Editorial

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The mental equation

Times are a changing- as everything ought to. Stuffs that were not even dreamt about are becoming devices and gadgets for everyday use.

The pace of development and inventions is increasing at a dizzying pace and in an unbelievably complex manner. Every single gene in the human body can be identified, isolated and manipulated. Electricity can be transmitted without any wires or cables. Cars that run for more than a thousand kilometers with only a gallon of fuel is no more a fantasy today. Space travel or space tourism is here.

Humans with embedded microchips can now manipulate and control his environment, well almost, as of now. Research and development in every field, being aided by sophisticated computers and robots, have quickened their pace and shortened their observation periods, leading to quicker results. It would not be much off the mark to say that the world as we know today is undergoing a paradigm shift in the way we live our lives. Through these radical changes and developments, one thing has withstood the test of time, proving to be an unseen and unaccounted yet determining factor that could make or mar everything else- the human mentality.

The workings of the human mind – emotions and feelings that cannot be quantitatively ascertained or expressed as an exactable scientific expression or equation, has remained an enigma- a mystery that has not been unraveled till date. Herein lies the genesis of every conflict and differences. Societies created laws and statutes based on the greater good of the citizens, and a system of checks and balances to arbitrate, enforce and amend them. It is a perfect set up- on paper. Unfortunately, the bitter reality is so far removed from the system so envisaged.

We, the ordinary citizens are arrested and harassed for raising our voice against what we feel is unjust and wrong- even threatened and shot by those who purport to serve our motherland, whatever form that might take. The powers that be proclaims to work according to the wishes of the people, while the voice is subdued with threats and intimidation, or worse still, let the voice die out and be forgotten with time. And who are we to turn to for help when the terrorists are the army and police who are drug traffickers who are extortionists who are the influential and powerful?

For us mere mortals, complaints and appeals entail the inherent risk of losing limb and life. Is what we are experiencing a replica of the so called Jungle law? I'd like to think that a jungle law would be a far better option- each one would then have a place in the set up.

But then again, we are born equal. A prime minister is as human as a sweeper or a carpenter or a scientist. Each one is doing their bit for the society. The president of India or the Chief Minister of Manipur needs a weaver to weave a piece of fabric which will be sewn into a cloth by a tailor and sold at the market from where it will be brought for his use. We need to accept and embrace one another as our equals. The powerful ones wouldn't have had a concrete mansion to hide within were it not for the masons and plumbers.

How do I complain in cyber crime in india?

IFF Lab, Digital and Cyber Forensics

1. First register a written complaint with the cyber cell in the city where you are currently residing. According to the IT Act, a cyber crime comes in the purview of global jurisdiction. This means that a cyber crime complaint can be registered with the cyber cell of any city, irrespective of the place where it was originally committed. At present, most cities in India have a dedicated cyber crime cell. The last section of this article shall provide you the list of cyber crime cells across India.

2. When filing the cyber crime complaint, you need to provide your name, contact details, and address for mailing. You need to address the written complaint to the Head of the Cyber Crime Cell of the city where you are filing the complaint.

3. In case you are a victim of online harassment, you may approach a legal counsel to assist you with reporting the case to the police station. Additionally, you may be asked to provide certain documents with the complaint that would depend on the nature of the crime.

4. In case the city you are currently residing in does not have a cyber cell, you can file a First Information Report (FIR) at the local police station. However, if your complaint is not accepted there, you can always approach the commissioner or the city's judicial magistrate.

5. Certain cyber crime offenses come under the Indian Penal Code and can be reported at the nearest local police station by lodging an FIR. Section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure makes it compulsory for every police officer to record the information or complaint of an offense, irrespective of the jurisdiction in which the crime was committed.

6. Most of the cyber crimes that are covered under the Indian Penal Code are classified as cognizable offenses i.e. an offense in which an arrest can be made even without a warrant and an investigation can be initiated for the same. In this case, a police officer is bound to record a *Zero FIR* from the complainant and forward the same to the police station in the jurisdiction of the place where the offense was committed.

7. *Zero FIR* offers some solace to victims of cases that require immediate attention and investigation as it avoids wasting time in enlisting the offense on police records.

8. Apart from the above steps, it is also essential that one is wary of the steps that can be taken with regard to social media cyber crimes on the very platforms where such offenses are committed.

