

Editorial

Wednesday, July, 18, 2018

Even Monkey falls from the tree

It could be recollected that Prof. Adya Prasad Pandey was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Manipur University on 24th of October, 2016 and he assumed charge on 13th of December, 2016. He took almost a month and half to report for joining the university. In addition, his academic credential and administrative competence is doubtful comparing with the local candidates who got a call letter for the post of Manipur University Vice Chancellorship. Despite all of it, all members and everyone in the fraternity of University community gave him a warm welcome believing in the vision of a new India by 2022 by providing new directions to the youths by building up the country's educational infrastructure both in terms of human material as well as human resources. Since he was handicapped for the Manipur University by the ruling political regime, every in the university fraternity were expectantly looking up to him that university will advance and progress under his leadership as head of the institution. But as unfolded over a period of time, he started behaving like a dictatorial 'Delhi implant'. Whatsoever he lacked in academics and administrative acumen he makes it up with his arrogance. It seemed, his attitude to the members in all the three wings of the university - teaching and non-teaching staff and also most importantly the students are not that of rendering service but doling out favours. He also allegedly made illegal appointments, awarded dubious contracts, misappropriate university fund and derelict his duty by habitually going in long outstation holidaying. It was from May 30 onwards of this year that the Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU) started an agitation demanding the removal of the Vice Chancellor AP Pande. The agitation gained momentum in the following days with the joining in of Manipur University Teachers' Association (MUTA) and Manipur University Staff Association joining in the chorus for removing a VC and commissioning an independent judicial enquiry to prove the allegation against him after he doesn't give any response to the appeal for giving clarification to the allegation labelled against him by the MUSU. With the situation becoming aggravating, the Joint Secretary of the Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry visited Manipur on 21 June to take stock of the situation. It turned out inconsequential and his attempt to drive a wedge terribly failed as he refused to meet MUTA and MUTA in turn forbid any of its members to meet him in private. Then there was attempt to fortify the university campus by deploying the large number of police personnels after there was arson and fire in university under suspicious circumstances. The Fact Finding Committee constituted by the HRD Ministry consisting of Joint Secretary of University Grants Commission and Deputy Secretary, ministry of HRD constituted on 12 July was also rejected by the MUSA, MUTU, and MUSA as toothless. After all these failed, there have been even sinister attempt to delegitimize all the fraternities of the university community as 'anti-nationals' stated by the VC and later echoed by the political functionaries in the ruling regime that the ongoing impasse is an outcome of non fulfilling of the Rs. Five Crore demand from a particular outfit. Though there seemed to have no reports from the intelligence agencies to substantiate it. The two officers so appointed for fact finding are protocol wise much below the status of VC. The Commission was reconstituted on 17 July by roping in one more member, Tayenjam Nandakumar, Retired Acting Chief Justice of Meghalaya High court as the Chairperson. When, on 15 February 2016, the President, who is the Visitor of all central universities, approved the dismissal of Prof. Sushanta Dattagupta from the post of Vice Chancellorship of Visva Bharati, it happened for the first time that the head of a central university has been sacked. In the said case, the committee comprises of Sakharan Singh Yadav (Justice of Allahabad High Court), BB Data (Chairman, Sri Aurobindo Institute of Culture, Shillong), and Dilip K Chakrabarti (Professor of South Asian Archaeology, university of Cambridge). In fact, the other two members from the non judicial background are all persons of eminence with unquestionable integrity independent of the conflicting interest of holding office of profit which could be influenced by the HRD Ministry. Considering the huge political clout enjoyed by the VC Adha Prasad Pande by virtue of his wife and his haughty flaunting of his association with the political stalwarts from the ruling regime in the Centre at various social networking sites (uploading selfies with them), the question arises how the far the fact finding committee can be 'independent' in probing and establishing the authenticity of the allegations labelled against the VC Adha Prasad Pande, which he himself found it hard to defend himself remains a big question. The issue is no longer of university alone. The University community and the people in the state would most likely take it only as a cosmetic change. The Union HRD Ministry is so far snail pacing in its attempt to address this ongoing impasse. More precisely put, the union HRD Ministry is doing a monkey business by responding to the impasse with a half baked token piecemeal perhaps with the intention to maintain a status quo of the VC Adha Pande. Those in the Union HRD Ministry and VC, Adha Pande must know that unlike those in the Hindi-Hindu heartland, Manipuri as a community with advanced literary tradition cannot be fooled so easily so as to honey trap or trapped in whatever way. From time immemorial, we have a local adage, 'Yong mamei Chappey' which in the English proverb very much runs like, 'Even monkey falls from the tree'. Beware; the Union HRD Ministry as well as the State Government so far remaining impotent in addressing this ongoing impasse. If your involvement and intervention doesn't lead to the desired expectation of the people and the university community, you all would also experience the situation of monkeys falling from the tree.

