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Covering developments in the area of training and education on economic policy issues

Walk Through A Momentous Event



As part of a unique research programme entitled, “Competition, Regulation and Development Research Forum (CDRF)”, CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CUTS C-CIER) and CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC) are jointly organising a Research Symposium, “Political Economy Constraints in Regulatory Regimes in Developing Countries” from March 22-24, 2007 in New Delhi. CUTS International has envisioned this research programme on competition policy and regulatory regimes in the developing world.

This Symposium is being organised to deliberate the research findings that emerged in the first cycle of the CDRF project. The research papers scheduled for discussion at the Symposium would focus on political economy and governance constraints that developing countries face in implementing their competition and regulatory regimes.

The Symposium schedule runs for over two and half days, which includes the Inaugural on the evening of March 22, 2007 (Day One). Notable dignitaries like Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary General, UNCTAD, Yashwant Sinha, Member of Parliament, India, Nitin Desai, Former Under-secretary General of United Nations and C Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India are the high profile speakers at the Inaugural Session. This momentous and dynamic Inaugural Session would serve as the curtain raiser for the brainstorming sessions that would follow for the next two days.

On Day Two and Three of the Symposium (i.e. March 23 and 24, 2007), there would be serious deliberation on the substantive issues in a focused manner. The schedule is structured into the format of panel discussions exclusive for the research papers, where authors would make presentations on key findings of their papers. This will be followed by comments from panellists and participants, thus each session is highly likely to be very interactive. More importantly, parallel sessions, which would cover three sectors, i.e. electricity, telecom and financial services is scheduled for Day Three.

The valedictory address on the afternoon of Saturday, March 24, 2007 would include observations of grandees like Bimal Jalan, Member of Parliament, India and Frederic Jenny, Judge, Supreme Court, France, who will also address the Inaugural Session.

The other notable highlight of the Symposium is the presentations. About 25 Research Papers are on the cards, which cover a wide range of experiences from developing countries and transitional economies like South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Zambia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) Countries, Fiji, Turkey, Serbia, Malta etc.

The papers and deliberations at the Symposium will help identify approaches that could be useful for developing countries in tackling the various political-economy constraints.

For details, please visit: <http://www.circ.in/cdrfsymp.html>

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What's Happening – An Overview

New Knowledge Network

To seek expert advice for peoples' empowerment with skills and capabilities relevant to the knowledge era, the Government has constituted the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), which proposes to build a network to interconnect educational and research institutes in the country.

The network will allow universities and institutes like Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs) and Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs) to share research data and information on a common network. Moreover, NKC proposes to connect 5,000 entities in the country covering universities, academic institutes, research and development laboratories and libraries.

Sam Pitroda, chairman of the NKC said that the Commission would be working on 100 hundred different topics to examine the level of knowledge, its creation and utilisation and the like and preparation of crisp reports, for submission to the Prime Minister.

The Commission focuses on five areas: access to knowledge; absorb and communicate the knowledge; research in development in science and technology; knowledge application; and knowledge services such as e-governance.

(BS, 18.10.06 & TH, 14.10.06)



Industry-Friendly Curricula

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has decided to revamp technical-education courses under 10 different streams to make the curricula more industry friendly. Aimed at attracting more students to the field of IT education, the revamped curricula will lay greater focus on practical job training, in collaboration with the industry. More importantly, AICTE intends to improve technical education syllabi to make youths better equipped with job skills.

The new syllabi would be introduced from the next academic year in all technical education institutes that are directly controlled by the AICTE. It is hoped that they will act as 'model' syllabi for adoption by institutes under the direct control of state governments.

The move to evolve new syllabi has come in the wake of severe criticism of technical-education standards in the country by industry.

(HT, 19.11.06)

E-Course for Professionals

There is no need to take a break from the job to acquire management degree from the IIMs. Three IIMs – Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Indore will now make their executive development programmes available at six remote learning centres in the country on the technology provided by NIIT.

The classes would be running after-working hours and on weekends enabling the students to continue with their jobs and pursue education simultaneously. The faculty would operate from an in-house studio located within the campuses of the IIMs and the students would undergo interactive sessions through two-way live video

and audio and other related software to replicate face-to-face teaching.

These include three general management programmes for professionals with a minimum experience of three years, six years or 10 years.

(BL, 13.09.06)

Investment in Education

In a bid to find skilled manpower for the services sector, there is a need for investments from the private sector in education and training. The CII Services Council has recommended that the private sector should initiate training programmes to educate teachers, create and update curricula and set up recruitment centres.