9. Most of the social media platforms have a clear procedure in place for reporting any abuse or other nasty offenses. You must make sure that you report such activities in the very initial stages of its occurrence. This shall enable the concerned social media platform to take immediate steps for blocking further activities and protecting the security and privacy of your personal information.

10. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube have a strict and clear redressal mechanism to protect its users from online abuse and cyber crimes. Make sure that you do your groundwork on their guidelines for reporting an abuse without waiting for an abuse to actually happen!

The Many Faces of Language

The write up reproduce here is an excerpt from the lecture delivered by renowned Journalist **SUBIR BHAUMIK** under the tittle **Northeast: A Thousand Assertive Ethnicities** *on the* ***Arambam Somorendra Memorial Lecture*** *on June 10, 2012.*

Even linguistic preferences in India's Northeast have often shifted due to political considerations, concealing ethnic and religious divisions. In Assam, the migrant Muslim peasantry of Bengali origin chose to register themselves as Assamese speakers in every census since Independence, so that they could assimilate into the local milieu. The Assamese caste-Hindus co-opted them into their fold as 'Na-Asamiyas' or neo-Assamese, if only to ensure that Assamese speakers remained the largest linguistic group in the state. Constantly haunted by the perceived domination of the Bengali speakers, it was important for the Assamese caste elite to retain the numerical preponderance of Assamese speakers in the state, since linguistic predominance provided the basis for ethnic hegemony. If Bengali speakers outnumbered Assamese speakers, they reckoned, the 'Assameseness' of Assam would be diluted. Since both the Bengali Hindus throughout Assam and the Bengali-speaking Muslims in the Barak valley were determined to push their language as an option parallel to Assamese, it was important for the Assamese-caste elite to win over the Muslim migrants of Bengali origin settling in the Assamese-dominated Brahmaputra valley.

With the support of the 'Na-Asamiyas', Assamese remained the major language in Assam and the caste elite sought to impose it on the Bengali-dominated Barak valley, leading to the language agitations in post-colonial Assam. Every year in the Barak valley and elsewhere in Assam, Bengalis observe 19 May as their Language Martyrs Day in the memory of those who were killed in confrontations with the police on that date in 1960, much like 21 February is observed in Bangladesh as the beginning of the language movement that finally led to the breakup of Pakistan. In recent years, 19 May celebrations in Silchar have been graced by the visit of leading poets, writers and singers from both West Bengal and Bangladesh. The Muslims of Bengali origin in the Brahmaputra valley, however, have largely stayed away from these celebrations to emphasize their linguistic preferences and have rather used their religious identity as the defining point of 'we' and 'others'. Physical security and fear of eviction from the land they own are the obvious priorities for the Muslim peasant migrants from the erstwhile Eastern Bengal who settled in the Brahmaputra valley. Unlike their brethren in Bangladesh and West Bengal, Tripura and the Barak valley, their passion for the Bengali language has been limited to the occasional folk song choirs in the char areas (river islands) during the harvest season. Only after these Muslims were specifically targeted by the Assamese militant student and youth groups during the bloody riots of 1982-83, did some of them register as Bengali speakers during the census in what was seen as a return to roots. This led to a fall in the number of Assamese speakers in the last two censuses of 1991 and 2001.

In recent years, the question of illegal migration from Bangladesh has overshadowed other political issues in Assam. This, along with the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has ensured that the linguistic mobilisation of the 1960s has been replaced by the politics of religious fundamentalism. Bengali Hindus in large numbers throughout Assam have started supporting the BJP and Assamese Hindus have joined them because they feel regional parties like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) cannot deliver on their promise of deporting illegal migrants (read: Muslim migrants). The AGP-BJP political alliance in the 2001 state assembly elections, engineered by the state's governor, Lieutenant-General S. K. Sinha (retired), marked the high point of this new trend; that it

prompted a backlash from the Muslims urging them to group together in a and vote Congress to victory.

