

# Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, December 29, 2015

## Why should media be dictated on what or what not to publish ?

The advancement in information technology has made today's world a 'Global village' - the term first coined by Canadian-born author Marshall McLuhan. Man born at the extreme corner of Far East Asiatic countries knows, cry and pray for the kind of disasters that happen in Middle East countries or in Latin America. Installation of internet technologies to cell phones which every human being can afford makes the people of our Earth- whose circumference is estimated at about 40,075 Kilometer staying at a communicable distance. Now every human being equipped with cell phone can now talk or stay in touch with any of their friends or relatives staying thousand miles away. Point bringing here is about the changes in the theory of mass media in relevance to today's journalism. The very concept at which the older generation considered 'proximity' as a characteristic of news is somewhat losing its foot.

Professor M.L Stein, the then chairman of Department of Journalism, California State University, Long Beach, California in his book "Shaping the News" in 1974 wrote that people are more interested in what happens in their neighbours. The one time presumption that 'a dog fight on Main Street is of more interest to our readers than fifty thousand foreign troops killed in battle somewhere' seems to have no relevance in today's society. Readers are more interested about happenings at distance places if the subject matters is his or her interest. However, another characteristic of news - 'Prominence' on the hand is becoming a matter of more interested subjects for almost all readers. People now want to know what had happen to their leaders, celebrity or the bureaucrats irrespective of where they stay or which country they reside. Every news readers are eager to know the story of successful personality. Points bringing up here are not to lecture on what is news and what should be reported but this is an attempt to make some of our critic to understand on why the newspaper especially the kind of ours often published story about real heroes or events that happen far far away from our state. Sometimes a mere insignificant event at which some people are of vested interested are often left of and the result is not always good for we in the media fraternity of Manipur state in particular. The other kind of pressure that the media persons sometimes remain helpless is their intentions to get publish their story. Manipur or say Imphal is not a safe place for even VIPs who are escorted by security personnel days and night. It is an open secret that almost all the politicians including MLAs or Ministers or even the Chief Ministers have linked with the UGs, the only thing we don't have is the proof.

So, what would be the security of those working with the media if in case, some of the individuals or rebels force us to publish stories of their interest. Being taken up this profession, we always stand with our ethics and there is no question of compromising our ethics while publishing stories. But when the government said that this should not be published and this should be published then where is the freedom of speech provided under the constitution of our country. Government machineries can invite news editors and can discussed about the content on objectivity reason but should in no way dictate the media on what or what not to publish. Calls of bandh or blockade by any organisation are in some way an essential news items for media houses living in conflict zone - because it is for the safety and security of the common people that the government machineries cannot guarantee safety. We have PCI guidelines, local code of conduct and this should be respected. Bottom line is that media should not be harassed at any cost for any reason because we chose this profession not merely to earn for living but with full intention to serve our nation.

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## Human Rights and Self-Determination as .....

Simultaneously with the Supreme Court case on the Manipur killings, Justin Trudeau, as newly elected Prime Minister of Canada, ordered an inquiry into about 1,200 murdered and disappeared indigenous Canadian women - an inquiry that has long been demanded by the country's indigenous population. This gives hope as well as a model for 'total renewal' between Government and an indigenous population.

If atrocities against civilians by men in uniform continue to be committed with impunity in Manipur, is it proper to speak of real development taking place here at all? Isn't security and respect for human life the foundation on which development should take place? These are fundamental questions to bear in mind as we turn our attention to people's relationship with the environment and the natural resources which form the basis of life.

### The Dam Issue

Dams are often promoted as symbols of development. Certainly the engineering involved in building a big dam, and harnessing the power of a river to produce electricity, is very advanced, even 'brilliant'. But do big dams ever benefit the local people who live in areas where they are built? Since India's Independence, at least 30 million people have been displaced by big dams. The vast majority of these people have experienced a drastic drop in their quality of life. Many thousands of people are threatened by displacement if the new mega-dams planned in Northeast India go ahead. The effects of big dams have been shown repeatedly to be disastrous for local ecosystems, destroying many species and damaging the web of life. Big dams are also known to be among the causes of earthquakes. It may well be that the Teesta dams played a major role in causing the disastrous 2012 earthquake in Sikkim. The benefits of big dams are highly questionable. From many angles, they often inundate more fertile land than they bring water to; siltation is often much more rapid than planned; the cost is usually much higher than initially outlined, and so on.

