

# Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, June 7, 2016

## Molehills to mountains

If ever there is anything that can be said about the present government in the state with absolute certainty, it must have to be the knack of turning a minuscule molehill into a formidable mountain. It has, indeed in the last fifteen years elevated this over-practiced indulgence into an art form. When the authorities entrusted with the responsibilities and endowed with the power to make good the social ills and keep in check the various activities deemed dangerous and harmful to the public turned a blind eye to their very duties, it is but natural that there will emerge an individual, body or group to take upon themselves the responsibilities and duties that have been neglected and ignored. In fact, examples of such a situation abound in our state, so much so that it has become a second nature for the state government to dither and maintain a stoic silence on matters pertaining to public grievances and complaints until matters reach the tipping point when social disruptions starts to go beyond control and all hell break loose. The widespread and contagious dereliction of duties have spawned a parallel set of authorities albeit without the official or legal sanction, yet one which is proving to be more effective when it comes to dispensing the required work. Take the municipal corporation for instance. What this office should be performing as a routine work has been found ignored, the result of which can be seen and felt more in the heaping piles of garbage and the revolting stench that goes with it so much for the excitement and the expectant hope of turning the state capital into a smart city - a stinking smart city to be more precise. Add to it the glaring fact that those at the helm of affairs and are the most trusted representatives of the public are abusing their power and authority to cover up the misdeeds and excesses blatantly committed by their kiths and kin, with not even the slightest display of concern for the long suffering and much frustrated people who, fearing the brunt of retribution from these incorrigible brats, chose to look the other way, as the state security forces have evidently chosen to throw the law of the land out the window and take side with these very persons who are granted unofficial sanction to run roughshod over the entire state and its machinery as if Manipur is a legacy handed them by their forefathers. The resolute unwillingness of the state government to reign in these problem-children or make them toe the line speaks volume of the inherent weakness and inability to uphold the interest of the general public. But everything has a shelf-life including these social freaks tweaking and twisting the system and their authority, influence or personal connections to enrich their personal coffers. A whiff of change is slowly yet surely starting to blow across the state, and if things do not improve drastically, the whiff will transform into a gale, blowing out the power mongers into oblivion.

### MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT NOTIFICATION Imphal, the 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2016

No. 1/13(6)/2014-LA(E)Ret: It is hereby informed to all the candidates who have applied for the following posts in the Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat that the viva-voce for direct recruitment to the said posts will be held on the date and time as shown below:

Sl. No	Name of post	Date	Time
1.	Librarian	09-06-2016	11.00 am
2.	Peon	10-06-2016	11.am

All the candidates are, therefore, intimated to collect their admitcards on or before the date of viva-voce scheduled above and also to appear for the respective viva-voce along with their original testimonials etc. without fail.

(G. Tapankumar Sharma)  
Deputy Secretary(Admn),  
Manipur Legislative Assembly

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Contd. from previous issue

## MANIPUR AS SEEN BY MEITEIS, NAGAS, AND ZO PEOPLES

The territory occupy by the ethnic group is crucial to the formation of ethnic identity. In broader term, identity is "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg and Abrams 1988: 2). Identity can be a source of pride and joy but it can also kill (Sen 2006: 1-2), and many of the conflicts are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity (Sen 2006: xv). Identity is a powerful ingredient in the development of nationalism and ethnic conflict. There are five distinct types of identity: ethnic and religious identities, political identities, vicarious and avocations, personal relationships, and stigmatized groups (Deaux 2001: 2). James Manor (1996: 461-462) identifies five different types of identities in India: religious identities, linguistic identities, tribal identities among the adivasis; tribal identities among people in Himalayan or Northeast areas; and (e) Aryan and Dravidian identities. Ethnic identity leads to political action, and when ethnic identity is highly salient, it is likely to be the basis for political mobilization (Gurr 2002: 6). The salience of a people's ethnic identity is due mainly to three factors: the extent to which they differ culturally from other groups with whom they interact, the extent to which they are advantaged or disadvantaged relative to other groups, and the intensity of their past and ongoing conflicts with rival groups and the state (Gurr 2002: 68-69). The incentives that prompt political action by identity groups can be categorized into three main types: resentment about losses suffered in the past, fear of future losses, and hopes for relative gains. The relative importance of each these factors depends on a group's changing position in relation to other groups and to the state (Gurr 2002: 69). According to Paul Brass (1991: 247) the ethnic group formation involves three sets of struggle. The first set of struggle takes place within the ethnic group itself for control over its material and symbolic resources, which in turn involves defining the group's boundaries and its rules for inclusion and exclusion. The second set of struggle takes place between ethnic groups as a competition for rights, privileges, and resources. The third takes place between the state (nation state) and the groups that dominate it, on the one hand, and the populations that inhabit its territory on the other.

