

# Editorial

Imphal Friday, December 23, 2016

## An applause for the collective efforts

If the dramatic disclosure of the chief minister regarding the Modi-led central government discarding requests of the state government to act on the ensuing undesirable situation in Manipur in time is anything to go by, the people in the state regardless of community, faith or ethnicity is in for the long haul before any significant improvements can be expected. Lending credibility to the claim of the chief minister is the unexpected resignation of sitting MLA of Thangmeiband citing inaction of the central government despite the obvious hardships being faced by the people of the state which is still worsening and is taking a communal hue. The chief minister went on to deny reports that the Centre had sent 4000 additional forces to the state. Meanwhile, the Home Ministry on Friday capped the state government for 'failing' to discharge its 'constitutional' duties as it has been unable to ensure smooth flow of traffic on the road despite repeated requests. "The state government has failed to keep the National Highway-2 open, in spite of government of India's repeated requests and making available Central forces to assist the local forces," the Home Minister told the Manipur Chief Minister. The conflicting claims throws up a serious concern for the people in the state as to what course of action or pressure to be applied and to whom to ease the present volatile situation and to bring about an enduring solution to the long-standing problem of distrust and conflicts of interest amongst communities.

There is however a silver lining to the whole sordid drama being played out in the form of an increasing number of civil society organizations taking initiatives to stem the tide of hatred and enmity. The looming threat of an all-out communal clash has once again brought to the fore the role these social organizations play in maintaining social checks and balances. Despite various groups trying to add to the confusion and ignite a communal conflict for reasons best known to themselves, it is safe to say that better sense has prevailed as of now. The relentless efforts of these CSOs to normalize the volatile situation and diffuse the heightened tension is showing positive results and needs mentioning. The very fact that leaders of different communities have come together and are deliberating on a course of action to ensure lasting peace in the state is a testament to the innate quest of humans to progress and evolve. It is time for the people of the state to join the race for development and personal advancement so that the state as a whole can keep pace with the rapidly changing world which is becoming a borderless global village. Embracing progress and the accompanying changes that it brings does not mean that we have to discard our social or personal identities. Rather, accepting such changes can mean the very survival of the customs, traditions, faiths and beliefs we so jealously try to uphold. Only a concerted collective effort can dispel the archaic mindset of feudalism and exclusivism. United we stand, divided we fall.

### National News

## BSNL to start 1900 access points of WiFi hot spots in Assam

**Guwahati, Dec. 23:** The BSNL is planning to start 1900 access points of WiFi hot spots in Assam and 300 new mobile exchanges are being set up in the State. Chief General Manager of BSNL (Assam circle) MK Seth said that BSNL will also increase number of towers from 100 to 200 in Guwahati and

50 to 100 in Silchar. The BSNL has also extended help to Assam government and banks including SBI for providing connectivity in remote places in a bid to adopt digital banking. BSNL will also launch a mobile app with the SBI for cashless transaction.

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## Manipur: Charting the way forward

Without endorsing the demand for integration of contiguous Naga ancestral areas with Nagaland state the GoM could have taken a number of positive alternatives instead of the destructive actions it has resorted to far. It was no secret that Naga insurgency movement was active in Manipur. Th. Muivah himself hails from somdal village in Manipur, so while keeping its stance on keeping territorial integrity of Manipur intact, the GoM could have acted as facilitators of the peace process along with Nagaland and Mizoram (though not a party to the peace talks, the state has played notable roles in keeping the peace process intact). By insisting that the Naga peace process should be restricted to Nagaland, Manipur has in fact attacked the very identity of the Naga tribals in Manipur, who have also long suffered the brunt of insurgency related violence, and are not migrants but indigenous inhabitants of the Naga Hills in Manipur, alienating them in the process. Ideally Manipur should have actively promoted the idea of equitable living together of various ethnicities in the state under the existing boundaries with invitation and exploration of ideas and measures to safeguard culture, heritage and land of the various ethnic groups be it meiteis, nagas, kukis or zomis. But the state administration has sadly has not taken any concrete step in this front, thus offering little to alleviate the fear of marginalization. Various example on such lines exist including the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam or the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration West Bengal, alternatively the