The CII Services Council felt that the private sector could focus on increasing employability by providing opportunities for on-the-job training. Further, the Council urged for the need to establish more institutes and increase capacity through public-private partnership (PPP).

Despite India having 311 universities and 16,000 colleges, about three million graduate each year out of a 120 million young people in the age group of 17 to 22 years, higher education is accessible to one percent of the graduates. CII recommends further opening of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the education systems.

(BL, 31.12.06)

Triple Bottom-Line

With the concept of triple bottom-line — gaining ground among Indian companies, the IIMs are incorporating specialised courses on corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of their academic offering. Triple bottom line means taking into account

environmental and social performance in addition to financial performance

The academia feels that such specialised management programmes will now assume importance since corporates are finding close relation between sustainability of business and its contribution to society.

The programme will delve into issues such as better reporting of CSR activities, PPPs, indexing of business and the environmental and economic dimensions of CSR. IIM-Ahmedabad has already introduced it as an executive MBA programme.

(ET, 12.12.06)

Training Managers

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has roped in Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) to train its senior management on various aspects of the model concession agreement (MCA).

The programme will familiarise NHAI officials with PPP concepts, project development processes and implications of various provisions of the MCA. The training curriculum will have a special focus on land acquisition and the changing role of NHAI.

NHAI and IDFC would be training 10 general managers, 14 deputy general managers, 6 project directors and 68 managers in PPP implementation.

Trained staff is expected to expedite faster implementation of PPP projects in the road sector

(ET, 28.10.06)

Regulating E-Learning

The HRD Ministry has decided to bring an enabling Bill to regulate distance education and online courses being offered by universities, including foreign institutions. According to the Ministry official, the Bill has been drafted and would be soon placed before the Cabinet for consideration.

The need to regulate distance education was felt after the Supreme Court in 2005 disallowed offshore campuses of Deemed Universities operating from Chhattisgarh.

Moreover, it has been observed that many teaching centres of distance learning schools were charging exorbitant fees from the students. Hence the Ministry opted for a model Bill in order to provide quality education through distance learning.

The Bill would provide minimum facilities that a student should get through distance education like the time in which the course material reaches them and the lectures they need to attend.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has already taken steps to improve distance education.

(HT, 14.10.06)

Strengthening Commercial and Economic Diplomacy

— Kishan S Rana*

In this era of globalisation, the process of external policy management has become more 'democratic' than ever before. Foreign ministries rub shoulders with other agencies of government that are fully empowered players in their own functional competence areas. Non-state actors are legitimised, and are even sought out by governments to do the things that the foreign ministries and other branches of government are unable to accomplish on their own. Two recent examples: the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) taking the help of the apex chambers of business and industry, to reconnect with the hydra-headed US decision-makers following the nuclear tests of May 1998 and the sanctions imposed by the US administration. The US business leaders and congressmen were wooed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in a sustained, successful campaign. Second case: when the Commerce Ministry found itself unable to put into operation the 'India Brand Equity Fund' that had been created in the mid-1990s, it joined hands with CII, and handed over the running of that Fund to a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement, under its overall supervision.

This is a trend the world over. Against such background, it is axiomatic that economic and commercial diplomacy should be seen as a shared concern of the MEA, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and all the other official agencies concerned. Carefully designed training programmes are one of the key activities that support and strengthen Indian capabilities as a dynamic participant in the global economy. We have simply not paid enough attention to this area, nor operated our programmes in the requisite comprehensive and integrated manner.

Who should participate in such training? CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition ran a 4-day commercial diplomacy programme in June 2006 with officials from the central ministries as the main participants. It was productive; and the written, anonymous feedback from the participants was excellent. Everyone, unanimously, asked for an encore. Some felt that in a closed circle of fellow-officials, they could speak more openly than they might have with a mixed group. That is a valid point. Yet, the advantages of having a blended group including corporate executives, officials from state governments, representatives of NGOs and business chambers, outweigh this concern. It is only with a group (that includes

all the stakeholders) that all the participants can truly understand how much they need and depend upon each other. Such integrated programmes also drive home the virtues and possibilities of PPP.

What might be the ideal content of training? The best method is a residential programme of not more than four days that covers the following:

Negotiation technique

This must include theory that has direct, practical applications plus a multi-session simulation, with role-play. It is astonishing how a few corporate executives have undergone such training; as for government officials, this is

entirely a new territory. In the end it is the simulations that provide real insight into the experienced professionals who have their own domain knowledge, and need to better leverage in real world situations.