The subsequent sections of the essay analyze the ethnic movements—those of Meiteis, Zo peoples, [V] and Nagas, or Kukis—so as to understand how and why they view Manipur so differently, and the significance of the location and distribution of ethnic groups in sustaining and compounding the conflict. According to Milton J. Esman (1975: 392) the proportion and the quality of conflict and cooperation depend on the relative resources at the disposition of each group. The resources are demographic (relative numbers); organizational (degree of

mobilization and capacity to put resources to political uses); economic (control of finance, means of production or trade channels); technological (possession of modern skills); locational (control of natural resources and strategic territory); political (control or influence over the instrumentalities of the state); and ideological (the normative basis for group objectives). In addition to these objective determinants of power, the quality of inter-communal relations depends on the congruity or disparity in goals between those who control the state apparatus and the leaders of the constituent groups. If the goals are the same, the outcome is likely to be consensual. If the goals are incompatible, the consequences will be tension and conflict, and the outcome will be determined by the relative resources controlled by the parties. This introduces to a third determining factor—the conventions, rules, procedures, and structures, the institutions for conflict management. Without such institution there can be no predictability in intergroup relations and no framework for channeling group demands or for regulating outcomes. Likewise, the clustering of factors that cause conflict in Manipur is so diverse. The situation is such that the political dominance of majority Meiteis can be challenge by the Nagas or Zo people because location and distribution of ethnic groups matters.

The United Committee Manipur, the group which opposes Nagalim, remembers the June 18th 2001 as "Great June Uprising Day" in honor of 18 strikers killed in Imphal in 2001 while demonstrating against the extension of the ceasefire between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India to Manipur. To make matters worse, the state government of Manipur had declared June 18 of every year as the "Manipur Integrity Day" in 2008. It was done in memory of 18 strikers killed in Imphal. The Manipur's legislative assembly had adopted several resolutions against the division of Manipur into different parts. The Meiteis had threatened to revive the movement for the restoration of the pre-1949 political status of Manipur in case Government of India failed to protect Manipur's land.

Opposing the declaration of June 18 of every year as "Manipur Integrity Day," the All Nagas Students' Union Manipur (ANSAM), a student group, set ablaze government offices and imposed curfew on a main highway connecting Manipur with rest of India for 52 days (June 19 - August 11, 2005). During those days, the goods-laden trucks were prevented from entering Manipur, and hence the prices of staple goods sharply risen due to their shortage. To show their distrust to state government of Manipur and Meiteis, the Nagas sought to registers private schools situated in their areas of concentration to the Nagaland Board of Secondary Education, the agency responsible for the conduct of final examination for class X in

Nagaland. It was summarily rejected by the government of Manipur. In 2010, Th. Muivah, the NSCN-IM leader, who wanted to visit his birth place in Manipur's Ukhrul district was debarred from entering Manipur by the government of Manipur. Muivah's supporters came out to protest in large number, in which two strikers were killed in police firing at Mao, the town located along Manipur-Nagaland border. In addition, the United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of Nagas, has started a campaign to sever all political ties with the state government of Manipur. The UNC wanted to set up an "alternative administrative arrangement" for Nagas of Manipur. The UNC maintained the Nagas have suffered social, economic, and political deprivations. Interestingly, those Nagas who have settled down in the plain region were not impressed by such campaign. Further, the Naga People's Front, the political party that runs state government of Nagaland, has entered the electoral politics in Manipur. It is clearly a Naga party, its membership open only to the Nagas. In the legislative assembly election held in 2012, it tried to win two Naga electorates on the issues of protecting the land of the Nagas, expediting the political talks between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM, and establishment of an alternative administrative arrangement for the Nagas. It won from four territorial constituencies.

