

## An Open letter from a father to daughter

### My loving daughter,

Seeing their children grown up is indeed proud moment for every parent. The achievement you earn during your school days as a result of your hard work is a bonus. Because of you I am now a proud father and your mother can't wait telling your success story to her friends, family and relatives. We know other daughters had shown much more excellent performances than you. But we are not jealous of them we are very much satisfied to the hard work you have harness to make your parents smile.



As of now you have make us proud. My dearest daughter you might not know how much we care for you, how much we love you and you wouldn't believed that whatever me and your mother has been doing is for you and you little sister. As you have completed your higher secondary schools now you will be in college in the next couple of days. And you have only 3 + 2 years left to reach your destiny. Being a typical father who hardly gets extra time to share with you besides my lack of proper understanding to the present education scenario, me and your mother have left everything to your own to decide on what your future will be. Some says that is the right thing that we did but I, as a father still have regret for not being a capable father like those father of your friends.

This write up should be in between you and me. My father had done once. That was the time when pens were used and letters were sent through postal service. But the situation is no more same, these days you people are somewhat over 80% more advance than us. But imagine, it is only in this 20 plus some years that the world is changing too fast and you are in the most competitive era perhaps in the history of this world.

The next few days you will be in college. You will be meeting different types of people among whom you had never met. These are exciting times for you: finishing higher secondary school, going to college, moving out on your own, starting a career, paying your own way, dating, marriage, having kids. The possibilities are endless. But, I'm not going to lie. At times, life is going to get rough. It's inevitable; however, it's all in how you handle the stress of life that determines whether or not you will succeed. Having a negative attitude toward the stress and being pessimistic will not, I promise you, resolve anything. Taking deep breaths, keeping an optimistic attitude and developing a character that doesn't quit will take you much further in life than anyone tells you.

I remember those days when you

were ready to come in this world. When every parents pray for male child, I pray the almighty to give me the most kind hearted daughter who have great respect for elders coupled with brilliant brain.

That moment of your birth was the day I realized that I wasn't alone in the universe. I had you. Now as you are grown up, I can only hope you learn to find the good in yourself. People will disappoint you. It's in their nature. It's the ones who disappoint you, own up to it, apologize and never do it again that are worth keeping around. At the same time, be careful with whom you choose to associate and don't be so naive to believe that you can trust just anyone. Love yourself and don't allow anyone to take you feel less of a person through their words or actions. You, and you alone, are in control of your emotions and well-being. By allowing someone else to taint your self-worth, you give them power over you.

You have potential for great things. Your love of children and kids with special needs is one of the things that make you amazing. You're now officially an adult, but that definition goes far beyond just being a number, don't be hurry in becoming one, because being an adult means being responsible with all aspects of your life.

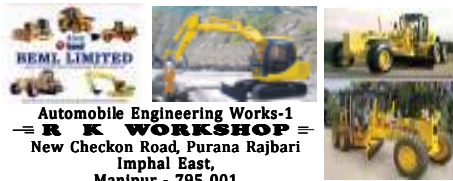
If someone gives you constructive criticism, don't assume they're being critical. Take it for what it is and smile. It may be the best advice you ever receive. Even though we won't be able to stay with you during your college days, a huge milestone in your life, you are surrounded by people who would each give their own lives to protect you and keep you safe. None of us want to see you fall, fail or get hurt. Your family is forever. Follow your dreams. Never give up on something you desperately want. Ever. Don't make the same mistakes me and your mother has made in life.

You are my first-born. You are love and all things good in my heart. When you hurt, I hurt. When you have joy, I have joy.

With lots of love  
Papa

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## Policy to Alleviate Water Problems in Manipur

Country	Annual rainfall	Per capita water usage
India	1,083 mm	135 litres per person per day (on planning paper)
Thailand	1,622 mm	219.5 litres per person per day
Singapore	2,497 mm	150 litres per person per day
UAE	78 mm	500 litres per person per day
USA	715 mm	1514 litres per person per day
Manipur	1,467.5 mm	Data not available

Fig: Annual average rainfall and water consumption per person per day

United Arab Emirates is one of the least annual rainfall. This is near desert like country. But UAE is one of the highest average water consumption of 500 litres per head per day. It is possible because of proper water management. Annual average rainfall in the USA is 715 mm and it's consumption is 1514 litres per person per day. This huge water usage per head is possible because of her strong and effective policy and management. Rain harvest is commonly done everywhere to manage proper water supply. This is the area we are lacking and our government should use money in projects for such unavoidable necessary resource.