What is needed is clearly much more open debate about the real costs and benefits of big dams. Having followed debates on big dams for several decades, it seems that opponents of dams win the debate on every front; but that money often speaks louder than words, and that the money coming to governments and politicians from construction and electricity companies has motivated the 'MoU virus' of new deals for big dams on the Brahmaputra tributaries. It is reported that protesters against the Mapithel Dam, for example, and the many villagers who have been forced to move to avoid its inundation of their lands, have faced considerable police repression. Time and again promises made to villagers about to be displaced by a dam are betrayed (Sahu 2009). It seems that every mega-dam in India shows the same hidden history: instead of recognition of the enormity of these people's loss, and proper help for them in relocating, people who are displaced face extreme levels of corruption and repression. In effect, the interest of people in villages, whose way of life is often a highly developed example of living sustainably, without taking too much from nature, are being sacrificed. In other words, big dams involve a modern form of human sacrifice. Mapithel Dam, on river Thoubul River in Ukhrul District, is being constructed with the aim of providing 7.5MW of power and also water for Imphal. Police repression is being used to force villagers off their land, following plans made back in 1980 and a long history of resistance, with final Environment Ministry clearance granted on 31 December 2013. There is said to be no proper rehabilitation for Kuki and Tangkhul Naga people who are losing land and homes; nor relief for Meitei people downstream, who lose their access to the river water. This follows a similarly violent displacement by the Loktak hydro project in 2011-13, when security forces burnt several hundred floating

houses to evict fishermen from Loktak Lake. The Loktak Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project started with the Itai barrage, commissioned in 1984, which displaced several thousand people, submerging 83,000 hectares of agricultural land, and badly damaging the lake's unique ecosystem, exterminating several species. Tipaimukh Dam, planned on the Barak River where it is joined by the Tuivai, is aimed at generating 1,500MW by flooding about 300 sq km, on the border between Manipur's southern Churachandpur district and NE Mizoram. It is likely to have a devastating effect on Bangladesh, which has strongly opposed the dam (Zakaria 2012); and also on several thousand members of the Hmar tribe, who have also strongly opposed it. Among other procedural events, Public Hearings were held for this dam between 2004 and 2008. The Forest Advisory Committee refused clearance for the project in July 2013.

Before more dams are built in the Northeast, it should be obvious that impacts of previous big dams need to be properly assessed. Among the worst is the Dumbur Dam in Tripura, which displaced an estimated 20,000 people, especially of the Borok people who are indigenous to Tripura. Also known as the Gunti Hydel Project and completed in 1976, Dumbur officially displaced 2,845 families in South Tripura district, most of whom were tribal. But these figures represent a minority of Oustees who had official land title. The real number displaced was far higher, and almost certainly fuelled insurgency in Tripura, compounding massive displacement of tribal people by settlements of Bengalis in Tripura. Similarly, Doyang Dam in Wokha district of Nagaland is reported to have displaced about 30,000 people without proper compensation.

In an election speech at Pasighat (Arunachal) in February 2014, Narendra Modi acknowledged the strength of feeling against big dams in the Northeast, saying: 'I know citizens of the region are against large power projects... I respect your sentiments. But hydropower can also be harnessed using smaller projects, while protecting the environment...'. Yet one of the most controversial dams is Upper Dibang, which is planned as producing 3,000MW, while submerging 5,000 hectares. Upper Dibang was refused forest clearance by the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) several times, most recently on 28 August 2014, on the grounds that it would drown 45 sq kms of forest, including part of the Dibru-Saikhang National Park (Assam), and 'ecological and social costs of destroying a vast tract of forest land which is a major source of livelihood for the state's tribal population would far outweigh the benefit likely to accrue for the project'. Less than a week later, the Cabinet Committee on Investment got the Prime Minister's Office to order the Ministry of Environment and Forests to give clearance (3<sup>rd</sup> September), on condition of a 20 metre height reduction in the dam height; obviously this decision was motivated thanks to the investment involved, estimated at 16 Crores (\$2.6 million). Members of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samitee (KMSS), a farmers' organisation at the forefront of anti-dam movement in Assam and the Northeast, sees this as a betrayal of what the PM said at Pasighat. The dam's foundation stone was laid by Manmohan Singh in 2008; police fired on protesters in 2011; and the dam threatens to destroy the cohesion of the Idu Mishmish people. Raju Mimi, from this community, explains that his people number just over 12,000, and that 'The whole dam-building process has been going on without asking the people into confidence or their participation. Most of the local people are dependent on agriculture and are not ready for such big dam projects. They will be further marginalised culturally, economically and politically.' Similarly, the Lower Demwe project, on the Lohit River in India's easternmost district, was cleared by Jayanthi Natarajan as Environment Minister in February 2012, against opposition from all seven

independent members of the National Board for Wildlife due to its probably negative impacts on Kamlang sanctuary.

