

Editorial

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

A good man perspective

The one simple thing that could make much of almost everything much easier and smoother, yet seemingly impossible to accomplish is the act of becoming a good person.

It would indeed take a much greater strength of character to own up our mistakes and shortcomings, and still greater willpower to refrain from deliberately committing acts we consciously know is wrong and false. The few fortunate ones who have the grit and will to transcend these urges are acknowledged and respected.

On the other hand, a new breed of "Go-Getters" who would not stop at anything to achieve their goal is on the rise the pressures of present day society helping in developing and pruning such mindset to perfection. They are the restless, hyperactive and aggressive ones who do not cater to emotions and aesthetics. Modern parents and guardians are increasingly urging their wards to adopt the letter approach towards life in order to carve out a place in the society that invariably results in a level of respect-respect that again is dependent on the earning capacity, the social circle adopted and living status maintained. Increasing compulsions for security in terms of food, shelter and a step towards a more secure future could be the factors that prompted the collective thinking towards adopting such an attitude towards life.

But then, does that mean the adage "All is fair and love and war" will be made true? Is our life becoming a daily struggle, a battle-if not a war, we are destined to wage every single living day of our lives? Where does that leave us with any room or opportunity for improvement not the financial kind, but a more rounded and holistic, as a person?

The present developments in the society-particularly that of mindless atrocities and lack of considerations that is becoming rampant would be a spill-off of this new approach towards life. The struggle for security-for the basic necessities of life has become the all-consuming trust for wealth which invariably leads to the thirst for power and influence. Greed takes over everything else, making our lives worse off than when we started. What then could be the panacea for these aberrations that has come to plague our lives of late? The answer lays within us common knowledge which just needs to be acknowledged, and more importantly to act on. Putting up a façade of make-believe and a show of benevolence and righteousness will not absolve anyone of the crimes and wrongs.

This is of utmost importance for everyone, and more so for those who are donning the role of public representatives who we are following. Concepts like beauty, peace and harmony can only be experienced if we can rise above our petty urges and look at life-that of ourselves and the ones around us in a different and totally new perspective one that does not have anything to do with wealth, power or fame.

"The earth has enough to satisfy man's needs but not man's greed". Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

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The problems of insurgency in keisham priyokumar's short stories

By- Thingnam Joyshree Devi

Keisham Priyokumar (1949-) is an eminent short story writer of Manipur. He has contributed five short story books in Manipuri Literature. He has received many awards like Sahitya Academy award (1998), Manipur State Award for Literature (2014) etc. The problem of insurgency and issues related to communal clash could be seen in Priyokumar's third book, 'Nongdi Tarakhidare' [1995].

The colonialism era have ended when the British left Manipur but there are a lot of discontentment in the heart and mind of the youths of Manipur. This is due to several reasons. When the natives thought that Manipur, being an independent state, would be a full-fledged state of India, the government kept Manipur in a very low status as part C State. People thought that democracy would be beneficial but the opposite of it happened. The fruits of democracy and its benefits were not given. The people of India also could not view the Manipurians as Indian citizens. Due to these reasons the youths of Manipur demanded its independence back and gave birth to the idea of anti-colonialism. The political chaos also increased. The seeds of insurgency began to sow in the 1960s. The people demanded Statehood and finally Manipur got its statehood in 1972. But the anguish and hatred that started in 1960s still continued. And in 1980s, the conflict of insurgency heightened. The changes that came with time were seen in the works of the Manipuri writers who were also a part of this society. The writers felt the miseries of common people due to the insurgency and the conflict between state and non-state actor. These issues were reflected in Manipuri Literature. The Manipuri short story writers kept the burning issue of insurgency far away from their works. But within a decade the writers showed the various issues faced due to insurgency. The age long insurgency struggles from its strongest time until it slowed down that is, the wave of insurgency could be found in Keisham Priyokumar's three short stories. We could see the communal clash in the hilly areas of Manipur in 1990s in his works. The themes of insurgency and communal clash could also be seen from his book, Nongdi Tarakhidare published in 1995. Later on "Lan Amasung Mang" [2000] and "Nongkhong Tamna" [2013] were published based on the issues of insurgencies, ethnic and communal conflicts. He experimented on a new style while writing these fictions. Some features in which the writer encounters while sketching these significant revolutionary issues and their effects are:

1. The life of the common people between the state actor and non-state actor.
2. Sorrows and suffering faced by the parents whose children enlisted themselves in the revolutionary army.
3. The mental reflection of the changed feeling of home-sickness or return to home experienced by those who have been already in the revolutionary armies.
4. The psychological set up of those who surrendered.
5. Fake revolutionary armies.
6. The painful effects of ethnic conflicts.

