

Editorial

Saturday July, 28, 2018

Pseudo intellectuals should stop thinking that they are wiser than the teachers of the highest academic institution

"The core objective of education is the search for truth and the means to arrive at truth." This was stated in a press statement released yesterday by Manipur University Community after hearing sections of people who underestimate the academic reasoning of those in the highest education institute of the state. Talk about natural justice is universally accepted and the Manipur University community particularly the teaching community knows what they are doing? They simply did not join the students' agitation for their personnel gain. The series of event that took place in the Manipur University since the MUSU launched agitation is a concrete example of how the MUTA being teachers requested the VC Prof. AP Pandey to talk with the students as the matter was/is serious which might become a stumbling block to the academic activities. The Teachers' wrote twice to the VC for timely intervention (this newspaper have all those letter endorsed to the Vice Chancellor AP Pandey). The response to the request from the VC was an open humiliation to the teachers' body and following that the MUTA too joined the demand for removal of the VC. Beginning of the first few days were the allegations on the administrative and financial irregularities and demand for a probe.

After almost all the deans and head of departments including Directors of some unit have tendered their resignation and after the joined agitation spread beyond the University complex. The VC Prof. Pandey appeared before press and questions throw by journalist was not given satisfactory reply.

The hard stand and dictatorial attitude of the VC Pandey has prompted angered to the University Community that the final decision which they resolved is removal of VC and conduct and enquiry against him by an independent body. The demand was genuine as the MU community said that normalcy will be resumed if an in-charge VC has been appointed when the AP Pandey has been under enquiry.

For almost two months - teachers, students and staffs of the Manipur University keep going their demand and continue the agitation. The MHRD constituted an enquiry committee after almost a month despite the fact that the MU Community had submitted memorandum time and again. The Governor of Manipur Dr. Najma Heptulla, who is the Chie Reactor of the Manipur University also convey the development in the Manipur University to all concerns. It was only the state government who remain quiet until the issue became a public issue hampering the law and order issue.

Why the MHRD responded after almost one month of agitation despite knowing the fact that the issue may spark serious issue? It didn't take much time when any such allegations emerge in case of Viswa Bharati (Central University) and shack the VC before completing his term.

Now why this newspaper is bringing up this issue is to let some pseudo intellect, who believes to be better than even the teachers of the highest learning institution of the state. It is clear that the teachers' body as well as the students' body and the staffs stand firm that an enquiry be set up by an independent body after putting the VC either on force leave or suspension. Those pseudo intellectuals that seem to be supporting the VC talk about natural justice. Which component of the MU community rejects the idea of natural justice to anybody including the VC. What the MU Community said is they have lost faith in the MHRD and a mere departmental type enquiry will not deliver justice. An independent body should be constituted under some provision of the Indian legal system and most accurate is the constitution of the enquiry under the Commission of enquiry Act 1952.

The MU community had also rightly pointed out by stating that whether a stone thrower which damage shops in Paona bazaar be waited for probe by magistrate or should be arrested first by the law enforcers. Everyone knows that the stone thrower was first arrested and later prosecuted as per the law of the land. That was what the MU community said - Remove VC Pandey for his post by any regulation and proceed and enquiry to find the truth.

One more thing, worth pondering is that, why the state government is not relaying the demand of the MU directly to the MHRD. This is about one man Vs the whole of Manipur. And why the government fails to show any of its power to give pressure to the MHRD as per the will of the people of the state.

On the other hand it is a shame that the BJP MP at Rajya Sabha reply against a Tamil Nadu MP concerns for the ongoing impasse at Manipur University during the ongoing session at Rajya Sabha. His way of answering showed that he understands nothing about the issues but he is playing puppet show to appease his masters. May be Pandey is also a master as his wife is a powerful BJP player.

Let's hope pseudo intellectuals stop thinking that they are wiser than teaching community of the highest teaching institute .

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Prospects of coffee in Manipur

By : Miranda Sanjenbam
Extension Inspector, Coffee Board of India

Coffee in India is one of the major commercial crops contributing in the export sector of market in the international aspect. India stands fifth in the ranking of coffee production worldwide. In this acquirement of such a good position in the global scenario, the north-eastern region of India holds very minute position in the contribution of coffee production in India even though coffee is a well known crop to every individuals of the region. It has its history of introduction in the early 80s as an alternative solution to fight Jhum cultivation prevailing in the region as a customary practice. North-eastern region being a neglected part of the country in many attributes has enormous natural resources and great biodiversity. And the information found in the records of Coffee Board of India, it is quite evident that the crop is very much suitable with the climatic conditions prevailing in the region. The organizational set up of the Coffee Board is rendering all the possible aids and technologies in establishing a well versed coffee plantation in almost all the areas of the region. Keeping in view the difficult livelihood challenges faced by the people of these regions, the Board is working on to reach every nook and corner to expand coffee plantation.

