

Editorial

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Don't ever think of controlling media

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 kilometers 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 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 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 discuss 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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Socio-economic Conditions Leading to the Birth of Marxism

By : CL. Meitei

As we will see later, Marxism teaches us that any ideas or theory are always the product of some material conditions. Whenever new material conditions come into being, new ideas and theories too are bound to emerge. This same truth applies also to Marxism itself. Thus in order to understand Marxism better we should try to know the material conditions, i.e. the socioeconomic conditions, within which Marx and Engels first gave birth to Marxism.

Marxism was established over 150 years ago, during the 1840s. It was established first in Europe, which at that time dominated the whole world economically, politically and military. This world domination was such that almost all earlier advanced civilizations like India, China and Persia had been subordinated to it. Marx and Engels were born and lived in some of the most economically advanced parts of Europe while developing the ideas of Marxism. They observed, participated in and were influenced by all the major political events of that time. Thus in order to understand how Marxism was born we will first have to take a look at the Europe of that time and see the principal factors in the socioeconomic situation then.

1) The most important factor was the Industrial Revolution, which lasted approximately from 1760 to 1830 and though it was centred in England, influenced the whole world. The Industrial Revolution was named as such because it was during these seventy years that the world first saw an explosive of the world market, which sent England. Along with this was the tremendous expansion of the world market, which sent English manufactured goods to all parts of the world. Though other countries like France, Holland and parts of Germany and the USA also set up large factories, this period was heavily dominated by England. Its domination was such that it came to be called the "workshop of the world" which supplied manufactured goods to all countries.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the capitalist class. This class was earlier economically not so strong and was a middle class (it was called the bourgeoisie because bourgeois in French means middle class). But, with the Industrial Revolution, this middle class was transformed into a class of industrial millionaires - the modern industrial bourgeoisie. The untold riches of

this new class gave it the strength to more powerfully challenge the feudal classes which were till then still the ruling classes.

Alongside the modern industrial bourgeoisie the Industrial Revolution also gave birth to another class - the modern industrial working class, or proletariat. This class consisting of workers working together in thousands in large factories was also far different from the earlier workers working in small groups in tiny workshops. The modern proletarians nothing else except their labouring power and had a strength and confidence not known to earlier generations of workers and toilers. This strength came from their contact with modern industry their discipline learnt from the factory system and their superior organisation due to their large numbers assembled together in single factories under one roof. Their position within society made them the potentially most revolutionary force in history.

2) The other important factor was that which dominated the political situation in Europe at that time. It was the spate of bourgeois democratic revolutions led by the rising capitalist class of which the most important was the France. It also led to the Napoleonic wars where the armies of the French bourgeoisie conquered almost the whole of Europe and introduced bourgeois reforms abolishing feudalism wherever they went. They thus dealt a deathblow to the kings and old feudal classes. Though the French armies were later defeated the old ruling classes could never recover their old position. The modern bourgeoisie continued its revolutionary wave with numerous other bourgeois revolutions, which resulted in the conclusive defeat of the feudal classes and the victory of capitalism as a world system.

Thus both at the economic and political levels the period of the birth of Marxism was a period of great advances and victories for the capitalist class when it was conclusively establishing its rule in the most advanced and dominant countries of the world.

3) Though this was the period of the greatest advancement of the bourgeoisie, the principal factor that gave birth to Marxism during this period was the rise of working class consciousness and proletarian organisations and

movements thus signalling and self-conscious force.

This rise of a class-conscious proletariat first took place in England and France. This was primarily because of the early spread of modern industry in these two countries. The spread of modern industry though it brought great wealth to the bourgeoisie at the same time meant the most inhuman working and living conditions for the working class. Almost three quarter of the workforce was composed of women and children because they provided cheaper and more easily controllable workers for the capitalists. Children from the age of six onwards were forced to work fourteen and sixteen hours in the spinning mills. As the bourgeoisie amassed greater and greater wealth the workers fell into greater and greater misery. While the cloth mill owners multiplied their capital many 16 times over, their weavers' wages reduced to one eight of what they earlier obtained.

Thus the conditions of the proletariat were such that rebellion was not merely possible but almost compulsory. The first such outbursts were spontaneous, without clear direction. An example was the machine-breaking agitation of 1810-11 in England where groups of weavers would attack the textile mills and smash whatever machinery they could lay their hands on. This was their method of protesting against the modern industry that was destroying their very livelihood. Such protests having no clear direction and being severely repressed, quickly died out.

What followed was the spread and growth of the labour movement and labour organisations that provided the answer and direction to the fighting proletariat. Earlier unions, which had been restricted to skilled men together in what were then called 'general trades' union. As these union in England started growing a movement to start a national level union started building up. This was formed and by 1833-34 reached a membership of 500,000. Along with the unions workers also started organising themselves in cooperatives and mutual benefit societies. In other countries and mutual benefit societies. In other countries where unions were largely banned these were the main forms of organisations of the working class which also grew in numbers and strength.