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BoSEM IMBROGLIO: EDUCATIONAL SMUGGLING IN MANIPUR

"Education Ministry has to take prompt and exemplary action to retain the faith of the budding students of Manipur"

By: Seram Neken

Gross leakage of question paper in the CBSE examinations in 2014 was a big issue in Manipur, thereby indicating the deteriorating educational atmosphere in the state. In its greatest expose then, one of the local newspapers in its website uploaded the leaked question paper of Physics one day ahead of the examination, which later on exactly resembled the questions circulated in the Examination hall. This writer in his article on the same day had termed the practice as 'Educational Smuggling' (meaning - Smuggle in Education sector). Now, recent unfolding of marks tempering one after another in the HSLC Examinations by a Students Body has again created doubts whether education has become a commodity for the most profitable business for some common.

It is not only the illegal drugs business, for which Manipur earns the notoriety of other states. It is not only the AIDS menace that attracts the notice of the global community. It is not only the rapes and child trafficking which attract attention of the nation. It is not only the fake encounters designed by the security persons that terrorize people. To a number of common in Manipur, education has served as a commodity for the most profitable business. Merits of a number of students have been compromised in the process of educational smuggling perpetrated by some individuals involved in the

Examination Procedure. While a number of meritorious students are toiling sincerely for their study for the annual examinations, few others are apparently vying for malpractices to earn ranks. 'Educational Smuggling' (rather Smuggle in Education sector) has been a regular affair in Manipur during the last few years, may be one of the consequences of hectic competitions among students fueled by excessive involvement of parents, teachers and well-wishers. Naturally, parents wish that their wards emerge with flying colours in the school examinations. The enthusiasm is so high that even some parents vie for unfair ways to make their children shine among colleagues. As part of the effort, it has become a fashion to involve school teachers, private tutors, examiners or even the staff of Educational institutions or Boards to indulge in malpractices. Competition is encouraging, but over-enthusiasm in competition turns out destructive.

Marks tempering during examinations of various standards is not a new concept. It has prevailed for a long time in Manipur, particularly in the Class-X (HSLC) Examination. If we rely on the saying that 'A thief is no thief, until it is caught', such mark tempering or favoritism might have been committed every year. But now, when the misdeeds have been unfolded one by one by a particular Students' organization, we are clear that 'there is rampant smuggling in

Education sector too'. Some of the parents, particularly of some high ranking pupils, are so serious that they are ready to compromise everything only if their children top in the rankings. The mistake solely lies on the fact that our teaching-learning process is entirely examination-based, and our examination system is grossly based on marks. Over-emphasis on marks during examinations is no sign of improvement in education sector. As for instance, the Zenith Academy was widely acclaimed throughout India, when it produced the Class-XII topper of the country some years back. There were even controversies for delayed reach of cash awards to the school and its topper student. By that time, some officers of education department even faced the authority's wrath to the extent of changing positions as penalty. However, the name of the most applauded institution has not been heard in the following years, as it probably fails to retain its reputation of producing high ranked students. The nexus among the trio - parents-tutors-examiners' sometimes or even often results in malpractices in the examination process. The problem has been materialized by the corrupt officials and staff of the Board of Secondary Education, which is the apex body of conducting such an important examination. All officials involved in the process of HSLC Examination, right from the Examiners to the Chairman of the BoSEM should either resign or be suspended, to give way for a fair enquiry. The government, especially

the Education Department should take up prompt and exemplary action to avoid repetition of such gross mistakes in future. The faith of the students and sanctity of the BoSEM cannot be saved, whenever the government machineries remain indulge in blame-game among themselves.

