

# Editorial

Friday, May. 24, 2018

## A wake up call to check the uncontrolled fee structures of Private school

### Govt. should support

When talks about improvement on the status of the Government High School is going around, it was most unfortunate that only two teachers including a Head master was present yesterday at Kamu Ching Govt. Junior High School which is located about 35 Km from Imphal, under Kangpokpi district in Saikul Assembly constituency. 7 teachers are reportedly allotted to the school and without attending the school they are enjoying their salary leaving the school as a playground for the students. What is more worrying is that almost all government school located at the interior part of the state is no different from what was witnessed at Kamu Ching Govt. Junior High School.

Affairs of Government schools are always in the public domain not for better performance but for lack of teachers, bad infrastructures etc., etc.. State Education Minister's assurances to improve the condition of the government schools is still a blatant lie to the people of the state as nothing impressive is seen. Transfer of teachers, promotions, regularization seems to be what the Education Ministry is showing interest as of now. Moreover, surprise visit to government schools by the Minister himself is also another priority of the Education Minister, yet except for suspension of those teachers found dereliction duty. No, extreme measures had ever been taken up which means there is something unseen going on as it takes only few months for revocation of the suspension order.

Well the present state of the government schools in the state is one reason for all parents to prefer on Private Schools. Teachers of government schools enjoyed more salary than those of the private schools but the low paid private school teachers produced more number of better students than those of the government schools. This is a fact. It is for this reason that we can't blame the parents for sending their children to private schools.

Taking this advantage of the weakness of the parents, Private schools decide the fee structures as according to their will as the government so far as not imposed any strictures about the limitation that a private school can collect from their students. For one reason or another these private schools also sometimes collect extra fee on certain occasion and students are compelled to pay any demand as they fear action - either directly or indirectly which may affect their career.

When fees are increased parents are the one who suffered most. Every parents want their wards to the best and with the condition of the government schools (except some in city area) . They paid whatever demanded by the private schools as they do not want their children to be ill-treated by the school authority.

Even a layman knows what is being happened in the education sectors of the school. Those in the government know better on why the parents sent their wards to private schools. However, the government authority still have not taken up any concrete work by formulating some system for improvement of the government schools neither they check the private schools.

It is their duty to look to establish some system to check the fee structures, school campus among others.

In the last state assembly session, the Education Minister introduced and passed the Private School and Coaching center regulation Bill. The Bill is to check the quality of the mushrooming private schools in the state.

Whether the Bill has come into force or not, nothing of such is seen taken up from the government side so far.

It is fortunate that Manipur have many students' bodies and civil society body which always initiated something to check the wrong in the society.

It is right time that the students' body Socialist Students Union Manpur, (SSUM) is organising a meeting of all private schools to fix a fee structures to lift down the burden of the parents. The government should also support such an initiative and appreciate the student body by even sending their representatives to such meeting.

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# Pluralism

The write up re-produce here is an excerpt from the lecture delivered by late Prof. Gangumei Kamei on the Arambam Soemorendra Memorial Lecture on June 10, 2006 under the title "Pluralism, Democracy and Ethnic Relations in Manipur: A Critique"

Mr. Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, and friends!

What is pluralism? Paul R. Brass in his "Ethnicity and Nationalism" (1991) put forth a simple description of pluralism as a "system that embraces a multiplicity of social, cultural, economic and political groups and that does not permit the imposition of the ideas, values, culture or language of a single (dominant) groups on others". In social and political thoughts, pluralism would mean "the autonomy" enjoyed by different groups within a society of multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-linguistics and multi-cultural state. Pluralism has become a unique feature of both democratic and communist states and societies in modern times.

This idea is philosophically linked with the theories of Pluralism and Monism, many and one. As opposed to the monistic theory of unity, there are philosophers who believe in the multiplicity and diversity of things as most stable and important factor. It was William James (1842-1910), an American philosopher who developed the philosophy of pluralism. In his "Pluralistic Universe" (1910). William James held that "the problem of the one and the many is the most central of all philosophical probes".

This philosophical perception has been adapted to the political, sociological and cultural issues of the modern civilization, state and society, because diversity has become institutionalized in modern states and societies.

