

# Editorial

Tuesday August 7, 2018

## 'One man', it's one man that put Manipur in frying pan

An erstwhile nation, which the British Empire had to face strong resistance from the sons of the soil to conquer it, where women folk raise war against injustice, now has come down to a level where one man can control the government and put all the people in a frying pan by inciting divisive policy.

The voice of the 25 member strong delegation that too led by the Chief Minister is not a concern for their leaders at the centre, but what is more important is to save the one person who can upside down the whole state in one stroke.

For over 2 months academic activities of higher studies in Manipur has been put to a grinding halt. Yesterday, witnessed police firing tear gas inside the Manipur University complex causing injury to six students. Perhaps for the first time the state witnessed a well organised rally against the Manipur University community who are demanding removal of VC AP Pandey in front of the Manipur University where the district administration imposed prohibitions under section 2 of CrPC 144. What is more surprising the indirect support of the police force to the Anti-MU Community rally, which was being organised by an unseen force.

On August 3, a peace rally of eminent politicians to show solidarity to the MU Community was prevented by the police after the district administration of Imphal West imposed prohibitions of any rally or gathering under section 2 of the CrPC 144 in and around the University area from 1 pm of the day. On that midnight a police team dismantle the makeshift platform in front of the University gate for staging democratic protest by the MU community. Following that the relay hunger strike protest had been shifted inside the Manipur University.

On August 5, High Power Ministerial team led by the Deputy Chief Minister Y Joykumar had appealed the MU Community to reinstate normalcy in the Manipur University saying that the incumbent Vice Chancellor Prof. A.P. Pandey has been put on leave for 30 days and have appointed the senior most Professor W. Vishwanath as Vice Chancellor (in-charge) of the University. He further said that bringing normalcy in the Campus is important to facilitate the Fact Finding Committee to enquire and in discharging their duties in a free and fair manner. The committee instituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) is headed by Retired Acting Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court, Justice Nandakumar.

The nature of 30 days leave given to Prof. AP Pandey seems like not associated with the present crisis in Manipur University as the VC is reported to be inspecting college in Kohima representing as a Chairman of a UGC committee. The team led by Prof. AP Pandey from University Grants Commission (UGC) completed their inspection of St. Joseph's College (SJC), Jakhama on August 6.

On one hand the fact finding committee constituted by the MHRD consist of a JK Tripathi Joint Secretary of the UGC and another from the MHRD. How could a VC which an enquiry committee consisting of representative from UGC is conducting investigation, be appointed as the Chairperson of a Committee of the UGC. Above all it is now open secret that the so called fact finding committee is not formed under any act of the constitution of India, which means that it is rather a departmental enquiry committee.

The inclusion of a retired High Court Judge is also more like considering the people of Manipur 'a fool' and humiliation of Judiciary. This is being stated as Retired High Court Judge are highly regarded and any committee headed by a retired judge should be independent and should have power summon any persons in need. It is not clear whether the retired Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court HNK Singh had accepted to head the departmental type enquiry committee or not. But accepting it would mean a three step down of his professional integrity.

The spirit of Manipuri who once had the courage even to fight the mighty British empire seems to lost today as one person is enough to boil the state.

## Reform Manipur's Education System

By- Chingakham Dina, Arambam Karamjit and Khwairakpam Sunita

The success of an education system is parallel to the success in the job market and applicability of the knowledge in real life. Education is poorly designed in Manipur and it fails in the job market. Knowledge learned should be used in the practical, real-life situation. The main issue is the wrong focus and lack of life skill focus in education.

Our system has not focused on self-sufficiency economy with full intention that should be encouraged in the education system. The present education is not enough in this modern era. Kids don't want to go to school as most children don't feel school is an interesting place. In Thailand, the dropout rate is lower compared to India. Schools are socializing and fun place for them. In Finland, all students are feeling safe and sound with a win-win feeling for all, on the other hand, we are in the dream of producing topper in class 10 and 12 standards. Schools should encourage children to come out of the family, learn and enjoy in the school that is free from the threatening environment from failing in the exams. Schooling system that focuses on examination is the wrong approach of education planner.

Unable to fit himself in any profession is a failure of the education system. We see many mistakes in our system that encourages learning on theory only, copy to pass in the exam, not to be used in practical aspect. Many European and American students come under the exchange program. We see this in Thailand. After one year, these students' bio-data profile

is stronger as they spent one-year volunteer service in fieldwork. Colleges and universities appreciate their fieldwork experience during admission time. In our system, this will be just wasting time and losing an academic break. This mental difference is stopper from doing getting practical experience in our present system. It is necessary for system change and perception change.