possibilities of 6<sup>th</sup> Schedules for the tribal areas can be explored if the provisions of article 371C are found wanting. Such formulation in fact seem promising for Manipur where territorial councils for the Naga group and Kuki-Zomi group can effectively fulfill the base demands while also helping curb corruption as corollary to decentralization. Arguably such a system of decentralization of autonomy and functions could come as a boon for the meiteis; it is well known that a major lingering fear of the Meitei community is born of the deficient land endowments of the community, the miniature valley will hardly suffice for the growing demographics and thus presents imminent challenges for the community. Taking for example, if adequately empowered local administration are established in the hill districts ensuring dignity and stability, the government in confidence with local bodies and plan "model towns" in each district whereby some stipulated quota of households (say 20% or 25%) is allocated to state natives of districts other than the host district, a small step but with multiple benefits such as building inter-community interactions, infrastructural gains, forging statewide identity etc. Given that for the Naga peace process to come to a meaningful conclusion some concessions has to be made on the demands of participating insurgent group, Manipur must also be bold in making compromise where it is required. Currently A speculated arrangement is the Pan-Naga Council, the GoM must not be dismissive of this idea, there is no harm in devolving some

administrative functions such as Culture, Education, Youth Development, Customary Law Institutions etc. to such an arrangement with necessary trimmings to ensure interest of the state (which ultimately translate into the interest of the people) are safeguarded. A good government must be able to show the way by taking exemplary initiatives, sadly so far the GoM only gives knee-jerk reactions. It must be borne in mind that successful fruition of the Naga Peace talk can translate into benefits for Manipur, especially with regards to paving the way for similar talks and arrangements with other insurgent groups. From the point of view of Government policy makers it can be surmised that not much concession will be granted to the NSCN members so as to ensure that insurgency is not seen as an attractive avenue for political and personal gains. The Nagas of Manipur on their part are also not free from points of criticism. The use of Economic blockades by the United Naga Council (UNC) as a form of protest is undemocratic, no doubt it is often justified as the last resort owing to the offhanded attitude of the GoM towards Naga CSOs but it's practical implications are inhumane as it has drastic impact on the most vulnerable section of the society, making scapegoats of the common man, thus ends can't justify means. Additionally the UNC seem to work in sporadic fashion jumping between issues, in present times its main contention is the creation of sadar hills district by bifurcating Senapati district. Indeed the UNC and the nagas have genuine concern in that Naga villages

should not be forced to become a part of a new district where they would become numerical minority. As this is a legitimate concern the UNC should have done follow-ups and lobbies with relevant government offices and in the same breath reached out to other kuki, zomi, and Meitei CSOs so that mutual understanding and acceptable process for district creation can be arrived, solely depending on MoUs signed with the GoM whence it is widely known that politicians are routinely opportunist for electoral gains points to a lack of diligence. Nonetheless the bottom line remains that the GoM bluntly disregarded the sentiments of the Nagas again on this issue and is therefore responsible for the imbroglio that ensued. Another fundamental problem in Manipur is lack of collective identity complicated by ethnic diversity, while meiteis are comfortable with the term "Manipuri", the hill tribes do not associate with this as an Identity, they are in their own rights, Naga, Kuki, or Zomi etc, hence it may prove worthwhile to consider giving the state an indigenous name or incorporating ethnic identity representation to the present name of the state. A suggestion for a truly native name for the state can be NKZ-Kanglei/ Kanglei-NKZ (where NKZ represents Naga-Kuki-Zomi in alphabetical arrangement), otherwise retain Manipur with the addition of NKZ in prefix or suffix. All things considered, a picturesque state like Manipur has great potential to surge ahead in harmony if it can resolve its current disequilibrium constructively and inclusively.

