stakeholders from North East India and chaired by Honorable member of NEC Professor Biman Kumar Dutta. Professor Keya Sengupta shared the various steps taken by the Centre to understand the status of the tourism sector in the region. Further, she also shared the plan of the Centre regarding Tourism. For the Centre, Dr Bhaskar Kumar Kakati, Centre Manager and Ibadahun Khongwir, Research Assistant, also attended the meeting.

## E-SYMPOSIUM SERIES

The Centre has organized the inaugural session of e-Symposium series titled 'Emergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives' on 05/06/2020. The e-Symposium series was inaugurated by Dr Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister (Independent Charge), Ministry of DoNER. The inaugural session was attended by Shri. Shishir Bajoria, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Shillong, Shri. K Moses Chalai, IAS Secretary, North Eastern Council, Shillong, Dr Inderjit Singh, IAS Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, Shri. Atul Kulkarni, Member, Board of Governors, IIM Shillong, Prof. D.P. Goyal, Director, IIM Shillong, Prof. Keya Sengupta, Centre Coordinator, Dr APJ Centre for Policy Research and Analysis. The



inaugural session was followed by a technical session. Eminent academicians and professionals

2020. The e-Symposium was inaugurated by Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Govt. of India.

The inaugural session was attended by Shri. Shishir Bajoria, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Shillong, Shri Manoj Mishra, Managing Director, Zenith Holidays, Shri Devesh Deval, IAS, Commissioner cum Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. of Manipur, Shri K. Jaya Kumar, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. of

such as Prof Saibal Kar, Professor of Economics, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata, Prof D. Rajasekhar, HAG Professor and Head, Centre for Decentralisation and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore Prof Madhurjya Prasad Bezbaruah, Professor, Department of Economics Gauhati University, Guwahati, Mr Amit Raje, Ex-Managing Director in Goldman Sachs's Principal Investment Area delivered a lecture on the technical session. Prof. Keya Sengupta, Centre Coordinator, Dr APJ Centre for Policy Research and Analysis moderated the session.

In continuation to the e-Symposium series, the Centre has organized the e-Symposium on tourism titled "Emergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives in Tourism" on 20th June

Sikkim, and Prof. D. P. Goyal, Director, IIM Shillong. The inaugural session was followed by technical session. Shri Shri Jishnu Debbarma, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura, delivered the valedictory address. Key note speakers of the technical session were Mr. Dyu Tamo, Mr. Kulendra Daulagapu, Ms. Nino Zhasa, Mr. Ajit Kumar Paul, Mr. Sonam Norgay Lachungpa, Mr. Shyamkanu Mahanta, Dr. Vijay Kumar D. Shri Atul Kulkarni moderated the session. The technical session was also attended by Prof Keya Sengupta, Coordinator, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis and Dr. Natalie West Kharkongor, Associate Professor & Sectoral Coordinator, Tourism.

## FIELD STUDY REPORT

The Centre is engaging in analysing different policies of North Eastern States of India on sectors like Handicrafts, Handloom, Horticulture, Tourism, BPO and Logistics. In context to this, the officials and staffs of the Centre are regularly visiting different stakeholders of the region. Objectives of these visits are to understand the present status of these sectors at these states and to collect primary data



on opportunities and challenges to these sectors. Accordingly, during the period the Research Assistants of the Centre made several visits to several organisations situated at different parts of North East India such as Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati (Assam), Gauhati University,

The Research Assistants of the Centre also meet the Adviser (Academic) Professor Madhurjya Prasad Bezbarua on 24th January 2020. They during this meeting, discussed the different issues on



Guwahati (Assam), NeDFI, Guwahati (Assam), and Toka Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Dima-pur (Nagaland).

Research Assistants of the Centre made a brief discussion with Dr Santanu Kumar Deka, Associate Professor, IIE Guwahati on 23rd January 2020 scope of Handicrafts, Handloom, Horticulture, BPO, Tourism and Logistics in North East India. A discussion was also made on the importance of product value chain, basically under the three primary sectors Handicrafts, Handloom and Horticulture sectors at two levels viz; Sectoral and Sub sectoral level.

the status of Handicrafts, Handloom, Horticulture, Tourism, BPO and Logistics in North-Eastern India.

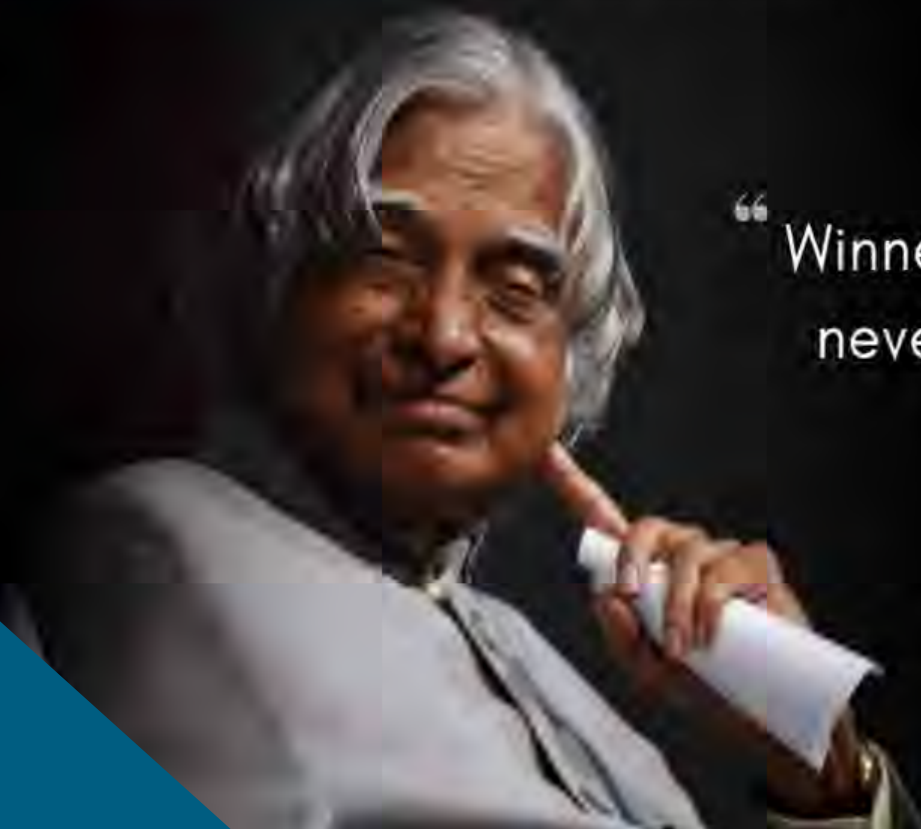
Research assistants of the Centre interacted with officials of the NEDFi Shri Saiedul Hussain, AGM on 12th March 2020. The discussion held regarding the feasibility study done by NEDFi on marketing of horticulture, handloom and handicrafts products of the North-Eastern region. NEDFi agreed to share the relevant TEDF reports with the Centre.



The Officials and staffs of the Centre visited Toka Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Dimapur (Nagaland) on 23rd January 2020 and interacted with Mr K. Kathi Chishi, Secretary and discussed on the probability of Horticulture, Handloom and Handicrafts in Nagaland.







“Winners are not those who  
never fail but those who  
never quit”

**DR. A P J ABDUL KALAM**  
(15 OCT 1931- 27 JULY 2015)

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