The Lower Siang Dam, near Pasighat, has been similarly controversial. When its planned capacity was raised to 2,700 MW in 2006, the CRPF used teargas on protesters, at Pongging on 26<sup>th</sup> May. This and other dams planned on the Siang (i.e. the Brahmaputra River) pose a momentous threat to the Adi tribe, who number about 150,000. Vijay Taram from this community says that 43 big dams are planned in the Adi area: 'We are on the verge of being annihilated by all these developmental activities. Our language, forest, rivers, culture, tradition and identity will perish. This land belonged to our forefathers and today we are being asked to vacate our land.' In their view, the river needs to 'flow of its free will'. After protests in 2011-12, and postponement of three Public Hearings, with strong critiques of the

project's Environmental Impact Assessment, this dam has apparently been put on hold.

So also the 2,000MW Lower Subansiri Dam, bordering Assam and Arunachal, stalled since 2011, after strong protests. A 2014 study ordered by the Supreme Court on the Uttarakhand floods in June 2013 concluded that dams were indeed a probable causal factor, so perhaps there is a good chance that some of the monster-dams planned for the Northeast can be stopped after all?

Negative impacts of big dams not only involve destruction of fragile ecosystems and sustainable communities, and likely floods, but also likely contribution to earthquakes - mentioned as a distinct danger for Tipaimukh and other dams. The Teesta Dams in Sikkim have already caused severe negative impacts on at least 7,000 Lepchas in the remote northern region of Dzongu, around Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain. (To be contd.....)

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## Problem of 1949 Annexation of Manipur

In addition to it, according to universally accepted benchmark, as in the Western Sahara Case, state can recognize and follow self determination benchmark. The benchmark of the self determination unit shall always override the 'Territorial Integrity Rule' of the state which perpetrate annexation. Moreover, when a new state is created, it is always followed by two ways of devolution and secession. As in the case of Greece seceding from the Ottoman Empire, and Netherland from Belgium, it was on the basis of secession benchmark that Indonesia, North Korea, North Vietnam, Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau was created and came into existence. Today, International law, after so

many changes, has created many new laws concerning the creation and resurrection of state on the basis of historical legality. Jawaharlal Nehru writes that States shall have the right to secede after 10 years. Any of the international laws and benchmarks does not approve, allow or support annexation of state irrespective of whether the state is member of the United Nations or not. It even furthermore threatens and violates world peace and security. The prime objective and responsibility of the UN is to maintain world peace and security. UN system does not allow and permit 'aggression' and 'annexation'. It even resorts to power to stop aggression and annexation if it becomes inevitable.

### Table No. 2COUNTDOWN ANNEXATION1947 AD

1.	19 April	- Nehru ultimatum to states - threats with hostility
2.	15 May	- Manipur Draft Constitution ready
3.	20 May	- British Cabinet resolution - states to be fully independent
3a.	2 June	- Nehru-Mountbatten's Secret Revised Plan
4.	3 June	- Mountbatten's negative attitude to the states
5.	15 June	- AICC stand: State's sovereignty lies with state people
6.	17 June	- Jinnah categorical: state to be independent sovereign
7.	25 June	- Interim cabinet accepts states department creation
8.	1 July	- Manipur king (Maharaja) becomes nominal figurehead
9.	2 July	- Assam-Manipur Agreement: Indian agent to stay in Imphal
10.	2 July	- Secretary of State, Listowell: States not subject to British parliamentary Legislation
11.	5 July	- Patel on Blood theory, 'all king by bond of blood' - possibly Aryan-Dravidian blood theory (?) of state
12.	5 July	- Gandhi to Mountbatten: States should not be independent/Gandhi possibly wants Indian empire not British
13.	10 July	- Indian Independence Act, 1947: British suzerainty over states in Indian subcontinent lapses
14.	25 July	- Mountbatten officially declares states independence
15.	26 July	- Manipur Constitution adopted
16.	28 July	- Mountbatten reception to Rulers/Lunch on August 1 - Diplomatically pressurises for Indian Dominion (His ambition to be India's Governor General).
17.	31 July	- State Negotiating Committee approves 2 agreement drafts
18.	8 August	- Mountbatten reports to Listowell: states remain independent save three subjects - States not committed to Indian Constitution or GI Act, 1935 etc
19.	9 August	- Listowell approves Mountbatten's 25 July proclamation
20.	10 August	- Manipur King directly takes over hill administration
21.	11 August	- king signs treaty of Accession: under Cl. 7 & 8 - Manipur's independence retained in the escape clause (cf. 5 April, 1946 meeting of Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha & MPM, Res 6 Part II: Manipur to be independent - RK Bhupon in chair)
22.	14 August	- King swears in the Interim Council
23.	15 August	- King hoists PAKHANGBAFLAG in Council Hall. Paramountcy cleared of Manipur
24.	28 August	- King announces - Manipur is sovereign
25.	6 November	- Indian Congress agent Debeshwar Sharma admits that Manipur is sovereign: Sovereignty lies with Manipur people (Categorical) (To be contd.....)