

# Editorial

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## Cohesion is sports

The resignation by the seven officials of the All Manipur Football Association (AMFA) on April 17, 2018 stands valid only if the remaining AMFA officials are also scrutinized in the High Court of Manipur unless these officials in fact be found punishable under the law court instead of the officials that have resigned. This fact is so because to see the truth of the proceedings many of the officials of the AMFA from the time of its becoming an influential sports association in the state have been from a particular locality in the state capital Imphal, a locality that has had influence in terminating the spectator interest in football in the state and reduced the game of football to mere official and legal proceedings amounting to a nagging and prolonged nepotism that has disrupted the inter-club transfers of football players from the state and also caused long-standing confusion in the state leagues and tournaments in the state. AMFA officials L Ranjit Roy, Jyotirmoy Roy, coach Kamini Kumar Singh and his brother Sushil Kumar, and N Bormanai have been the officials of the state official body for football and except for Kamini Kumar Singh who died of heart attack, something that happens rarely with sportspersons and coaches, the others still are officials although football is a popular sport in the state and so many officials must have vied for the AMFA posts pointing to the fact that officialdom has been rampant in the AMFA sports association.

A logically and legally identifiable problem is the prolonged terms of the officials in the AMFA, a case which if resolved could also solve the matter of appointments or elections to the state's sports associations. What are the criteria for appointments and is it not necessary to do away with rules that harm the freedom of sports as played on the field and how is it that officials that have not played for any clubs, leagues, tournaments and other features across the state officiate from influential positions that mar the sport and sports careers of the players - a mockery of sports and sports enthusiasts that has come to a situation where the sporting careers of competitive players like K Sanjita, in weightlifting, are being taken up in the legal jurisdiction of international sports committees for doping that seems to be irrelevant in the case but is justified from the opinions of the international sports committees on doping in competitive sports.

Manipur is not concerned much with doping tests in sports at any competitive level especially in the local sports competitions, as is specified under the doping rules, and there have been no cases of doping tested positive according to the doping rules of national and international sports competitions. It is then quite contradictory that sportspersons, as they come on to the international arena, are found wanting again and again and the disappointment that causes in sporting circles in the state is obvious. Testosterone is an anabolic steroid that is necessarily not orally ingested but is also caused by a genetic mismatch that causes chromosomal disorder. Overt male dominance does cause the gender mismatch and there are many factors in the state that point to the possible cause for the confusion in the matter of doping in sports. Would this be a matter that could be legally taken to a conclusion by the doping federations and if left unchecked what would be the future of sports and sportspersons in the state - a question for the day and another day in the future also - pertinent and commonplace.

Writer- RK Lakhi Kant

# RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE MERGER PROBLEM

By-Dr. M. Horam

1.a. Secretary General of the United Nations declared 1993 as the "International Year of the World's Indigenous People". The motto is; "Indigenous People: A New Partnership".

1.b. Indigenous People are those who first inhabited in a particular country before other races having different cultures arrived or invaded to that country. The indigenous Peoples, for want of better name, are also called Aborigines, or, Natives. For examples, the Red Indians are the natives of Two Americas (the North and the South), the Maoris are of the New Zealand, the Eskimos are of the Northern Europe, the Tatars are of Russia and the Adivasis are of the Indians.

### 2.a. Who are the Indigenous peoples of Manipur

This is a tricky question to answer. It needs a serious and unbiased systematic study of early history of Manipur. Manipur has past written history, particularly of the Valley. It had its kings and queens played their parts in shaping the destiny of its people. Manipur had also a political system of its own which was basically feudal; a system in which land was granted by a king to a subject in exchange of for his military and other services. This system however, was badly jolted by the British arrivals in Manipur. A word may be mentioned here that system was primarily enforced and practiced in the valley of Manipur.

2.b. Manipur, from time immemorial, is geographically divided into two Regions: 1) The Valley and 2) The Hills. The Valley was peopled by various clans, now called the Meiteis, the Hills were/are peopled by the various tribes. These Tribes are now called the Scheduled Tribes according to Indian Constitution's definition. The Hill Tribal's administration was/is entirely indigenous based on their age-old traditional un-written laws

and codes. Each village was/is a republic (like the ancient Greek City-States) for example, a Naga Village. A Naga Village has its own administration besides the tribal customs; well-demarcated land and land use system. The tribal way of life continued uninterrupted for centuries till the extension of the British Colonial Rule to the Tribal Areas of Manipur. Nonetheless, the British adopted the "Non-Interference Policy" towards the Tribals respecting their cultures and customs.