1. **Life of the common people between the state actor and non-state actor**
In 'Tha Amasung Rahu', 'Grahagi Dasha' [Nongdi Tarakhidare, 1995], the agony of the common people who suffer while existing between the strong forces of insurgents and those who stand to suppress the former is depicted. The story 'Tha Amasung Rahu' has been developed with the background of a bus which travels from Senapati to Imphal. The long awaited monthly salary has been forcibly and completely robbed on the journey towards home by the insurgents at Sapermeina. Thereafter, hard frisking is done on the protagonist immediately after crossing the Phaidinga Bridge blaming him to be one of the insurgents thereby giving repeated trauma. The story reflects the unwanted activities

and fear caused by the state army in the name of suppressing the insurgents and this can be vividly known from one of the writer's line: 'Grandmother worries only about her granddaughter when the arrival of army is heard' [Priyokumar, 1995: 55].

The writer compares such an agonising sorrow of the common people with the moon eclipsed by Rahu. Again in 'Grahagi Dasha' a family gets ill fated for the army claim all the family members to be insurgents because they have given shelter to some insurgent. In it, a young daughter without the permission of her parents provides a night's shelter to two young insurgents. But, on the very night, the police came and take the two lives away with the ultimate result of the ill-fate and suffering got by the daughter and her whole family. Such a terrible situation is frequently experienced by the people of the state in reality. During the whole activities of getting independence by the state revolutionary armies and of suppressing the former by the state security forces, the innocent and common people always suffer.

2. **The agony faced by the parents whose children unlawfully enlisted themselves in the revolutionary army**
In 'Meisha' [Nongdi Tarakhidare] and 'Shiningbagi Wakhal' [Lan Amasung Mang, 2000], the sorrow and agony experienced by the parents whose children have become insurgents are portrayed. Meisha depicts the grief of the innocent life of Chaoton who resides at the edge of the Chakpi river growing maize and collecting Khangra leaves. In the story, Chaoton's daughter marries a non Manipuri man who takes shelter at Serou resulting in an unhappy married life. Although he gets societal shame, he lives in the hope of his son who studies at Imphal. However, the son turns out to be insurgents and gets involved in a military encounter and gets killed. This sad news put another sorrowful burden on the life of already grieving father, Chaoton. He then becomes a father who gives up the hope of living. 'Shiningbagi Wakhal' outlines a grief stricken father who feels like giving up life because his sons have become victims of insurgency and drugs.

3. **The mental reflection of the changed feeling of home sickness or return to home experienced by those already enlisted insurgents**
'Lan Amasung Mang' was published five years after the publication of Nongdi Tarakhidare. The work mentions the feelings of the insurgents when they are far away from homes. The feeling to surrender after becoming insurgents, the longing for home return and the feeling of disheartenment on the side of the revolutionary armies are strongly depicted in 'Ucheke'. A home-sick insurgent, Chingkhingnaba's mind is symbolised in the bird. Chingkhingnaba who has been already an insurgent yearns for his home return after numerous months. As he eagerly waits to return home at dusk on the dense hill near his village, a bird flies freely over him in the sun setting shy to return to its nest. The situation vividly symbolises this young man's mental longing for a return to home as reflected by the writer:

"...like the free roaming bird, he wants to be free."
[Priyokumar, 2000: 52]

4. **The psychological set-up of those who surrendered**
'Nongkhong Tamna' published in 2013, is a portrait of anxiety of a young surrenderee. 'Khongup Be' depicts the mental agony of a young surrenderee who evolves from the agonising of a surrenderee to an active insurgent presently living to have ment

better of his past bitter experience. Sanatomba (Malemnganba) has surrendered and has been in a marriage bond but he cannot live a peaceful life. Even if he stays at home, he faces the fear of encountering both security and militants. The whole story clearly reveals the fear and anxiety of Sanatomba's inner mind experienced at just a night. The killing of surrenderees on the pretext of fake faults by calling them out of their houses by the security forces and by the real insurgents is a frequent incident in this conflict prone region. Such a terrible news often haunts the mind of man like Sanatomba. He wishes to smile freely and happily with his mother, wife and child but he hardly does so because of frequent fear. When his wife informs him about the news of surrenderees got killed kidnapped, he remembers his past life and consequently fear overpowers him. He feels that such an incident could also happen to him anytime which panics his existence. Meanwhile, Sanatomba wants to hear something new that will make his heart delighted from his wife. He wishes to live a restful life. The barking sound of the dog with the thundering storm in that night raises his hidden fear. Then, he hears the sound of stepping boots, he becomes more fearful. He can't even breathe. The sound of the boots can even panic the sense of stepping of the readers. He starts to feel the grief of his young and charming wife:

"I am devoid of any accusation now. Don't be worried. What I am concerned is your being like a newly bloomed flower." [Priyokumar, 2013: 11]

