

Editorial

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

Welfare woes

The Government of India has launched numerous welfare schemes and programs since independence with 'Growth with Social Justice as the basic objective of the development planning in the country. It can be said that there is at present a scheme to cover any requirement or meet any specific need of any section/segment of the society or part of the country. While these schemes have managed to bring about significant and positive changes in its attempt to fulfil the ideal of a welfare state not only in principle but also through economic planning thus securing to its citizens justice- social, economic and political, the government still needs to fine tune various aspects to ensure that the real and intended beneficiaries receive their due share.

The recent move by the state government to ensure proper coordination between the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) and the related departments so that awareness of various schemes can be dispersed to the public with greater ease and efficiency may be viewed as a positive development in the ongoing efforts of the present government who have so far shown its eagerness to walk the talk.

Admission of drawbacks and weaknesses in the administrative process rather than making excuses and passing the buck around is a sign of political maturity. But the real test of intent and integrity of thought by the leaders is when measures are actually taken up to make good such mistakes and weaknesses.

The issue of the declining popularity of government schemes needs to be addressed from different aspects starting with the formulating of such schemes to finding the right mix of methods for spreading awareness to the intended beneficiaries to streamlining a delivery mechanism that can ensure accountability during the whole process.

Difficulty in understanding the nuances or finer points of the program compounded by the inability to disseminate information and details of the schemes remain the biggest hurdle. Reports of cheating and preparation of false muster rolls were rampant. Instances of siphoning of money and resources were the order of the day and bureaucratic hurdles add to the murky nature of the whole exercise which has even come to be seen by many as an organised racket.

Despite the drawbacks which are more a result of greedy and dishonest officials and administrators along the long chain of implementation of these schemes, they remain the vital means to bridge the gap between the rapidly increasing rate of development and the less fortunate and disadvantaged sections of the society. For any welfare measure to be carried out successfully, active participation of the public, especially the beneficiaries is important. They need to be aware of the schemes and the exact benefits they are entitled to and also encourage them to demand the same. However, the best laid plans of mice and men are about the same. The result of the whole humongous exercise rests in its proper implementation, and the best way to go about it is to develop methods for easy and efficient checks and balances with a motivated workforce to put it into action.

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“Battle of Imphal- Catalyst to India’s Independence”

The INA as an army of the independent government, took part in a joint operation with the Japanese Army. It was not a puppet army. It was unjustifiable and illegal to try in a British military court the regular officers of an independent government which has the right to fight.

At the conclusion of the trial, Chief counsel Dr Desai delivered an eight-hour speech over two days declaring that 'a subjugated people have the right to fight'.

On 3rd January General Auchinleck suspended the life imprisonment sentence of the three of INA officers, General Shah Nawaz Khan, Lt Colonel P.K. Sahgal and Colonel G.S Dhillon. General Auchinleck was very conscious of the fact that even officers and men of the British Indian Army who were responsible for maintaining India's peace and security were becoming awakened to national Independence, and that they could not be relied upon any more. He was afraid of the British Indian Army turning from a watchdog of the British Empire to an arm of the Indian National Congress.

The British government had succumbed to the demands of the

Indian masses and had chosen the path of giving up the power of administration. The British government realized the irreversible course of the situation and began secretly to formulate the second best alternative- an honorable withdrawal while maintaining and protecting British interest in India as far as possible. The military trial in the red fort, contrary to their original expectation and calculation, created the decisive factor for the British withdrawal from India.

The historical significance of the trial was clearly expressed in the article contributed by Nehru and published on 17th January, 1945 as quoted in its preface. '... The issue of the trial is neither the legality of the court nor eloquence. It is a power contest between the administrator who controls India and the will of the Indian people. Its outcome is a victory for the Indians... Will the trial, held in the last week of the year 1945, terminate the chapter of British control following that of the Mughal dynasty? Yes, the trial presages the end of that chapter'.