The Hill men and the Valley men lived in peaceful co-existence for centuries. These Hill Tribals were not directly under the control of the Manipur King though they had friendly relation with the exchange of good will missions from time to time. Gifts were exchanged by the visiting members.

2.c. From the above statements we can arrive at the conclusion that the Meiteis are the Indigenous people of the Manipur Valley and the Tribals are the Indigenous people of the Hills. Needless to remind ourselves that the word "Tribals" are of Westerners concept which they often used to the first settlers of a place. The Westerners called the first settlers as 'tribals', 'uncouth', 'barbarian' and uncivilized whenever they came into contact with them. Therefore, these words have derogatory attribution and contemptuous appellation. The Indian Government and the Indians coming from other parts of Indian Sub-continent still use these colonial phrases with a sense of superiority complex.

3.a. Objectives of the International Year of World's Indigenous People are:

1. To protect their birth rights such as land, forests, culture, religion, language, education, social and economic conditions, self-government and self-determination.
2. To recognize their contributions.
- 3.b. Today many Indigenous

Peoples are threatened by systemic development process, distortion of History, artificial creation of boundaries (e.g. Burma and Manipur boundary), forced occupation, military atrocities, erosion of cultures by stronger communities in the name of bringing them into the 'mainstream'.

3.c. Peoples of Manipur consider that they are the Indigenous Peoples of the Valley and the Hills of Manipur. If, that proposition is correct, then the Peoples of Manipur have the right to defend their cultures, forests and land.

The Charter of the Indigenous passed and adopted in Penang, Malaysia reads; "We, the Indigenous Tribal Peoples of the tropical forests, present this Charter as a response to hundreds of years of continual encroachment colonization of our territories and the undermining of our lives, livelihoods and cultures caused by the destruction of the forests that our survival depends on". "It further continues to say; "We declare that we are the original people, the rightful owners and the cultures that defend the tropical forests of the world".

4.a. During the past years, the peoples of Manipur have witnessed the application of Special Arms Acts such as Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and amended in 1972. This Act is supposedly to contain the various Underground Organizations. According to this Act, "Special Power" are conferred to the Armed Forces that any "Warrant Officer" can arrest without warrant, can enter and search without warrant any premises...and no prosecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted, etc. etc.

Recently again, the Punjab Security of the State Act, 1953 has been imposed on Manipur to 'flush out' the Insurgents. In the name of curbing the Underground Activities and 'knocking out the sympathizers', many innocent men and women have suffered both psychologically and physically.

Many persons have been arrested, tortured and beaten. And fear-psychosis has been created in the minds of the law abiding citizens of the State. There is a general suspicion in the minds of the public that, while applying this Act, wittingly or unwittingly, powers can be misused.

More often than not, the Government officials and the Armed Forces misconstrue and misinterpret the grievances of people as 'anti-social activities', or 'sympathizers' of the Undergrounds thereby painful and unwanted punishments are inflicted on them. In such eventuality, the eternal question of the public is; imposition of Armed Forces Acts against Human Rights?

Unimaginative and dictatorial application of such Acts can be counter-productive. Problem faced by the Peoples of Manipur are not only military or political problems. They are also human problems; and therefore humane approach to ease the situation is the utmost importance.

### 4.b. On the Merger Question

Much has been said and much has been written on this issue. I need not go the same story all over again. However, it must be admitted that this is a controversial subject and thus it needs to have serious dialogues among the Indigenous Peoples themselves and then with the Indian Government. For further debate, I would like to pose the following questions to the learned members. They are:

- Who appointed the "Dewan"? Was he appointed with the consent and approval of the Maharajah?
  - Did Maharajah sign the Merger Agreement with his own accord, or under duress?
  - Was Merger question placed to the people of Manipur for their considered opinion, or were they by-passed? These are a few questions. The validity and legality of the Merger may be questioned and debated.
- Note:  
Dewan : Major General Rawal Amar Singh

## Disabled Identities and Empowering Language

By Olivia M. Myers

(Courtesy: the Social Worker dot com)

We live in a diverse world in which technology and globalization allow people to pay increasing attention to human rights around the world. People have greater access than ever before to firsthand knowledge of the experiences of marginalized populations. This article focuses on some of the experiences of the disabled community. In particular, I will discuss language and the importance of using community-chosen terminology as a means of respecting the identities and autonomy of disabled clients and other disabled individuals.