**Human as causes of water scarcity in Manipur.** There are many rivers, wetland, lowland and suitable places for construction of dams and reservoirs in Manipur. People of Manipur have very low civics sense compared with other nationalities. We have bad culture of water usage. We take a bath in the pond, and the same water is used for drinking and kitchen purposes. Our already insufficient resource is spoiled by dumping garbage in the river.

Nambul river and Imphal river are examples of too much pollution with garbage. Planners and authorities are not taking up any stringent action to clean up these rivers. You will never see any dirty and garbage in Chao Phra Ya river which is running right in the middle of 15 million (day time population; actual dwellers is about 8.28 million) population city of Bangkok. You are not allowed to dump dirty things and garbage. But in Manipur, there is no proper rules and guideline to stop pollution in rivers. An "Exclusive Video - Loktak: A Fresh Water Lake or a Dump?" by Kangaonline published on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016, shows the real picture of people's culture destroying the ecosystem of Loktak lake by dumping garbage, plastic bags, plastic bottles upstream and destroys the nature of downstream and habitats.

The main problems of water shortage are directly or indirectly related to:

### 1. No proper water management

**Conclusion**  
Before I conclude, I want to propose a way forward. The ideas that have been brought out in this lecture will hopefully lead us into action in the not so distant future. Whether it is 'Naga integration from within' or in other words the idea of a 'localised integration' without disturbing existing State boundaries; Whether it is working towards a federal solution to issues of ethnic identities in Manipur or Whether it is the idea of region-states or a Greater North East as just mentioned in the last segment, all these are inter-connected to one another and also to the larger theme of peace, democracy and integration that has been discussed.

Moreover the ideas I have presented is aimed at peaceful resolutions to the current conflicts and differences we are faced with in our neighbourhood and region. To write new political and social narratives based on the themes mentioned above is not going to be easy by any stretch of imagination. Let's be realistic. It is going to take time; mutual understanding and goodwill; removing the trust deficit and restoring relationships. The larger goal of restoring relationships can happen if we can invoke the principles of peace and fraternity. I am hopeful. To repeat Walter Lippman's famous

2. **Deforestation- destroying trees and forest.** Depleting rain catchment areas which leads unable to hold rain water longer in the soil.

2. **Pollution- dumping garbage in the rivers and canals.**

3. **Chemical pollution- contamination of overground and underground water by pesticide, insecticide etc.**

4. **Bad culture and bad habit of water usage.** People wash and take a shower inside the source of water. The same water is used for drinking and cooking, mainly in valley areas.

5. **Corruption among planners and contractors that didn't use project money fully on construction work.**

6. **Destroying natural pond, lake, stagnant water area for construction and residential area.**

There are some water supply plants such as at Koirengkei, Porompat, Eraisemba, Chanchipur, Singda dam etc. These cover only some small areas of Manipur and most of the villages of Manipur don't access to running-pipe water. Water is so much important than some other resources and one cannot live without water and this basic need is important for everyone till the end of our lives. However, this resource is being neglected by everyone from government authorities to common people.

The quality of water supplied in pipe could not be high enough to drink in Manipur comparing with other countries. In Singapore, their government uses high technology water treatment plant. The quality of water is amazingly high but her citizens do not drink it directly from pipe water as people are very aware of health. In the same way, in Thailand people don't use running pipe water for drinking even though the water is very high quality. People drink bottled water. We don't have modern water treatment plants in Manipur. The quality of pipe used is not as high standard as of Thailand or Singapore. Rusting in pipe, leakage on supplying pipeline and contamination with disease causing germs and bacteria, poor quality of water treatment are fearsome to consume but this is

what people drink and consume directly.

Health, hygiene and people's appearance are very much directly related to water quality. The smoothness of our skin, the quality of our hair is very much understandable by using strong saline water, high iron content water, and muddy water without any further investigation.

To solve the issue of water scarcity, we need water revolution involving local people and government together. People don't mind drinking water from canal and muddy water from roadside ponds. Affordable people are proud of parking private water-tank vehicle in front of neighbours to show that they can buy supplied water. This is kind of symbol of social status and sign of richness in Manipur. But this is not long lasting solution. We need good plan for water management to have this basic need, accessible to every citizen-rich or poor. There should not be water scarcity in a place like Manipur with proper annual rainfall if we take up proper plans. Only the possible reason is lack of management and mismanagement. The following points will solve the problems of water shortage in Manipur.

**1. Cleaning rivers and canals:** We need projects to clean up the heavily polluted rivers such as Nambul river, and Imphal river. Use these rivers for water harvesting project. People's involvement and awareness are very much needed. Set a proper rule so that nobody is allowed to throw garbage into the rivers. Impose heavy penalty to those who dump garbage. We need this strong rules like in other countries such as Thailand and Singapore.