As the workers organisations

started growing the workers in Britain launched the Chartist movement in 1837 demanding electoral rights for workers. This was the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement. It used the method of mass petitions to Parliament somewhat similar to the signature campaigns sometimes organised today. These petitions gathered upto 5 million signatures. Some of the Chartist demonstrations had 350,000 participants showing the organised strength of the working class. However as the movement grew in strength and militancy it faced severe repression and was suppressed by 1850. During the early 1850s while Engels was staying in Manchester (in England) he was in close contact with revolutionary Chartist leaders as well as its weekly. The Northern Star and was influenced by the Chartist movement.

The growing militancy of the workers movement also often in this period led to the first worker uprisings which were suppressed brutally. Examples of these were the uprisings of the silk-workers of Lyons (France) in 1819 and 1834 and the uprising of the handloom linen-weavers of Silesia in Prussian Germany (today part of Poland) in 1844. The last named struggle had a strong impact throughout Germany as well as on the young Marx.

Thus, by the time of the 1840s, the proletarian 18 movement was growing rapidly in strength and intensity in many industrial countries. However, it was still very weak and in no position to yet pose a threat to either the dominant big bourgeoisie or the old feudal ruling classes. Nevertheless the emergence of the proletariat as an independent class force was an event of world historical significance. The coming into material existence of the proletariat also meant at the same time the birth of the ideas representing this new revolutionary class. Many ideas and theories claiming to represent working class interests thus came into being. Marxism, when it was first formulated in the 1840s was only one among these. However, though many theories had emerged from the same economic conditions, Marxism alone provided the tools to properly understand these conditions and also to change them. Therefore in the years to come it was Marxism alone that would prove to be the true proletarian ideology.

Indian Constitution: A Comprehensive Analysis, Loopholes and More

By Sumedha Upadhyay:

When we hear these familiar words, only one thing comes to our minds 'the INDIAN constitution'. These are the very first words of the Preamble. The commencement of our constitution marked the beginning of an independent India. Drafted by the Drafting Committee headed by B.R. Ambedkar, this Sovereign document is the largest and the lengthiest constitution in the world with 395 articles and 12 schedules. The Constituent Assembly was believed to be the representation of the will of the people. The words 'We the people' signifies that it was a document given by the people, to the people and for the people.

Today, in the 21st century can we say that the real power to govern this country is vested in its people? But the question that often arises is, does the constitution in true terms express the will of the people or is it has just become a tool in the hands of some hungry politicians? Are the people of India in real terms assured of Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity? Is the common man today receiving justice? Does equality really prevail? Is Liberty being exercised by all today?

In the wake of the changing times in the Indian society a constitutional review is highly required. The constitution, though a very impressive

piece, has failed in some respects. And in this article, I wish to express my opinion on the need of an overhaul in our constitution.

The preamble says that we are a Democratic Republic. What does democracy mean to all of us? To define it in a layman's language Democracy means that the power is in the hands of the people to decide how and by whom the country is run. But today does the real power lie in the hands of the people as it was believed when the constitution was applied? It is no more 'by and for the people'. Now it is more or less a board game and the players are the politicians with personal profits as the winning amount.

I also believe that our constitution is a borrowed constitution. When the drafting committee drafted it, they adopted a major part of it from the Government of India Act 1935 with few modifications here and there. Besides this, we have borrowed many provisions from various other constitutions of the world. The Parliamentary System has been taken from the British Constitution and Judicial Review & federalism from the US Constitution. We cannot say it's a piece of novelty or originality. Many provisions need to be amended as they were adopted from the 1935 Act

and maybe worked for that period; however in today's time they have become obsolete.

One of the biggest flaws of our constitution is the never-ending length due to the tough language in which it has been drafted. Being the sovereign document of our country it should have been drafted in a language easily comprehensible by the citizens. But unfortunately the legal jargon used can hardly be deciphered by the common man. With that length, the parliament today will never get the time to modify and simplify it but I feel this is something which should have been kept in mind at the time of its commencement.

Securing justice to all - social, economical and political, is one of the chief aims of our constitution. But this has hardly been actually put into action. Our judicial system which is responsible to provide justice to each and every individual is one of our slowest systems. Today we have at least 10,000 cases per day pending for each judge of Tis Hazari court which is at least ten times higher than the prescribed number. Even the fast track courts take 3-4 years to solve cases; the term 'fast track court' thus fails the purpose. As we all know it took 63 years for the judiciary to come out with the historical judgment of Ayodhya Babri

case. Criminal cases like that of Jessica Lal, Priyadarshini Mattoo, Nitish Katara case are among the many examples of delayed justice. Besides the procedure to approach the courts is so tedious that a poor farmer ends up selling his land, the only source of his livelihood, to pay so that he can get his rights back. The guidelines issued in the landmark judgment of D K Basu v. State of West Bengal in order to bring about prison reforms are rarely followed. Thousands of under-trial prisoners are still in jail, living in inhuman conditions and are being denied basic rights of living.

The fundamental rights under part III of our constitution too need to include many of those rights that have developed over a history of various judicial pronouncements. These rights though not really stated in part III have been recognized as fundamental in nature and are better known as 'implied fundamental rights'. Right to food, right to privacy, right to livelihood, right to clean potable drinking water, right to fresh and clean environment, right to be silent, right to speedy justice etc. These rights need to be added in chapter III as they are equally important in today's time for every Indian.

At the same time I feel that the (..Contd. on page 3)