### Contemporary Language Use Around Disability

Among professionals and institutions that provide care, there is some debate over what types of language are most appropriate when referring to the phenomenon of disability or people with disabilities. Some use straightforward terminology, such as "people with disabilities," "disabled individuals," and "disabled populations." Others have drifted to what they consider more sensitive or politically correct language, by using phrases such as "special needs," "differently abled," "people of all abilities," "handi-capable," and others. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recently changed all appearances of the word "disability" to "ability" in the NASW Code of Ethics. For example, the phrase "mental or physical disability" was changed to "mental or physical ability" in the section

titled "Social and Political Action": *Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.* (National Association of Social Workers, 2018, Ethical standards, sec. 6.04)

These changes were made as part of a larger set of updates and revisions to the Code of Ethics, which took effect on January 1, 2018. The changes apply only to specific instances within the Code, and not to general usage of these terms.

### Reflections on Contemporary Language Use

The urge to substitute the terms disabled and disability with other phrases is understandable. Disability, because of the prefix dis-, is often seen as an inherently negative word that connotes a deficit or weakness, as well as a sense of brokenness. No one wants to be defined by what she, he, or they cannot do. This is equally true for those both with and without disabilities. That social workers and social work organizations are attempting to approach the topic from a more strengths-based approach is laudable.

The problem arises when one stops to consider who is doing the defining. Is it disabled people who define themselves by impairments, or is it the rest of society? Of course, it is largely those members

of society who do not experience disability who hold the power to define it (Dolmage, 2005).

The disabled community has— with only a few exceptions—chosen the terms disability and disabled to describe and identify themselves. It is not the concern of non-disabled individuals whether or not they value those terms or find them palatable. In keeping with narrative theory, self-determination, and the social work value of client empowerment, we must respect and use the terms that people choose for themselves. It is my belief that to avoid or eliminate the term disability in our language does much more harm than good for the disabled community. As a person living with an invisible disability, I find this deeply troubling.

Steering clear of disability contributes to the erasure of disabled individuals and their lived experiences. For many, their disabilities have a great impact on their daily experiences and decisions in both positive and negative ways. I will reemphasize that no person wants to be defined by limitations or challenges. However, the elimination of the word disability makes the opposite error by ignoring those challenges— especially discrimination and oppression—entirely. In addition, when social workers avoid using the terms disabled and disability, we contribute to the erosion of a sense of identity and pride within the disabled community. Disabled and even more politically volatile terms such as cripp are increasingly used to build personal identity, community networks, and community pride (McRuer, 2006; Clare, 2009).

Furthermore, to substitute the

words disability and disabled with terms such as "respectable" and sanitized terms such as "ability," "varying abilities," or "differing abilities" is to actually perpetuate the stigma of disability by euphemizing the terms disability and disabled. By tiptoeing around those words and refusing to say them, we magnify the perspective that disability is a negative phenomenon and is marked by deficit, weakness, and brokenness.

Lawrence Carter-Long, a disabled activist and artist, launched a social media campaign called #SayTheWord in 2016 (King, 2016). In this campaign, Carter-Long encourages people to stop glossing over the experiences of disabled individuals or avoiding the topic altogether out of discomfort. He implores us all to just "say the word" disabled, so we can foster deeper cultural and political dialogue.

### Shifting Cultural Paradigms

It is important to consider the sociocultural context of this linguistic debate. In Western society, the current dominant model for conceiving of disability is the medical model, in which disabilities are "diagnosed" and "treated," just as one would diagnose and treat a physical condition such as hypertension. Dolmage (2005) refers to this medical model as the "medical-scientific paradigm," through which contemporary Western society views disability. It is important to recognize that terms such as disabled and disability have been used pervasively by medical professionals in ways that have stigmatized and degraded the disabled community.

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