Economic analysis

Government officials write analytical notes and policy recommendations much of the time, with varying degrees of competence, and business executives do much the same. What

This article address a theme not often debated: our contemporary training needs, in support of India's efforts to connect with the world economy and use external markets to spur domestic socio-economic growth.

the training imparts is a methodology of analysis that applies in all situations, a master template that looks at issues in all their dimensions. Once the virtues of well-organised analysis are shown through living examples, the lesson lasts a lifetime.

Inter-cultural communication (ICC)

Government and private sector executives are now becoming aware of how much they need to know of 'the other', to understand the value systems and the core beliefs of their foreign partners, besides their visible cultural traits and taboos. We ignore this dimension in external negotiations, or even in preliminary contacts, at our peril. What ICC does teach is the mind-frame in which one should approach such dialogue across cultures, not one rigid formula.

India is still at an early stage of its internationalisation. It is natural that new training needs emerge, especially for those at mid-career levels who are making a major transition in their thinking. We need many initiatives and programmes that address commercial diplomacy to a wide catchment of stakeholders that are on the right track.

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Annual Event Roundup

COMPETITION POLICY & LAW SEMINARS (CPS)**First Training Seminar on Competition Policy and Law (CPS.01)**

The first five-day training seminar on Competition Policy and Law, at New Delhi, India, on March 20-24, 2006 kick-started the activities of CIRC that aimed to develop analytical



capabilities to comprehend issues related to competition policy and law, including their perspectives and linkages with the industry and economy.

For more details, please visit: www.circ.in/er20mar06.htm

Second Training Seminar on Competition Policy & Law (CPS.02)

A training seminar on Competition Policy & Law was held at Hilton, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on March 29-30, 2006 in collaboration with the Ethiopian Competition Authority and the Trade Practices Investigation Commission.

For more details, please visit: www.circ.in/er29mar06.htm

Third Training Workshop on Competition Policy and Law (CPS.03)

CIRC organised an Interactive Seminar on Competition Law in New Delhi on May 13, 2006. The event had Richard Whish, Professor of Law, King's College, and Non Executive Director at the Office of Fair Trading, UK and Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International addressed the issue 'Competition Law of India with focus on International Cartels' from an international and national perspective, respectively.

For more details, please visit: www.circ.in/fe13may06.htm

Calendar of Events

- Political Economy Constraints In Regulatory Regimes In Developing Countries – A Research Symposium
New Delhi, India, March 22-24, 2007
- Seminar on Experiences of Competition Law from Around the World, (CPS.07) March 21, 2007, New Delhi, India

(For more: www.circ.in/event-calendar.htm)

Fourth Workshop on Competition Policy and Law (CPS.04)

In collaboration with Foundation for Effective Markets and Governance (FEMAG), Australia; the International Network of Civil Society Organisations on Competition (INCSOC), India; the Board of Trade of Thailand (BOT); and the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand (JFCCT), CIRC organised the fourth training seminar on Competition Policy & Law from June 29-July 01, 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand.

For more details, please visit: <http://circ.in/er29june06.htm>

COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY SEMINARS (CDS)**Training Seminar on Diplomacy in International Trade (CDS.01)**

Training seminar on Diplomacy in International Trade was jointly organised by CIRC, Institute for Trade & Commercial



Diplomacy (ITCD) and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) with the support of Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, in New Delhi on June 28-July 01, 2006.

For more details, please visit: <http://circ.in/erCDS01.htm>

ACADEMIC LECTURE SERIES (ALS)**Capacity Building for the Indian Competition Regime with focus on Abuse of Dominance (ALS.01)**

January 18, 2006, New Delhi

For more details, please visit: <http://www.circ.in/er-ALSCP01.htm>

Intellectual Property and Competition Law' (ALS.03)

March 15, 2007, Mumbai

For more details, please visit: www.circ.in/er15may06.htm

Trade Policy Making and Multi-stakeholder Diplomacy (ALS.04)

July 04, 2006, New Delhi

For more details, please visit: <http://www.circ.in/ALS04.htm>

Evolution of Competition Law with Respect to India (ALS.05)

August 26, 2006, Kolkata

For more details, please visit: <http://www.circ.in/ALS05.htm>

Competition Policy & Law in a Liberalising Economy (ALS.06)

December 07, 2006, Mumbai

For more details, please visit: <http://www.circ.in/ALS-06.htm>