In the early decades of the twentieth century when the "melting pot" theory of the American nationhood as reflected in the vigorous programme of "Americanization" of various ethnic immigrants of the United States was discarded, the idea of cultural pluralism grow up. They discarded assimilation and opted for integration or harmonization, co-existence of cultures. Many American policy makers and sociologists argued that assimilation was not a desirable goal but Americanization would benefit by preserving many separate cultures, blending of the admissible features of various foreign nationalities. This policy gave a great push to pluralism. In India, in the early years of the republic, there was a widespread talk of Indianization of the people living in the periphery. There was no popular takers for such a theory.

#### Ethnic pluralism

Ethnic diversity is generally regarded as the main cause of pluralism. Ethnic diversity was the legacy of conquest, trade and immigration, sometimes colonial immigration or voluntary immigration to the countries which provided opportunities for employment and settlement. Historically, an ethnic diversity was created when a groups of diverse ethnic peoples were brought together by conquest, and put under the rule of the dominant group to which belonged the rulers. Ethnic diversity posed no problems for the big European colonial empires until the beginning of the twentieth century. The central empires under the control of the nation states of Europe required political unity and social solidarity. But nation states and ethnic diversity were diametrically opposed to each other. Naturally problems grew up sooner or later.

The colonial powers of Europe had attempt to find solution to the problems caused by the social, linguistics and religious diversity

in the policy of assimilation and acculturation of the diverse groups- whether forces, induced or voluntary or communities becomes more profound and sharpened when they are undergoing an ethnic competition with each other. This competition may be for the assertion of their identity and for a share in the governance and the enjoyment of the state resources. Assimilation does not easily happen as each other group asserts its identity; each one of them is concerned not only with material interest but also the symbolic emblems like its identity. Therefore, there are opposition to this policy or concept of assimilation which is being replaced by the policy of integration. We may further note that integration may be understood as the harmonization of the social and cultural relationship based on emotional integration. The sense of mutual belongingness is the basis of emotional integration.

Thus ethnic diversity in most of the newly liberates Third world countries led to the emergence of ethnic pluralism. And a plural society is a social order consisting of institutionally segmented cultural groups living side by side, yet without mingling in one political unit or a nation. In most cases, one dominant cultural groups monopolizes the political power, controls the state and the government, dominates-over other groups. However, in modern states these groups, either collectively or individually as citizens are entitled to the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution and the laws of the land. They are entitled to participate in the governance of the country. A plural society was thus born out of the "cultural incompatibility of its plural parts". This incompatibility sometimes enabled the dominant group to use "the state" as the instrument of domination leading to the despotism of the majority ethnic or cultural group

Pluralism, however theoretically subsumes both as conflict and co-existence, competition and harmony among the citizens are to be regulated and protected by the state. This also implies that pluralism is to be guided by toleration and mutual respect among the plural parts. More often than not, conflict becomes inevitable due to the divergence of interests and competition for the control of the political power and the economic resources of the state. As most of the modern states operate under an accepted constitution and the appropriate laws, despite the conflict and clash of interest there is also co-existence among the groups. In order to avoid conflict and ensure mutual co-existence, the elites of the ethnic and cultural groups make appropriate alliance, enter into compromise and decide to collaborate in a democratic state so that they share the power and resources of the state. The constituent ethnic groups, despite competition and rivalry, collude to make the state a centre of power and the distributor of resources. The state has been made a source and promoter of new national values. The state assumes a predominant role in a plural society. In a democratic state, pluralism is based on the combination of toleration, interdependence, identity, self-respect, protection of minorities, a unity in diversity. Further, in India, the national ideal of secularism

#### Pluralism in Manipur

Plurality is a unique features of Manipur, her polity society and

culture. Manipur is a classic example of a plural society. Ethnic and social pluralism is the basis of the state and society. Ethnic diversity in Manipur, as history shows, is the legacy of her long history. The social composition of her people consists of the indigenous Meiteis who are the dominant group, the indigenous Naga tribes who live in the northern and north eastern and eastern hills of the state, the immigrant Meitei Pangan (Manipuri Muslim) who are an indigenous community, and the immigrant Kuki-Chins who migrated to Manipur in different periods of history, and other communities who migrated from mainland India. The ethnic diversity was the result of the conquest of the hill tribes by the Meitei state, settlement of the immigrants in the state by the Kings of Manipur assisted by the British Political Agency.