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Meeyangi Numit (People's Day)

A Reflection & Conception of Good Governance in Manipur

By : Seram Neken

Chingmee Eikhoibu Nungsibiba, Minungshi Leiba Minister Ni Nahakti;

Ching Gi Zilla Khudingda, Chaokhat Thourang Pirakpa; Ching Gi Lamdam Khudingda, Senpham Mayam Thadhabiba; Nang Nattana Kanasu Ukhidri, Nang Nattana Kanasu Chongthoraktri;

Chingmee Eikhoibu Nungsibiba, Minungshi Leiba Minister Ni Nahakti -

Soinaiba Sing Nungsibiba, Minister Ni Nahakti; Hinghoubasing Thoujalbiba, Minister Ni Nahakti; Nang Gi Mapoksima Laigi Mapokni;

Chingmee Eikhoibu Nungsibiba, Minungshi Leiba Minister Ni Nahakti -

Punshi Nungshangba Oiyuko, Nungai Yaipha Oiyuko; Punshi Chuppa Ningthou Oiyuko, Narum Thupna Hingjage Miraibinu Ko -

(You are the only Minister who loves the hill people; You are the only Minister who brings development to the hills; You are the only Minister who shares funds to the hill districts; None has ever done it, None has ever come out before. You are the only Minister who loves the disabled; You are the only Minister who loves the survivors; You're truly the incarnation of God. We wish you long life, We wish you well-being; May you be the king forever, Please don't ignore us; We will live under your love & care.)

This beautiful song presented by a girl-artist during the Silver Jubilee celebration of Liangmai Sports Association on 11th January last at Liangchi Village in Kangpokpi district in presence of Chief Minister of Manipur Nongthombam Biren Singh is well indicative of a regained emotional integrity between the hill and the valley people in the state. The lyrics, tune and rhythm signifying the whole-hearted innocence of the singer apparently represented the emerging voice of the hill people towards the present governance which has successfully made an upheaval of the earlier conception of Hill-Valley emotional divide. The song was bereft of any calculative composition, and without any pretension. It truly came out of the hearts of hill people and appealed to the hearts of valley brethren with a message of love, integrity and development.

Having the bulkiest written constitution based on the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, India is acclaimed the biggest Democracy on Earth. Indian Constitution has been praised worldwide for catering to the needs and aspirations of a multitude of communities, cultures and peoples with their kaleidoscopic and cosmopolitan characters. Thanks to the framers of Indian Constitution, who had toiled hard to grasp the beautiful aspects of constitutions prevailing in different countries of the time, and fitted to suit the needs of this diverse land into a compact political structure termed as 'Union of India'.

Federal system in India is unique, in the sense that it creates a centrifugal tendency whereby different regions with varied characters tend to submit to the unionism of India as a Nation. However, Indian Democracy nowadays has become a subject of criticism across the globe because of the ever widening gap between

the rulers who are supposed to exercise the power bestowed upon them by the people, and the ruled who elect their representatives for a fixed tenure.

The shorter the gap between the people and the government, the healthier is the Democracy. In the City States of early Greece, people themselves made laws and executed them. It was the Direct Democracy, which was suitable for small territory with small population. People itself collectively acted as the government. With the increasing size of population and territory, the concept of Direct Democracy became impractical. Nations around the globe had to adopt the representative form of government, as if Democracy became synonymous with representation. Today, election of representatives has become the essence of Democracy. Wherever and whenever the elected representatives work in tune with the people's aspirations, the governance is said to be good.

When the people's representatives fall short of responding to people's sentiments, Democracy will surely invite criticism in this modern liberal world. Hence, in order to save the very spirit and true essence of Democracy in India, there is strong need to shorten the gap between the people and the rulers in all states of India.