As coffee is a perennial crop, it requires at least 3-4 years in bearing fruits, with a lifespan of 60-70 years once the crop is planted in the field. Timely management and other cultural practices are of course required for maximum bearing and tolerance to the pest infestation. Two species of coffee are generally adopted for plantation depending on the altitude of the sites, i.e. *Coffea arabica* and *Coffea canephora*. Arabica coffee is suitable for higher altitude ranging from 1000 m-1500 m above sea level and Robusta coffee for lower altitude between 500-1000 m. To retain the authenticity of the variety, it is highly advisable to the growers that they acquire the seed coffee for plantation from the Coffee Board of India, even though the seedlings are available in several commercial nurseries. Coming to the perspectives of Manipur, it was learnt that coffee already existed in the state when it was brought for plantation by Manipur Plantation Crops and Corporation Ltd. and other related NGOs earlier. Unfortunately, the products of these plants were unable to convert in to the expected revenue due to the communication gap between the Board and the growers and that it was never brought into limelight about the existence of coffee in the region. While taking up a case study in the matter, it was found out that since they could never find a proper market for coffee in the state, they had to abandon it with heavy hearts.

In spite of all these disappointments, Coffee Board of India stayed connected with the state and few planters through an extension centre in Churachandpur. The database present in Coffee Board showed an approximate figure of planted area of 240 ha under Arabica and 7 ha under robusta. The Board in collaboration with MOBC, MOBEDS organized a consultative workshop in the month of September, 2017 to know the problems faced by the early planters and what alternate means they had to take up to combat the losses. And it was positively learnt about the potentials of coffee in different sector. Ever since then, MOBC and the Board are working together in developing and promoting coffee in the state in every possible means.

The recent adoption of coffee plantation in the golden triangle of Myanmar replacing Poppy plantation is one good step closer to a secured future. Considering about the BCIM corridor in the pipeline, it is high time for Manipur to give a proper thought on trade and commerce and the consequent opportunities which need to be grabbed at the right time. In an article published in 'The Statesman' written by Rangan Datta entitled possible Game Changer he clearly mentioned the benefits, north-eastern states will be getting and also country as a whole. He talked about the feasible multi-modal transport system and trilateral Thailand, Myanmar and India railway projects by linking Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland to establish trade and industry hubs all the way to Mandalay from Manipur and to Sitwee port and Yangon. Keeping these in mind, it would always be wise to be the first one to initiate something which will hold a firm place in the coming future and make the best out of it.

Other North-eastern states of India namely Nagaland, Meghalaya are already in the mission to make it big in the global scenario in terms of plantation and production. Smoky falls coffee of Shillong reaching the

International coffee festival is indeed one of the greatest achievements of coffee in north-eastern region. Also the coffee of Nagaland is exported to South Africa making the transactions very much instant which lures the interest of the planters easily. These foreign traders came to know about coffee in Nagaland mainly through Hornbill festival when it was first showcased by the Land resource Department of Nagaland. So, in Manipur, where there are multiple international and national level festivals observed every year such as Sangai festival, Shirui festival, Cherry blossom festival etc., what is stopping the planting community of Manipur in bringing out the crop in the forefront?

If we give a thought on the processing and consumption, almost all the trending restaurants and café in every nook and corner of Manipur has a vending machine supplied by Café coffee Day through various dealers. So, there is no doubt in concluding that coffee is widely consumed in the state by every section of individual. Green coffee is one processed product which has very high demand in the market now because of its various health benefits such as in weight loss, lowering blood sugar, high level of antioxidants etc. Also it acts as an important ingredient in bakery industry with its unique flavor resembling chocolate. With all such characters inherited in the coffee beans, there is no doubt in stating that Coffee indeed is a wonder crop and holds a very bright future in developing an economically backward state like Manipur. The creation of international business hub, reconciliation of the environmental problems, enhancement of standard of living, provision of self-employment in the plantation sector etc are some of the wonders coffee plantation can bring in this state.

The main concerns of the humankind in the present era are climate change, sustainability and food security. Survival is not going to be that easy in the future ahead without keeping all these constraints at check. We all are well aware of the main factors causing such a drastic change in the environment. Deforestation is the root cause for so many natural calamities worldwide. In Manipur context, the inhabitants cut down trees especially in hilly region for practicing Jhum cultivation for maintaining livelihood. When question comes for survival, nobody has the right to stop the hilly people from cutting down the trees for farming purposes, which is the sole source of income and also for livelihood. Only when there is an alternative to such problems, people will stop degrading the environment as such. In the recent visits of Coffee Board for survey and inspection in some interior villages of Manipur, it was found out that there are certain villages which have no electricity (except on Christmas), no proper roads, no proper communication facilities, almost cut out from the emerging trends of the world. And in such state of lives, how can the concerned authority enforce something n tell them not to practice Jhum, which is the only source of livelihood for them? Coffee is a shade loving plant generally grown under shade trees in Indian condition unlike those in Brazil, Guatemala, Uganda, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Coffee can therefore be considered as one of the few preventive measures to combat the alarming condition of deforestation carrying out in the region. Another great characteristic of this plant is that it can be grown with any kind of crops, be it seasonal crops, spices, horticultural crops etc. With these practices, there is no need for the planter to worry about not getting revenue from coffee until it bears fruit. There are so many success stories of multiple or integrated cropping system of the planters in the traditional area of coffee such as Karnataka, Coorg, Kerala. One just needs to be a little committed, determined and patient while planting coffee, nothing more. So, here lies the choice we can make about our future in terms of production, processing, consumption and marketing of coffee plants. All these challenges are likely to be sorted easily with the up-coming and on-going activities of coffee plantation in the state. With the changing climatic conditions and the alarming natural calamities faced almost in regular intervals, it would be a wise step to start thinking about the remedies and preventive measures permanently and not extending relief measures after the disasters already struck us. Also when the opportunity of creating an international hub of coffee with the agendas made for the BCIM corridor at higher authority level, no other choices stand a chance against embracing it. And as the traditional blessing in South India goes "May you live for a hundred years like davara-tumbler of coffee" may the people of Manipur get enlightenment of the consistency and diverse wonder a coffee plant can do to the nature.