**Unnecessary competitions**  
Indian system puts unnecessary heavy pressure on students. Focusing only on the exam is the main focus of education. Learning is just for examination in our present system. There is hearsay that schools are buying top students to showcase the businesslike model in education in Manipur. There is less focus on a practical aspect of the learning to be used in real life world. Such a situation leads to unnecessary and unhealthy competitions that yields negative impacts.

Finland, the world's best education system does not let students put under unnecessary stressful competition. For them, all students feel that they all are a winner in the classroom. But in Manipur, people think toppers are the winners. In such a competition, many government schools fail in many aspects. So, government schools fail to attract students. Parents opt for expensive private instead of free education in a government school. If all the government schools are equally good as private schools,

there is no reason for parents not to send kids to government schools. Teachers are paid more in government schools but the learning output fails to attract students. There is no strict action if teachers are absent. This hollow effect is due to a failure in the system.

**Grading system**  
Mark-grading system causes stress to students and parents. Most educators and policymakers don't see the harmful impact of the topper selection based on marking system. This leads to tough competition just to see the score percentage. In Thailand, students are grouped only under four bands of a mark such as grade 4, grade 3, grade 2, grade 1. Grade 4 is the highest score band. There could be thousands of students in grade-4. All are within the range 1-4. There is not any single case of the fight for the position of rank holders. Our topper selection method rendered mostly bad taste and only a few students come out as the winner which is very opposite to Finland's win-win learning situation for all students.

Because of this system, we see conflict account of like who will be higher rank even after the exam results came out already. This conflict wasted lots of resources, money and time, and unnecessary but avoidable pressures on both sides-students and authorities. We have not seen such conflict in our teaching career spent more than a decade in Thailand. The exam is just a simple thing. Learning matters, not testing the kids. All level including class 10, and 12 is in the hand of class teachers for the

exam. There is no issue with the topper, grading etc. Thai government conducts a common test to ascertain the quality to help planning. There is no fail or pass in such common examination.

Another mistake is giving a failing score to students. We should remove the failed marking system. Many disagree on this point and they cannot see the importance of the logic. Students lives do not depend on physics, chemistry, math etc. If the kid is good at physical stamina, let him do sport even if he doesn't do well in math, science or whatever. If her voice is excellent, send her to music class. Chemistry will not be this kid's career. Don't label kids failure but promote the kids in higher level by identifying his strength that will be suitable for his future career such as farming skill, carpentry skill, mechanical skill as examples. Here comes the role of the vocational school. In this way, basically there no students failed in Thai schools. They see the importance of it. If a student is thrown out from the school, this will result worse so the school system will keep the kid in the school and when the kid finishes high school, he can read-write-so basic maths for his farming skill, to become a mechanic and also these kids will never steal the jobs of first-class students. Everyone has his own space. It is the basic thought for keeping them to be able to read and write instead of becoming a drug user if he is kicked out from the school.

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## Tikendrajit: The Lion of Manipur

By - Dr. Lokendra Arambam

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The Commissioner ordered the Durbar to be held on that day itself at the Residency of the Political Agent Mr. Grimwood, and the native ruler and his retinue was forced to wait at the gate of residency for hours, since the Government of India's proclamation was to be translated and it took quite long. The military preparations surrounding the residency became an object of suspicion to the native officials, especially Tikendrajit, who sensed the dubious preparations and absented himself from the Durbar, pleading ill-health. It led to the immediate postponement of the Durbar, since it became clear that the Durbar should be held with Tikendrajit himself to be present. The next day, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, the matter became more complicated since Tikendrajit refused to attend the Durbar. The failure to hold the Durbar, where Tikendrajit was to be arrested, led to Mr. Quinton scheme the attack at the Kangla dawn the next day with force of arms which led to the reprisal by the native soldiers and the subsequent tragedies.