The animosity between them is so profound that a small incident can turn into a big issue. The alleged assault of a Meitei film actress by a NSCN-IM insurgent at the town of Chandel in 2012 led to a series of strikes in Meitei-concentrated areas demanding appropriate action against the alleged culprit. However, the state government of Manipur couldn't take any action. Although the ceasefire between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India is officially limited to Nagaland, but in practice it extends to all Naga-concentrated areas. The Meiteis alleges that the central government of deliberately appeases the Nagas, and hence has compromise the interests of other ethnic groups. As pressure mounted from the Meiteis, the state government of Manipur sent leaders of various political parties to Delhi to put pressure on the central government to take action against the said insurgent. On the other side of the divide, the Nagas accused the Meiteis of blowing a small incident out of proportion. They claimed that the incident was a matter of discord between two individuals 19 - Further, the state government of Manipur wanted to upgrade Moreh, the town located along the India-Myanmar border, into a municipality in order to accelerate infrastructure development there. The town has been a major trading center between India and Myanmar. The proposal was seen by the Zo peoples as a "meticulous game plan" to suppress their rights. They wanted the town to be governed by district council, not by the state government of Manipur.

Interestingly, the Meiteis overwhelmingly wanted Moreh to become a municipality. Nonetheless, the Nagalim and the Kukiland or Autonomous Hills state are opposed to each other because of their overlapping territorial claims. If the proposed Nagalim is unacceptable to the Zo people, the proposed Zoland is also unacceptable to the Nagas. Both sides accused each other of claiming more territories as integral parts of their ancestral homeland. Both sides claimed to be the first settlers in the disputed territories. The claims and counter-claims have reenergized the conflict since not much is available about the history of Nagas or Kukis. To my mind, they are resorting to what Anthony Cohen (2000: 153) calls inventing history for themselves.

The Nagas claimed that the Zo people were recent immigrants who came from Myanmar, an allegation refuted by the Zo people. A Naga scholar states "Kuki community is found scattered in all hill districts of Manipur, but a larger population is concentrated Churachandpur. District like Senapati, Chandel, Ukhrul and Tamenglong belong to the Nagas" (Shimray 2001: 3675). Th. Muivah, the NSCN-IM leader, also claims "We Nagas are not living in anybody's territory, we are in our own territories. It is a fact, so the question of claiming [any territory] does not arise." By contrast, a Kuki scholar states "Even though written records of the history of the Kukis started primarily with the advent of the British, Chaitrad/Kumbaba, the court chronicle of the kings of Manipur, and the Pooyas, the traditional records of the Meitei people, include some accounts of Zo people which date back to 33 AD. This means that the Zo people has been living in Manipur and other north-eastern states since prehistoric times" (Haokip 2013: 254). However, Lucy Zehoi, an anthropologist at North Eastern Hill University, Shillong states, the Nagas and Zos are recent arrivals, nearly two hundred years ago compared to Meiteis, who are the old inhabitant (Zehoi 1998: 40). Ethnic violence between them occurred in the 1990s. It was a major violent conflict based on ethnic lines which have greatly changed the social equations of Manipur. It has resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives and damage to private and public properties. Several thousands have been either temporarily or permanently displaced. It started over establishing and perpetuating control over Moreh town (see, Oinam 2003). In the aftermath of this incident new insurgent groups were formed to safeguard the interest of the Zo people.

Both Meiteis and Th. Muivah accuse the central government of giving undue favor to the Nagas. They said that the government did not take action against the Naga insurgents despite knowing that they indulged in illegal acts. The Kukis allege that their interests are not being heard. Take, for example, despite the Zo people insurgent groups and the government decided to temporarily suspend military operations against each other since 2008, the political talks had not taken place. (Concluded)

## How Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh lies about .....

But, in Manipur, BJP portrays that Rajnath Singh even had to leave Pathankot for Manipur, but the point is - he went to Pathankot not for Pathankot attack probe but to attend his party's function. So, trying to project that the Home Minister has left the national issue of Pathankot by leaving Pathankot and rushing back to New Delhi for discussing Manipur's 3 bills is misleading, and that reflects the seriousness of Rajnath Singh, which is as good as saying that nobody in Manipur or from Manipur actually knows what Rajnath Singh was doing at Pathankot - whether he was in Pathankot for Pathankot terrorist attack probe or for his party's function to celebrate 2 years of Modi *sarkar*. This attitude of BJP is a clear example to prove that BJP has genuinely no interest in the Manipur's 3 bills and implementation of ILP in Manipur. The photo session of the leaders of BJP, without giving any official statement from Union Home Ministry, is a clear justification of the hypocrisy and epitome of lies of BJP towards the people of Manipur.