The education sector in Manipur which had long been blamed for all kinds of irregularities and corruption, has in recent times witnessed certain developments in the form of cleansing with its energetic and learned Cabinet Minister doing the rounds. People now do hope that the incumbent Education Minister of Manipur would come forward with its prompt action to suspend all responsible officials and staff during the enquiry process. No doubt, the dynamic and committed leadership of the present education minister has spearheaded various innovative and reformative measures in the recent past. Still academic reformation in Manipur is in its bud as we have to go a long way to bring education at par with international standards. During such hectic endeavour of the state government as well as the academic community, some notorious elements are sabotaging the education sector by way of doing business in the academic institutions. It is high time the state government put a proper monitoring of the working of educational institutions particularly the conduct of examinations under the various boards. Otherwise, the much hyped quality education will remain at stake in the state.

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Conversion into Hinduism And Burning Of Meitei Puyas

By: Dr. N. Birachandra

There was the trace of Hinduism in Manipur long before the reign of King Pamheiba alias Garibniwaz in the 18th century AD. Hindu Gods and Goddesses began to worship in the country from the time of King Kyamba (15th century AD) though there was no case of formal initiation into Hinduism. In the 17th century AD, King Khagemba took more initiative in the worship of Vishnu and in his last stage he was leaning toward Hinduism and began to neglect traditional faith. But we are not getting any information of his formal initiation into Hinduism. The first quarter of the 18th century AD was a turning point in the history of the Manipuri culture. King Charairongba, the father of King Pamheiba commonly known as Garibniwaz took formal initiation into Hinduism. He was baptised by one Rai Banamali, a Brahmin from Orissa to Rudra Sampradaya or Vallabha chairs. His example was followed by other 300 person. Formal initiation of the king along with 300 persons took place on 6th Jesta 1704 A.D. His attempt to convert the whole population was brought to a halt by his sudden death in 1709 AD. Even though the attempt was fruitless, he was the first king of Manipur who brought Hinduism and planted on the soil of Manipur.

After Charairongba his son and successor Pamheiba was initiated by Rai Gangadhore, a son of Rai Banamali. Thus in the early part of his reign Garibniwaz followed the cult of Rudra. But the king soon changed his faith to another cult i.e. Goudya Vaisnavism (Sanak). He was baptised to the new faith by one Gopal Das on the 10th day of Mera (Aswin) 1717 AD along with some of his followers (*Cheiharal Kumbaba & Sanamahi Laikan*). The king was a wonderful man having fickle mind that, after following the Goudya Vaisnavism for seven years, he changed his faith once more and adopted Ramandism or Ramayet cult.

Arrival of Santadas Gossai and Introduction of Ramandism in Manipur

Hinduism entered Manipur peacefully without any hue and cry in its early days. But arrival of Santadas Gossai and attempt to make Ramandism as state religion by uprooting the traditional faith and acts of persecution left an unforgettable episode in our history. Pamheiba took formal initiation to Ramandism from Santadas in 1724 AD. But his subjects including his own son Chitsai and local priests led by Lourebam Khongnangthaba strongly opposed the new religion. Although the king was very eager to spread the new faith, he was aware of the great Maichous of the country - specially, Lourebam Khongnangthaba. So, the king sent messengers to seek the opinion of the Maichou. Accordingly, Khongnangthaba send one Moirang Lanhanba to communicate to the king his denial to accept the new faith. The king was so angry while receiving the reply of Khongnangthaba. He ordered to hang Moirang Lanhanba to death. It is said that, Khongnangthaba saved his disciple-through some miracle. Nongkhrang Iruppa-1729A.D. In this time Ramandism became state religion of Manipur. But his subjects refused to utter the name of Rama and took meat secretly. So, the king and Santadas devised a way to bring the Meiteis in the new faith by means of a promise called 'Nongkhrang Iruppa' on the 1st day of Wakching (Magha) 1729 AD. The king forced his subjects to perform the Nongkhrang Iruppa at Lilong and Nungjeng Pukhri simultaneously using the threat of punishment and torture (CK-and Khagemba Langjei). Thus the innocent peoples were bound by the promise to the new faith i.e. Ramandism. Then the Gossai started the work of investing the sacred thread (Lugun) stage by stage and the Meiteis were