Environmental Protection & Internal Displacement in Manipur

By- Homen Thangjam

(Contd. from previous issue)

Dawn of a New Age: Replication of Colonialism or Globalism?

Modern state is pervasive in its action. Its power lies not only in its ability to exercise violence at will in the Weberian sense of the term but also in its ability to "enthuse" hope to its citizens. This dawn of the new age, associated with the idea of freedom and justice, attempts a break from colonial state, in the sense that it promises (through periodic elections) responsibility and accountability. Welfare is the catchword, wherein, it promises that arenas presumably unlooked or exploited or even uncared would be paid attention. Every available means would be used in the name of development for welfare and justice, yes, in the name of the people. However, it never bothers to pay attention to the structural violence unleashed in the process of undertaking development or preservation and protection project. As Ashish Nandy puts it, however, the modern state in terms of practices in formerly colonised societies, only ends up emulating the erstwhile colonial state. The Loktak Protection Act 2006 and consequent deprivation of people of their livelihood means through eviction (displacement) and is one such practice, which undeniably is an emulation of a colonial act, and jeopardizes the people who have traditionally depended upon the lake. However, the story of despoliation of Loktak begins with the construction of the Loktak project in 1971 under the control of Ministry of Irrigation and Power, as a central sector project. The project was handed over to the NHPC six years later and commissioned in 1983 at an estimated cost of Rs.115 Crores, with a capacity of 105 MW (3x35 MW). According to projections, lift irrigation facilities were to be provided to 24,000 ha. of land and as in most cases of paradoxical "multipurpose" projects, irrigation promises were never fulfilled. This dam has "permanently" raised the water level of this wetland and has blocked the natural flow of water to and/or from the wetland, severely altering the hydrologic cycle of a delicately balanced system. Before the construction of the Itai barrage, the natural dredging process continuously cleared the silt brought down by the various streams and rivers from the valley and the hills. The roots of *phumdi* and other aquatic vegetation during the lean season touched the bottom. During the monsoon, the water level and the vegetation rose, bringing silt up with it. Much of this silt was drained out through the Manipur River with the current, together with some of the vegetation or

phumdi.

In the post-barrage scenario, the water level is sought to be maintained at a particular level throughout the year, resulting in the silting up of the wetland at an unprecedented rate. Other changes to the floating *phumdi* have led to the endangering of native aquatic vegetation, the extinction of native fish species and the thinning and proliferation of the *phumdi*, which now covers more than half of the total area of the present water body. Remote sensing studies conducted jointly by the Manipur Remote Sensing Application Centre and the Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad (1999) shows that the area under *phumdi* has increased from 10,499 ha. in 1990 to 13,506 ha. in 1994. Consequently, the water mass has reduced from 15,441 ha. in 1990 to 7,875 ha. in 1995. According to the Survey of India, prior to the dam, in 1970, the water mass was 4,882 ha., with no indication of seasonal variations. The hydropower multipurpose project had already submersed around 83,000 hectares of cultivable land leaving thousands of farmers unemployed. Water and Power Consultancy Services Ltd. (WAPCOS), Delhi, a consultant for the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) , has pointed out that the rate of siltation has increased due to "humming, deforestation and unscientific land-use practices in the catchment areas". The present siltation rate is approximately 336, 325 tons annually. This, as in the case of most reservoirs, is greater than what was projected during the project's conception. At this rate, the reservoir will reach Dead Storage Level much before the 160 years estimated in Loktak Lift Irrigation Project (Revised), Vol.1, May 1980. Another problem caused by siltation, weed infestation and proliferation of the *phumdi* is the gradual reduction of water-holding capacity, which results in reduced power generation capacity. In addition to this, a recent study under the aegis of the government of Manipur found the water to be chemically "unpolluted", but the levels of microbial pollution in the Keibul Lamjao area have increased beyond permissible limits for drinking water (Strategic Option Study, government of Manipur, 1999). This has been caused in part due to the faecal discharge by phum-dwellers and the decay of *phumdi*, but primarily due to the daily draining of effluents by the rivers and streams and agricultural residue, which is not washed off. This has major health implications for the local people who depend on the water for their daily requirements.

(To be contd.)