**How Modi government divides Manipur on ILP**  
In "Bills for Protection of Indigenous People Passed By Manipur Assembly", NDTV, dated 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2015, it states that: "The Manipur Assembly today unanimously passed three bills to protect the indigenous people of the state. They were the Protection of Manipur People Bill, 2015, the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (7th amendment) Bill, 2015 and the Manipur Shops and Establishments (Second Amendment) Bill, 2015."

In "Ibobi orders inquiry - Cabinet takes step on Churachandpur flare-up", The Telegraph, dated 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2015, it mentions that: "The Okram Ibobi Singh

cabinet today decided to order a magisterial inquiry into the flare-up in Churachandpur town against three bills passed recently by the state assembly, leading to the death of eight protesters." In "Cpwr JAC not to allow magisterial enquiry; wants probe by Central government", Imphal Free Press, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015, it states that: "The enquiry is set to begin and concerned officials are slated to come on the September 23 to Churachandpur to begin the enquiry. The JAC said the people will not accept any enquiry initiative by the state government. Instead, the enquiry must be instituted by the central government." In the same news, it also states that: "With the unrest over the demand for a Separate Administration for the tribals of Manipur not abating, the top government official, MH Khan, IAS, Principal Secretary, came to make an assessment of the actual situation on the ground. Earlier, when Khan's vehicle approached the gate of DC resident, his convoy was blocked by womenfolk who also snatched the order appointing him lead a Magisterial enquiry in the incidents that led to the police firing in the district headquarter in the wake of the violent street protest against the passing of three bills ostensibly designed to prevent influx of migrants into the state by the State Legislative Assembly on August 31."

public at Kangyai where he was given a memorandum by the Chief's association of the district." "The Manipur Assembly today unanimously passed three bills to protect the indigenous people of the state. They were the Protection of Manipur People Bill, 2015, the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (7th amendment) Bill, 2015 and the Manipur Shops and Establishments (Second Amendment) Bill, 2015." Despite the 3 bills being passed unanimously by Manipur Assembly, Manipur Chief Minister Ibobi Singh, being a democratically elected Leader of Manipur, through his cabinet, decided to order a magisterial inquiry into the flare-up in Churachandpur town against three bills passed by the state assembly, leading to the death of eight protesters. The magisterial inquiry was headed by the then Principal Secretary M.H. Khan of Government of Manipur. But, neither the Head of the inquiry nor the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned had an opportunity to institute the inquiry as both were stopped violently and made to return back. The government official vehicles were destroyed and ultimately the Principal Secretary had to come back to Imphal without completing the inquiry. But, contrary to the mob treatment given to the Principal Secretary, Modi government sent a Special Secretary to assess the ground realities in the same district, and when the Special Secretary, from New Delhi, went to visit the same place, the Special Secretary was given a hearty welcome. It clearly shows that Modi government has been making its own attempt to present that Manipur Government is indeed not concerned about the flare up in the district while his (Modi)

government in New Delhi is only concerned about the issue, and therefore, when the Special Secretary, from New Delhi, came, there was a sea change in the law and order situation of some areas of the district. What had made the Special Secretary, of Union Government of India, to be received with such a warm welcome while the Principal Secretary, of the Government of Manipur, was blocked and sloganeered by mobs to go back to Imphal in the same place within a difference of a day or two? **Conclusion**  
With the photo session over a cup of tea with Union Home Minister and BJP leaders of Manipur, without any official statement from Union Home Ministry, and with a deliberate false portrayal of Rajnath Singh's rushing back to New Delhi from Pathankot to discuss Manipur's 3 bills, and sending of the Special Secretary from Government of India to hear instead of waiting the inquiry report by the Principal Secretary of Government of Manipur, and silence of Modi government towards the status of Manipur's 3 bills which are lying in Modi government for the last 9 months, the genuine seriousness of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is strongly doubted and this justification of the existence of the doubt is clearly exposed by the lies and doubletisation of Manipur's 3 bills and the failure to implement constitution of ILP in Manipur by none other than the Union Home Minister of India. How long will Modi government keep the Manipur's 3 bills in New Delhi and play politically with it before Manipur's 2017 state assembly election? When will the Union Home Ministry of India officially state and release an official press release, through Press Information Bureau, on the status of the Manipur's 3 bills? (Concluded)