5. **Fake revolutionary armies**
The short stories 'Ngaba' and 'Bomb' in 'Lan Amasung Mang' [2000] depicted the unfortunate condition of the poor, powerless unemployed and disoriented youths turning into fake revolutionary armies. Ngaba sets its background on two fake insurgents who, on a stormy night wait for the money they have demanded from quite a rich man. So, in their act of waiting, the desperate lives of their past and of their unsettled future yet to come could be seen. They know well that what they are doing is not right, but they want to have the last attempt thinking that they could make the last attempt thinking that they could make the better of their lives with the whole lot of money they are going to get. While showing hesitation over their act, they can see a vehicle coming towards them. When they come closer to it, the persons inside it turn out to be more powerful and able and they lose their lives in those unknown hands immediately. Instead of depicted the punishment owing to facing insurgents, the reader could feel genuine sympathy for these unfortunate youths for their helpless situation trying to make a well off destiny. 'Bomb' shows the confused mind and life of Mohon who is an educated unemployed and who has lost all hope and ways to get employment. Mohon has a confused state of mind because his sick father, divorced sister and their property on mortgage for getting a secure job. Consequently, he wants to have a test of power after testing a bomb which has been left by a young man owing to inconvenience. The flow of his wild quick thought ends when the young man comes to recover the bomb. 'Shiba Kiba Amasung Kidaba' reflects the situation in which one needs to hold a gun in order to survive and live. The writer shows the unfortunate condition of those young contractors' whose cheques have not sanctioned whereas the powerful contractor's cheque has

in such a situation, they are conditioned to utilize the authority required cheques. down with a great even brings in the youths stuffing an sack and hiding him of a river. The gun which frightens is seen at the end

"The gun off his belly has been thrown away into the river. The dark gun flowing down at the moon-lit night could be seen clearly." [Priyokumar, 2000: 52]
'Mang Macha Amagi Khongchat' in Nongkhong Tamna has been represented as the double faced look of insurgency. Whether the insurgents are making money on the pretext of revolution or whether they are really fighting for their motherland is being displayed in front of the readers. The writer shows that some of the insurgents are doing revolutionary business and making a huge amount of money in the name of fighting for freedom. The protagonist Amu in the story is a young man who has sat in many interviews but has not yet got a job. However, he enlists himself in the insurgent army after encountering the leader of seven insurgent parties. Then, he gradually realized that their leader is a multi-faced one. But he gets involved in the activities of making money lose trust on one another blaming each other with an extremity that they try to kill one another. Later on, he tries to survive hard instead of making money. Finally, he succumbs to his death pit and ends the journey of his short dream.

6. The painful effects of ethnic and communal conflicts

The Naga-Kuki conflicts in the hilly areas in the 1980s spread like a wild fire in the hills. Such a fiery incident was depicted in Nongdi Tarakhidare for the first time. Nongdi Tarakhidare reflects the sorrowful and agonising condition of hilly people who have become victims of communal riot and clash. When they were accounting their income in a hopeful moment waiting for the seasonal rain the writer depicts a heartbroken Chongnikim remembering how Lungjahao was killed by crucifixion in the communal war between the Nagas and Kukies. Chongnikim's heart could not be soothed even if the seasonal rain could bring greenery in the surrounding hills. She had to leave her village to an unknown one in order to survive when she was still unable to cope with her husband's separation. The theme/idea of communal conflict which started with Nongdi Tarakhidare took a new form in Lan Amasung Mang. The images of heart and mind could be clearly seen as compared to the incidents. In Ahing Ama [Lan Amasung Mang] the setting is the consequences of killing due to communal conflict of a night. Stephen (Naga) and Lingpao (Kuki) were living for four years as brothers. But the bond of love and trust between them were destroyed due to the communal killings in their village. When Lingpao's brother was killed by Nagas, Stephen's mind was filled with doubt that Lingpao might want to avenge his brother's death. The writer clearly depicts the restless mind of both Stephen and Lingpao. From the stories discuss above, we can't find any insurgent protagonist. The writer depicts the pain and miseries given to various people in the state and community due to the emergence of armed insurgent groups. The distress of common people between insurgent and the power to subdue it, misery due to communal clash, thought of the youths involved in insurgency, testing life by the doubtful and hesitating youth and the wavering mind of the surrendered youths are depicted in Priyokumar's works. In the story, Mang Macha Amagi Khongchat, which is in his last published book, 'Nongkhong Tamna', the issues between the ideas whether the war is fought for the motherland or the insurgents are earning money in its name is very confusing. The writer has shown that the 30 years long insurgency conflict is a mere war for earning money. If we discuss the writer's works, we could see that the issues and problems of insurgency is in a chaotic and confusing state.