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## Transformation of government into governance in manipur (Changing complexion of civil society: an assessment)

COPPAI started its movement with the motto of peace, integrity and development of Manipur. For the successful reconciliation of conflict, it is necessary to have as its stepping stone, concepts and tools for the analysis of conflict, and also to identify the debateable issue of the conflicting parties. For four months COPPAI surveyed all the hill areas and other places of Manipur to understand people's aspirations. In this survey, COPPAI volunteers visited 1500 villages and 915 camera meetings were held at different place during that period emphasizing communal harmony and fraternal ties of brotherhood. The movement launched by COPPAI caught the imagination of all sections of population mainly younger generation of Manipur both hill and valley. Finally COPPAI could turn into practice the objective which was dreamed by its members. The United Nations Development Programme (1977) has viewed governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs at all levels. It is the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences". UNDP has laid down following characteristics of good governance viz, participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision. Thus we have several interpretations of governance and use in several contexts. The way

in which changes is taken place i.e. government, governance and good governance. New public management is relevant to the discussion of governance because steering is central to the analysis of public management and steering is a synonym for governance. Osborne and Gaebler distinguish between 'policy decisions (steering) and service delivery (rowing)'. They argue that bureaucracy is a bankrupt tool for rowing. Hence, they propose entrepreneurial government based on certain principles, viz, competition between service providers, empowering citizens, focusing on outcomes, decentralization of authority, catalyzing all sectors, putting energies into earning money, missions and goals, etc. New public management and entrepreneurial government share a concern with competition, markets, customers and outcomes. Governance calls for more steering, providing impetus to other forces, rather than rowing. The emphasis has thus been placed on 'enabling' rather than 'providing'. Good governance means bringing about goodness in all the three sectors: government, civil society and corporate world including transnational corporations. Good governance is a trust with trust, a commitment of the people, for the people, a social contract for the greatest good, and the collective conscience of the community. From the above paragraphs, we come to understand that earlier the term 'governance' was used in a broader sense of government, which is not appropriate in present times. Governance means more than maintaining law and order. In

other words, we can say that it is a participative system in which those who are called upon to govern on behalf of the people are motivated with a will to giving their best, serving and doing well to the people, solving their problems and making their lives more liable, satisfying and enjoyable. But before Manipur attain statehood (1972) and up to 1990, the ruling elites of the state were administering the state by their own wishes not based on people's choice and reflection. That is the outdated concept of government. It could be transformed into governance when the government makes partnership with the civil society and starting to open their eyes for giving economic values to people and protection of their rights. One may come across such state function in later part of today's Manipur whether for the good of the greatest number or not is another question. The following discussion will give the real picture of it. Basically, the question of good governance is raised if the state is fragile in character. In the fragile state the decision making and process of implementing it are not always based on people choice and reflection. So it has full of negative indices such as:

1. Ideology.  
9. Political assassinations.  
10. Politicisation of the armed forces.  
11. Commitment of public services to the line of ruling party.  
12. Wide corruption and maladministration.  
13. Concentration of powers  
14. Mass arrests and  
15. Foreign interference in domestic matters.  
In this political development of Manipur, one may put a question again that what the people are entitled to and what they receive? So, civil society is enthusiastically waiting the total quality management from both permanent and temporary executives. It indicates that we have need meaningful partnership for governance by large scale participation of masses as attentive publics. Therefore in this paper, my effort is to examine the governance concern from civil society point of view and how it can go hand in hand. There are a number of aspects in this chapter. Firstly, I seek to identify the various governments concern in Manipur since Chief Commissioner to today's government whether they are administering for the interest of the both hill and valley people or not. Secondly, I intend to examine the civil society and its response to the government. In this analysis, one could easily see transformation of government into governance in Manipur. If it could be happened with its good governance, it can occupy the middle space by maintaining social, economic and political justice, automatically peace will be followed otherwise it could not be beyond the question. (Concluded)