Manipur is a historically evolved state. The long march of Manipur, in time and space, started from the prehistoric times. The first historical kingdom was founded in the first century of the Christian era by King Pakhangba who founded the Ningthouja dynasty. The kingdom was further developed during the reign of Loiyamba (1078-1122) who promulgated a decree known as the Loiyumba Shinyen which is regarded as the first written constitution of the kingdom. It had become a full-fledged sovereign state during the reign of King Kyamba who conquered the Kabaw Valley in 1471 and annexed it by a treaty with king Khikkhomba of Pong, the Mau Shan state of Mogaung an upper Myanmar. It reached the status of a little empire in the 17th Century as the boundary of the kingdom was pushed beyond the Chindwin River in upper Myanmar. Garibniwaz extended his empire into the heartland of Myanmar up to Sagaing on the Irrawaddy near Mandalay, the capital of Ava during the first half of the 18th Century. In the process of the expansion of the state into the surrounding mountains, the various Naga tribes who inhabited the hill ranges overlooking the valley and along the trade routes to Assam and Myanmar were brought under the political control, though no direct rule was established over them. With the conquest of the Kabaw Valley, the Shans and other ethnic groups living in the western part of the Chindwin basin became the subjects of the empire. In addition to the immigration of early batch of the Kuki-Chin groups, the influx of the Kukis into Manipur in the 19th Century, which was a process of immigration of the Kukis, Paite and kindred tribes, brought in new elements to the growing diversity of the population of Manipur. The earlier Kuki-Chin groups like the Hmar, Kom and kindred tribes came to Manipur in and around the 14th century. However, with the transfer of the Kabaw Valley to Burma in 1834, the Shans and inhabitants of that Valley ceased to be the subjects of Manipur. However, there was a social absorption of the Kabow (Shan-Tai) into the Meitei social fold when they were in Manipur. Other Immigrants like the Aryan Brahmins, the Muslims and the trading communities came to Manipur in different periods of history. By the end of the 19th century, after the British conquest of 1891, Manipur, had become multi-ethnic state, and pluralism had taken deep roots.

#### Problems or a Plural Society

Manipur has become a

sovereign nation state by the 15th century. The kings of Manipur followed a liberal social policy towards the peoples who accepted the suzerainty of the Meitei kings. They were the tribes who were the tribes who were later brought under the Naga identity by the British. The Shana of the Kabaw Valley and some of the earlier Kuki-Chin tribes, were popularly known by the misnomer nomenclature of "Old Kuki", an invention of the British ethnography. There was no bar to the integration of the so people into the Meitei social fold. However, the lack of communication, absence or near absence of trade, the King's or state's relation was not beyond the collection or offering of the nominal annual tribute. No Lallup was imposed on them before 1735. They were not disturbed and left to themselves. The king did not interfere in their polity so long as they expressed their loyalty to the king. The writ of the state was confined to the villages along the trade routes only. After conversion into Hinduism in the 18th century and introduction of a mild form of caste system, the social policy of the Hindu monarchy and nobility had undergone a great change. The process of integration of the tribal population into the Meitei social fold was discontinued. A hiatus between the Hindu Meiteis and tribal communities, who were the followers of the indigenous faith, was created. The process of integration was not perhaps completely stopped. There are historical evidences of conversion of not only individual tribesmen but even whole tribal localities into Hinduism and their complete absorption into Meitei social fold. The process still continues sporadically, confined mostly to the inter-marriage families.

In the nineteenth century, the Kuki influx added a new complexity to the social diversity of Manipur. The Muslims or the Meitei pangan who were settled in Manipur since the 17th century were partially integrated into Manipur while they adopted the Manipuri language (Meitei) is their mother tongue as a result of their marriage with Meitei women and acceptance of the lineage (*sagei*) system imposed by the state. In the twentieth century, both ethnic and religious diversity has emerged. The adoption of Hinduism by the Meiteis, conversion of tribes into Christianity created a religious divide and the opportunity of integration was lost.

Colonialism also created further problems for the plural society. During the period of the colonial rule or eve earlier to that, ethnicity was adopted as criteria for the identification of the hill tribes into the two identity constellations, the Nag and the Kuki. Affinity with the Nagas of the neighbouring Naga Hills was adopted to identify a group of indigenous tribes as Naga. And the affinity with the Kuki tribes of Assam (North Cachar and Cachar), Chin and Lushai Hills was adopted to identify a groups of tribes as Kuki. These generic names were not used by the tribes themselves who were ignorant of the name but they were imposed on them by the colonial administrator. It was R. B. Pemberton (1835) who refers to the Kookies or Khongjai and Nagas among the tribes. William McCulloch in "The Account of the Valley of Muunipore and surrounding Hill Tribes" (1859) mentions the two identity formations, Naga and Kuki. He

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