With north Indian migrant communities like the Biharis and the Marwaris supporting the BJP in ever-increasing numbers, the process of religious consolidation has begun to affect the politics of Assam more significantly than ever before. After all, Assam has the second highest percentage of Muslim population among Indian states after Kashmir and the impact of global and national realities on Assam's politics cannot be wished away. This has weakened the support base of Assamese separatism because the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) operates from its bases in Bangladesh and its soft stand on the migration issue has not gone down well with Assamese upper-caste Hindus. The ULFA is opposed to the politics of religious fundamentalism, but when it went to the extent of supporting the 'Kashmiri freedom struggle' during the Kargil War, the Assamese saw in it a not-so-subtle attempt to please the ULFA's main external sponsors.

Changing Trends in Migration

In the pre-British era, the population flow into what is now Northeast India originated almost entirely in the east. Closer to the highlands of Burma and southwestern China than to the power centres of the Indian heartland, this region was exposed to a constant flow of tribes and nationalities belonging to the Tibeto-Burman or the Mon-Khmer stock, one settling down only to be overrun by the subsequent wave. The direction of population flow changed with the advent of the British. The colonial masters brought peasants and agricultural labourers, teachers and clerks from neighbouring Bengal and Bihar to open up Assam's economy. The trickle became a tide, soon to extend to Tripura, where the Manikya kings offered Bengali farmers 'jungle-avadi' or forest clearance leases. The move was intended to popularise settled agriculture in a largely hill state and improve the state's land revenues. The hill regions were protected by the Inner Line Regulations, whereas the plains and the princely domains were not. The steady population flow from mainland India, particularly from Bengal, into the plains of Assam and Tripura, accentuated the ethnic and religious diversity and introduced a nativist-outsider dichotomy to the simmering conflict.

Partition led to a rise in the flow of refugees and migrants from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Tripura's demography changed within two decades as Bengalis became a clear majority. The pace of demographic change was slightly slower in Assam than in Tripura but it was pronounced enough to upset the 'sons of the soil', provoking both armed and non-violent mass protest movements and sometimes a mix of both. The fear that, like Tripura, the other northeastern states could be swamped by influx of outsiders has weighed heavily on indigenous peoples and early settlers throughout the Northeast and provoked the more militant among them to take up arms.

A tradition of armed resistance to invaders had developed in the region even before the arrival of the British. The Ahoms, who ruled Assam for several centuries, fought back the invading Mughals. The Manikya kings of Tripura not only fought the Bengal Sultans back from their hill region but also managed to conquer parts of eastern Bengal at various times in history. The Burmese were the only ones who overran Assam and Manipur, only to be ousted through the help of the British within a few years. When the British ventured into the Northeast, they encountered fierce resistance in the Naga and the Mizo (then Lushai) Hills regions, in Manipur and in what is now Meghalaya. The

Naga and the Mizo tribesmen resorted to guerrilla war, holding up much stronger British forces by grit and ingenuous use of the terrain. As a result of the fighting, there were parts of the Mizo Hills where entire villages were 'populated only by widows'.

After the departure of the British, the Indian nation-state faced uprisings in Tripura almost immediately after Independence and in the Naga hills since the mid-1950s. The communists, who led the tribal uprising in Tripura, called off armed struggle in the early 1950s and joined Indian-style electoral politics. Since the 1980 ethnic riots, Tripura has witnessed periodic bouts of tribal militancy, with the Bengali refugee population its main target. The Naga uprising, the strongest ethnic insurrection in Northeast India, has been weakened by repeated splits along tribal lines. Talks between the Indian government and the stronger faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), which were started in 1997, are continuing, but a possible resumption of Naga insurgency remains a preoccupying possibility in the Northeast.

Armed uprisings erupted in the Mizo hills following a famine in 1966. A year later, guerrilla bands became active in Manipur and Tripura. Since most of these rebel groups found safe bases, weapons and training in the former East Pakistan, the defeat of the Pakistani armed forces in 1971 adversely affected the rebels from the Northeast. For nearly seven years, they were deprived of a major staging post in a contiguous foreign nation. China, which trained and armed several groups of Naga, Mizo and Meitei rebels since 1966, stopped aiding them in the early 1980s. By then, however, Bangladesh's military rulers had assumed power after the coup of 1975, in which the country's founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, was killed. They promptly revived the Pakistani policy of sheltering, arming and training rebel groups from Northeast India. This policy, initiated by General Zia-ur-Rehman, has been continued by his wife's government more than twenty-five years later.