New documents that had now become available had revealed that the Chief Commissioner Mr. Quinton was pre-determined to remove Tikendrajit from Manipur, and he was already in consultation with the Government of India, represented by the Viceroy's Council in Simla. The British authorities had been completely informed of the entire history of the political developments in Manipur and the details of the palace revolution in 1890. Instead of deciding to support the eldest brother Surchandra who requested British help to restore his throne, the Government decided to support the cause of the usurper Kulachandra, and at the same time see to it that Tikendrajit, the real power behind Kulachandra's throne be deported from Manipur elsewhere in India. The logic of the empire was of

paramourty to interfere in matter of succession, and the British interests that had perennially climbed since its conquest of Burma, and an absolute necessity to remove any potential enemies to its hegemony. Mr. Quinton and the Viceroy's Council had earlier mulled over the necessity to increase the strength of the military garrison posted at Imphal even, and Mr. Quinton was also aware (in his own way) that the Senapati (Tikendrajit), the most popular of the brothers, the present head of the Manipur Army, a man of bold and turbulent character may be expected, when driven to desperation, if he does not openly resist, to use these utmost efforts to stir up disaffection and rebellion. Mr. W.J. Cunningham, the officiating secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department in his confidential letter to Mr. Quinton on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, let it be known that "The Governor General in Council considers that it will be desirable that the Senapati should be removed from Manipur and punished for his lawless conduct. I am to enquire where you would recommend that he should be interned, and what steps you consider necessary for carrying out his removal without affording him the chance, which his position as head of the Manipur forces might possibly give him, of making any forcible opposition" (Fort William No. 360 E.).

The stealthy raid to the sacred capital, the unprovoked violence to women, children and ethnic residents in the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1891, and the hand to hand combats with the attacking soldiers, the devastation and fire to households, death to ethnic citizens and Brahmins and the burning of property and loss of lives to both sides were indeed an unpardonable crime perpetrated by the alien power to a historically trusted friend and ally. The so-called ceasefire and attempt at

negotiation after the violence of the whole day of the 24<sup>th</sup> failed because of the refusal by the British authorities to surrender their arms, as demanded by Tikendrajit. The tense night witnessed the arousal of the masses affected by the provocation and those citizens earlier who had lost their near and dear ones, those who had nursed silent grievances against British officers for misbehaving with their daughters, rose in one fell swoop and punished those perpetrators of the crime. In the eyes of the indigenous patriots, the attackers on the sacred capital of the land had perpetrated an unpardonable crime, and the capital punishments was deserved, sanctioned by tradition.

In the reckoning of the powerful empire, the murder of the four British officers was a severe insult to the might and prestige of the Victorian Empire. The Asiatic state was attacked from three sides. The warriors of Manipur, aware of their inferiority of arms and superiority of the enemy in technical aspects of warfare, retreated from the three mountain strongholds, but finally made a resolute stand at the fields of Khongjom, some 22 miles at the south of the capital, and from 8 am till 5 pm engaged in hand to hand combat, swords and shields against bayonets and cannon ball fire and the river Khongjom ran with blood! The Gurkha regiments who fought with the Manipur army later recognized that the Khongjom battle was one of the hardest and toughest they had ever fought for the prestige of the British Empire.

As for Tikendrajit, for his personal leadership in the conduct of the war, in his heart of the hearts, must have felt it as an avoidable engagement. He saw to it that Mrs. Grimwood, in her flight to Silchar was not pursued by the Manipur army. He saw to it that those who had been captured in the early confrontation should no longer be kept in prison. Those fifty one soldiers who had been imprisoned due to the Quinton attack on the sacred capital were released

and given rupees five each for their expenses on the way back. When the war became unavoidable, appropriate measures were taken for all defence in the three hill routes, yet attempts were made to have negotiations at the Thoubal in early April. But it was impracticable. The disaster at Khongjom in late April which was the last resistance, led to the final decision to leave the capital. There was a serious discussion whether Yubaraj Tikendrajit should lead a final confrontation, but realistic appraisal felt it was better for the prince to think of a resistance seeking the support of a foreign power i.e. China. The prince along with the Maharajah and some fifty armed men left the capital on horseback on the 26<sup>th</sup> April, and attempt to reach the Chassad region in the northeast where the Kuki friends of the state awaited. Unfortunately, the help of the Kuki chieftain Tonghu, at Chassad could not succeed, since the British forces had sealed all routes, since Burma had earlier been conquered. Tikendrajit, his brother king and the group returned in hiding, each on their own. He was later in May arrested from the home of his mother's elder sister and it was a Manipuri Subedar, Khelendra of the Konthoujam family, who was himself a distant relative from the line of prince Nar Singh, a colleague of Tikendrajit's grandfather Gambhir Singh, the heroes of the Manipur freedom struggle against the Burmese was of 1824-26. It was secretly rumoured that the prince Tikendrajit let himself be arrested by none other than a Manipuri soldier from the Surma valley military police, who had accompanied the British invading force from Silchar, under Lieutenant Col. R.H.F. Rennick, the Commander of the Silchar Column, who reached Imphal and entered the capital Kangla on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1891.

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