One encouraging trend in Indian Democracy is visible in recent times with an innovative conception of Meeyangi Numit (People's Day) orchestrated by the BJP Chief Minister of Manipur Nongthombam Biren Singh in order to tackle the apparent disconnect between people and government. Addressing people's grievances with an emotional touch, the political institution of Meeyangi Numit hears the voice of the voiceless people and provides easy access

to ministers and bureaucrats. On this day, people irrespective of their political, social, educational and economic status can approach ministers and bureaucrats including the Chief Minister to air their grievances. Right from the poorest of the poor to those from the remotest corner of Manipur, people of all sections can directly speak out their views personally to the Chief Minister, other Ministers and bureaucrats.

In Manipur, 15th of every month is People's Day and 10th of every month is earmarked especially for the 'Hill People'. Public screening of documentaries depicting achievements of the government is also arranged at the Chief Minister's premise on this specified day. Other than elected leaders, all police stations in the state have started hosting Meeyangi Numit for convenience of people who are unable to reach the Chief Minister and other ministers. Any visitor complainant need not come for the second time, as progress of his appeal will be communicated via SMS through a new mechanism called 'Redmine App'.

The incumbent Chief Minister of Manipur, who has the passion and enthusiasm to be in touch with his people and who has the wisdom of winning people's hearts, is seen doing extra home work to rebuild the much needed rapport between the people and government, as well as between the hill and the valley brethren of Manipur. Shri Biren appears to have the strong belief that emotional integrity is foremost in bringing about development in Manipur. In reality, Manipur has long been deprived of progress and growth only because of the impending mistrust among communities, and between the governed and the government.

Amidst the much-talked about VIP Culture followed by forerunner heads of states in Manipur during the last few decades, 'easy accessibility' by the people and 'open reach-out' to the people have become the unique characteristics

of the present office of Chief Minister in Manipur. It is now opined at various circles that the Manipur Chief Minister has become the most accessible Head of State since Manipur became a part of India in 1949.

He has the strength to listen to the voice of the people seriously and is responsive to his people as much as possible. Even though Meeyangi Numit cannot accommodate all citizens of the state and cannot fulfill all aspirations of the people, this very institution has dramatically minimized the decades-old existing trust deficit on the government to a great extent. People have now begun to feel that their government is working and listening to them.

Democracy, in the real sense of the term, demands a government - that is both responsive and responsible to the people residing in the state. Shri Biren, who is worthy of being titled "The People's Chief Minister", may be regarded as an apostle of good governance in Manipur, for he has been able to dwindle the magnitude of rulers-ruled disconnect and hill-valley divide to a certain extent.

During such an opportune moment, each and every elected representative of people right from Ministers and MLAs to Municipal Corporators and Panchayat Members should enthusiastically come forward to host such a routine event in order to concentrate on the pulse of the people and work in tune with their aspirations.

All ranks and file in government should also seriously feel the importance of the Meeyangi Numit and devote extra time in following up the outcomes of this day. Without proper follow-up action by government machineries, this day may turn into a mere ceremony and only a symbolic event. Even the politicians across India need to emulate and adopt the institution of Meeyangi Numit to save Indian Democracy from criticisms arising out of the ever widening gap between the rulers and the ruled.

Regional News

Assam Rifles conducts security meeting

Imphal, Jan. 23: In view of upcoming Republic day a "Security Meet" was conducted by 15 Assam Rifles of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR(South) at Chingmeirong Company Operating Base on 22 Jan 2018. The meet was attended by local of the area including prominent personalities of various Clubs and MeiraPaibisorganisation. The aim of this meeting was to discuss all the security aspects and necessary measures to be undertaken by locals in synergy with Assam

Rifles. The requirement of keeping tight vigil in the area in view of upcoming Republic Day was stressed upon. The Battalion provided this platform to the villagers to discuss their perspective of security situation in the area and to encourage them to come up with suggestions to improve synergy between Security Forces and the local populace. In the end the attendees appreciated the efforts of Assam Rifles in ensuring peace and assured their commitment and assistance in maintaining the same.

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