Fishing in Troubled waters

Almost all the separatist groups in the Northeast – Nagas, Mizos, Meiteis, Tripuris and now those from Meghalaya – have subsequently received shelter and support in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Indian agencies used the Northeast to arm and train, support and shelter the Bengali guerrillas against Pakistan in 1971 and then the tribal insurgents from the Chittagong Hill Tracts against Bangladesh. For a brief while in the early 1990s, the Indian external intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), supported the Kachin Independence Army of Burma with weapons and ammunition.

Since the 1980s, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has also used Bangladesh to prop up some of the rebel groups from northeast India. A few of them have received weapons, specialised training in explosives and sabotage and even funds. Surrendered insurgents have reported that the ISI encouraged them to strike economic targets like oil refineries and depots, gas pipelines, rail tracks and road bridges. Burma and Bhutan have also been used as sanctuaries by some of these rebel groups but there is little evidence of official patronage from the governments of those countries. There are some unconfirmed reports of Chinese assistance to the NSCN, the Meitei rebel groups and the ULFA. By the early 1980s, the entire region was gripped by large-scale violence. There were fierce riots in Tripura and Assam. Separatist movements intensified in Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur, later spreading to both Assam and Tripura. India's young Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, took the initiative to arrive at settlements with the militant students of Assam, the

separatist Mizo National Front and the Tribal National Volunteers of Tripura. Other insurgencies continued, however, and new ones emerged. Whereas earlier separatist movements, such as that of the Nagas and the Mizos, had challenged federal authority, the recent insurgencies of the Bodos, the Hmars, the Karbis and the Dimasas directly confront the regional power centres – the new states of the Northeast. Although the Nagas and the Mizos fought for a separate country and finally settled for a separate state within India, the smaller ethnicities like the Bodos and the Hmars fight for autonomous homelands that they wish to carve out of states like Assam and Mizoram. The failure to achieve separate states radicalized the movements and made them turn to secessionist rhetoric. Territorial demands based on ethnicity in northeast India are very often sustained by historical memories of separate tribal kingdoms. The Bodos or the Dimasas fondly recall their pre-Ahom kingdoms, when they controlled large territories. The Tripuris and the Manipuris look back at the long rule of their princely families to justify secession. A democratic dispensation like India's provides even the smallest of these groups scope to raise their homeland demand and since Delhi has conceded many of them, these ethnic groups have reason to feel they can obtain what they want with a little more persuasion or pressure, violence or manipulation.

Very often in the Northeast, a negotiated settlement with a separatist movement has opened the ethnic fissures within it. The Hmars, the Maras and the Lais fought shoulder to shoulder with the Lushais against the Indian security forces during the twenty years of insurgency led by the Mizo National Front (MNF). But twenty years of bonding through the shared experience of guerrilla warfare failed to develop a greater 'Mizo' identity. As the common enemy, India, receded into the distance, Delhi came to be seen as a source of protection and the last line of justice by the smaller tribes and ethnicities. Now, the Hmars and the Reangs want an autonomous district council for themselves, like the Lais, the Maras and the Chakmas already enjoy. Both tribes have militant groups (the Hmar Peoples Convention and the Bru National Liberation Front) who attack Mizoram police and politicians, provoking fierce reactions from groups such as the Young Mizo Association.

The Bodos, the Karbis, the Dimasas and the Rabhas all joined the Assam movement to expel 'foreigners' and 'infiltrators'. But after the 1985 accord signed by the Assam agitation groups with the Indian government, these groups felt the Assamese 'had taken the cake and left us the crumbs'. The result: fresh agitations, often sliding into violent insurgencies, spearheaded by smaller ethnicities demanding separate homelands. Within two years of the 1985 accord, the Bodos were on the warpath with a new slogan: 'divide Assam fifty-fifty'. Militant Bodo groups took the road of armed rebellion and terrorism, blowing up bridges, trains and buses, attacking troops and policemen, politicians and non-Bodo ethnic groups. Despite a settlement with the Indian government in early 2003 that promised to establish a Bodoland Territorial Council, some groups like the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) say they are determined to continue their armed movement. Militant groups representing the Karbis and the Dimasas have also surfaced, promoting ethnic cleansing as the core of their political strategy to establish numerical domination over proposed and perceived homelands.