

Editorial

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Changing trend of journalism

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 neighbourhoods. 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 now 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.

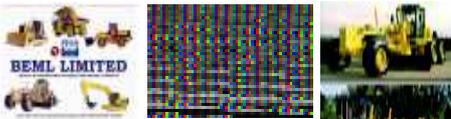
Manipur or say Imphal is not a safe place for even VIPs who are escorted by security personnel days and night. It is an open secret that almost all the politicians including MLAs or Ministers or even the Chief Ministers have linked with the UGs, the only thing we don't have is the proof.

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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Manipur: Charting the way forward

By: R. Kelson

The state of Manipur has witnessed recurring ethnic strives and it is imperative that the state learns to shield itself from such unnatural and devastating human calamity. Centuries old kuki-naga enmity poked its ugly head up again in the 90s of the 20th century with destructive outcomes, inflicting deep gashes in the relationship between the two communities, this was followed by the Meitei-pangal and the kuki-paite clashes, all of these resulted in heavy loss of life and wealth. The state continues to reel in ethnic tension and interestingly the state government has not made any attempt, earnest or cosmetic to bridge these ethnic divides, rather it has capitalized on such enmities to cover-up administrative inefficiencies and large scale corruption leaving the common man poorer and insecure in an unstable environment. This has resulted in different communities living together in mutual distrust and thus there's no secret on why the state lacks behind on every spheres of development, except how the system really works.

In recent times the main point of chasm in Manipur has been the ceasefire between the Government of India (GoI) and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN). This ceasefire seems to make every other issue like monumental corruption, malpractices in appointments in government departments, fake encounters and ASPA etc. trivial or even normal in contrast. When the ceasefire signed between GoI and NSCN in 1997 was extended to Naga-Inhabited areas, (Naga-Inhabited area: signifying the contagious naga ancestral homeland) in 2001 the Manipur valley erupted in a massive protest leading to loss of nineteen lives demanding a roll-back of this clause in the ceasefire as it was perceived as a threat to the territorial integrity of the state of Manipur, eventually the clause was omitted by the GoI. It is noteworthy here that this protest was restricted to the valley of Manipur whereas the declaration of extension in ceasefire coverage was welcomed by the Naga population inhabiting the four hill districts Chandel, Senapati, Tamenlong and Ukhrul. Almost a decade later in 2010 the same GoI ignored directives of Home Ministry to allow passage of NSCN's General Secretary Th.

Muivah to his ancestral village for a visit, protest against the GoM broke out in Naga areas leading to death of two young students at Mao and hundreds of civilians suffered injuries at the hands of the notorious Manipur Police commandos, here it must be highlighted that the Naga people of Manipur state were welcoming Th. Muivah to show support for the peace process, denouncing violence and upholding the hope for a peaceful future. Insurgency has cost the Nation many precious lives and resources, and is one of the greatest challenge the country faces, and a risk avenue of malicious external interference, one can fathom why the government of India as well as the common citizens would want to resolve such problems in peaceful non-destructive and non-violent ways wherever possible. Thus the question begs, was the GoM intentionally scuttling the hard-work of the union government? Th. Muivah may not be an angel but his significance in the insurgency landscape of NE India cannot be ignored. His planned visit could have served as a window for the entry of GoM into the negotiation process.

Without endorsing the demand for integration of contagious 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 meteis, 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 exists including the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam or the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration West Bengal, alternatively the possibilities of 6th 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 meteis; 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 meteis 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.

National and International News

Stop anti-Kashmiri violence: Rajnath Singh to CMs

IANs
New Delhi, April 21: Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday asked all Chief Ministers to act against those who harass Kashmiris living in their states, amid at least two recent incidents of harassment of youth from the troubled valley in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Rajnath Singh condemned the attack on Kashmiris in Rajasthan's Mewar University where a group of Kashmiris were on Wednesday allegedly called "terrorists", "stone-pelters" and beaten up by locals who were angry over repeated incidents of stone-throwing at security forces in the valley.

The Rajasthan violence was followed by giant hoardings installed in Meerut that asked "stone-pelting Kashmiris" to leave Uttar Pradesh or face consequences. The warning signs were attributed to the Uttar Pradesh Nav Nirman Sena — a little known outfit that has also threatened to launch a massive drive from April 30 against Kashmiris living in Uttar Pradesh.

The group has admitted to have put up the banners that read: "Bhartiya sena par pathar maarne wale

Kashmiriyon ka bahishkar." (Boycott Kashmiris who pelt stones at the Indian Army). "Kashmiriyon, Uttar Pradesh chhodo warna..." (Kashmiris, leave Uttar Pradesh or else...).

The hoardings also carried the name of the outfit's chief Amit Jani, who shared a picture of the banner on his Facebook account.

Jani told CNN News18 on Thursday that the drive was aimed only at "radical elements" in Kashmir. Police in Uttar Pradesh have slapped a case against Jani.

Dubbing the incidents as "unfortunate" the Home Minister said he had come to know that Kashmiris were subjected to "misbehaviour" in some places.

"I appeal to all the Chief Ministers to ensure security of Kashmiris in their states. They are equal citizens of India and part of our family. No Kashmiri should be harassed. If such incidents happen, action should be taken. "The contributions of the people of Kashmir in the nation building are immense," the Home Minister told reporters here.

He said he had asked the home ministry officials to circulate an advisory in this regard.

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