converted into Hindu Kshetriya. Throwing aboard of the ashes of the skull at Irravati River

The Gossai then started a series of works to Hinduise the Meiteis through and through. The traditional practice of the burial of the death body was ordered to stop and the skull of the deceased persons were dug out and cremated and thrown its ashes to Irravati River. Since then the Meiteis used to perform cremation in the disposal of the death. There also Khongnangthaba advised the king not to do so, as it might lead to the discomposure of the Meiteis. But the king did not pay any attention (Miyat & Kok)

Burning of the Puyas

To uproot the traditional faith and to complete the work of Sanskritisation Santadas with the permission of the king, collected all the manuscripts of the Meiteis locally called 'Puya' and burnt them into ashes. It is said that about 115 books of different aspects were destroyed by the foolishness of the king.

Destruction of the Idols of the Traditional Deities and its Consequences

King Pamheiba ordered to destroy all the idols (Umanglai) of the old faith. All the idols of the Umanglais were collected, destroyed and were buried at Mongbahamba in 1726(C.K.). Then the two disciples of Santadas viz. Bhagavandas and Narayandas destroyed the bronze idol of Sanamahi made by and buried the same at Mongbahamba in 1732 AD.

The destruction of the image of Sanamahi was followed by some events of miracles in the state and in the royal family. The king's son Siva Shai and his queen Paikhulanthabi got seriously ill and the diagnosis of their illness was not possible. But they were saved by Moirang Lanhanba when the king promises to reinstall the idol of Sanamahi. The same was done in 1733 AD on the initiative of Santadas. The two disciples of Santadas were turned out from the state. The priests and protagonists of the

old faith who were not converted into Ramandism led by Lourebam Khongnangthaba firmly stood against all acts of highhandedness of the king and his Guru. In the meantime bad omens and events of miracles started occurring frequently in the state. The king's Guru could not boldly face all such events. Not only did he fail in saving many such cases, he also had to beg the Meitei Maichou for help (Sanamahi Laikan & Garibniwaz Laiming Louba). Above all his false stories to induce the king to accept the Ramayet cult automatically bound him to respect the traditional God like Sanamahi. Its effects had far reaching causes which led to the revival of traditional deities and worship of Sanamahi even by the Manipuri Brahmin. This led to the co-existence of the Hindu Gods with the traditional deities. Santadas realized the strong ritual potency of the traditional faith. Not only did he retreat on many occasions of removing traditional faith, but once his life was saved by Lourebam Khongnangthaba. Thus his attempt to Hinduise the Meitei society could not be completed. He retreated from his earlier stand and decided to make a compromise. Thus he brought a compromise with the priests of the traditional faiths and decided to form a new taste of Hinduism, having elements of 50 per cent each from both the faiths. Traditional rituals, ceremonies, festivals etc. were all sanskritised. It included elements of both the faiths. But in some aspects, what was beyond the knowledge of Santadas were left unsolved with sanskritisation. In the end, worship of the traditional deities was permitted and revived once more. Sanamahi and other Umanglais were reinstalled. Puyas were collected and rewritten. In the attempt to rewrite the destroyed Puyas, new elements might have been added by the enthusiastic scholars of the time.

(Contd. Page 3)