**2. Rain water harvest:** We need to construct dams and reservoirs for rain water harvesting for home use and agricultural purposes. No single country will have enough water without constructing dam and reservoirs. It is not exception for Manipur. We need enough numbers of dams and reservoirs not only for city dwellers but also for village people.

**3. Modern water treatment plant:** Keeping public health as priority, planners and authorities in concerned department should take up cost effective modern water treatment and purification plants for home usage. Compared with Singapore, we are still lucky enough with large land and forest coverage

that we shouldn't have any problem if we manage well without going extremity to recycle the sewage water like Singapore. Lately, there was in the news that hospital sectors in Manipur earn large income, which is a direct reflection of people's poor health, and spent more money to hospital. This is not good sign for public health.

**3. Use project money efficiently:** Development of a country depends much on the sincerity of the people. It is open secret in Manipur that project money hardly reaches the target areas fairly which shows by the results of construction, such as breaking of Sekmai dam one year ago. If we use every single rupee sanctioned for the project, we are going to be nearly developed like as Singapore and Thailand.

**4. People's involvement:** We need more people's involvement in construction and water management projects such as construction reservoirs, not only waiting for government money. People are not willing to spend money for water and people still prefer to spend money on non productive activities. Local people should come out to monitor the quality of water reservoir construction so that the public property will last many years to come.

**5. Pay water bill on time:** Water scarcity is both responsible by government and people. People should clear water bill on time. The money comes from this bill will help to run government's expenditure. When people don't take responsibility of paying their bills, government can't run smoothly. People are less aware this issue in our society. However, we should not point finger to people only for this issue. There is great responsibility for government to supply water regularly, maintaining broken pipeline without delay to make people also satisfy with the service,

as well as install prepaid water system like prepaid electricity to make people use water more carefully.

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## Framework for a Shared Future.....

prevailing in Manipur, it is very important to have more of people to people contact or else our problems and conflicts will not get resolved.

Meiteis, Nagas, Kukis should also embrace this prophecy and work towards that.

Of course, a lot of effort at different levels will be required.

I want to revisit an event that I attended in Manipur's Senapati town sometime in November 2012. Then the Editor of The Morning Express, when I was invited to speak I had suggested the formation of a forum between the Meiteis and the Nagas in order to address our differences. The next day I was told that the media in Manipur gave a lot of prominence to this story and it was positively highlighted. It is somewhat surprising that despite having a shared history, the comparative advantage of our geography and despite the strides in human thinking as also the connectivity provided by globalization, the Meiteis and the Nagas in particular have not been able to communicate well enough or think and work on a common vision and platform for a shared future.

Maybe 50-60 years back this was not required because of the mutual understanding and the political order that prevailed. I am sure most of us present here will agree that Manipur in the 1960s is very different from Manipur of 2012 or 2016. Given the situation like the one

prevailing in Manipur, it is very important to have more of people to people contact or else our problems and conflicts will not get resolved. Meitei and Naga civil society or for that matter Kukis and Nagas, Meiteis and Kukis, there has to be a common forum to talk and resolve.

When the invitation to give this lecture came to me, this unhelpful and awkward situation that Meiteis and the Nagas find themselves in, where we are not even on talking terms, the result of long felt grievances exploding and obviously the differences over the outcome of the Indo-Naga peace process, all this played on my mind.

As I said at the very outset I was determined not to let the conflict and differences come in the way of sharing some of my thoughts and ideas. During the course of this lecture, I have spoken on some of the difficult issues confronting us. I hope I have addressed them respectfully without hurting sentiments. Though you may not agree with me on every point, I know that you have listened patiently with an open mind so that a process of dialogue can begin on the challenges facing all of us as peoples.

I want you all to believe as I also do that we can create solutions to some of the pressing problems of the day. We should not allow the present conflicts to linger on because you will

agree with me that any conflict situation does no good to our peoples. It is counter-productive for peace, development and the shared future of our peoples in the neighbourhood in particular and the North East region in general.

As I had said right at the outset of this lecture, the Meiteis, Nagas, Kukis all need to explore a framework for a shared future.

If we want to change the conflict situation we are faced with or resolve the differences that exist, we need to start imagining with an open mind and start discussing ideas as late ArambamSomorendra would have liked.

I respect and salute the determination of the people of Manipur to find their rightful place and my firm belief is that with due consideration you will reciprocate the same towards other struggling peoples, including the historical and political rights of the Nagas and their aspiration to live as one people.

With this concluding thought, I want to once again thank the ArambamSomorendra Trust for giving me this honour and also for the confidence you have shown that we can achieve something meaningful through this dialogue and interaction. The ArambamSomorendra Memorial Lecture is a place to begin such a journey of peaceful resolutions. Thank you. **(Concluded)**