

Editorial

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Politicising MU issue: by whom?

The unrest in Manipur University in the last 26 days crippling all academic related activities is now not only an issue for the teachers, students and staffs of the Manipur University. It is an issue of the people of this state as the future depends to the quality of this University. Silence of the Civil Society organisations and political parties would mean showing the immature mental ability of those in either the CSOs or the Political parties.

As a matter of fact local clubs and organisations located at the periphery of the Manipur University at Canchipur had showed solidarity to the students' movement at Manipur University. Political parties now come up demanding immediate intervention to the ongoing issue by the concern authority.

The main opposition, Congress party had formed a high level committee to find an amicable solution to the present crisis at the University. The Communist Party of India (CPI) Manipur state Council also apprised the Governor of Manipur, who is also the chief rector of the Manipur University to intervene the ongoing crisis. The Siva Sena also comes up criticising the silence of the concern authority to the issue of the Manipur University.

Surprisingly, the BJP which is heading the coalition government both in the state as well as at the center only comes up yesterday and that too hitting the congress instead of showing concern to the development. What a shame? The BJP first word to the present crisis is a slashing criticism to the congress party saying that they are politicising the matter.

If a political party talks that way to the sensitive issue of the state, people easily understood who is trying to politicise the present impasse at Manipur University.

The Vice Chancellor Prof. AP Pandey, who is the root of the present impasse, came to the press after 23 days of total break down at Manipur University and that too without giving any reasonable clarification to the charges levelled against him by the Manipur University students.

The BJP comes up after 25 days blaming the congress. As the BJP now is heading the government at the state seems like the party has been playing the old trick of wait and watch policy and latter divert it by another issue.

Well what prompted the three deans to say that they were under pressure to resign from their post is still confusion as they had resigned following the irresponsible attitude of the VC. A matter which needs to ponder is that the three deans said that word after the VC said that they resigned due to pressure from the students.

The other day when the students' union of the Manipur University was demanding removal of the VC, a press statement circulated said that Prof. AP Pandey visited GP Women College. His visit may have reason but one wonder on why the VC visited the GP Women College when the Manipur University was on the frying pan.

But one thing learnt from the source is that the Principal of the GP Women College is the wife of one of the Dean of school of academic affairs of the Manipur University. The said dean was one among the 3 deans who said that he resigned due to pressure from students. The real terminology the dean used was "the students came and requested to resign". May be the Prof. used a language of courtesy but the intention was no different than saying that the resigned due to pressure from the students.

The situation is worsening day after another. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh may have pressure from the high command as the wife of AP Pandey is a hard core member of the BJP who have long hand upto to the level of Prime Minister and Home Minister. But sometimes it's no worth sitting in the golden chair when the room is set on fire.

Legal Clinic

Section 342 in The Indian Penal Code
342. Punishment for wrongful confinement.—Whoever wrongfully confines any person shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.

Section 309 in The Indian Penal Code.

309. Attempt to commit suicide.—Whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year [or with fine, or with both].

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Liberation War And Merger

By- Lashram Jugeshwor Singh

Translated from Manipuri by Dr. Aheibam Koireng Singh, Manipur University

What is our viewpoint at the present? The liberation war, colonial subjugation under British rule and despotic rule of the monarch in the past decades of the discordant history falls vividly before us. History shows, events that happen 50 years before are perceived contradictorily at the present time. This is also unstoppable as it is brought about by the changes of time. In addition to it, in a democratic state, many different thoughts come in to each generation. Such thoughts are unstoppable. It needs to be publicly debated and discussed. The rightness and wrongness of it could not be judged on the basis of my personal likes and dislikes. Its thinking should come in the way which is beneficial to the general public. The dictatorship brought about by a complete 70 years of Moscow's absolutist Communist regime along with the unfulfilling of the constitutional commitment for the welfare of the people and the worsening economy led to a disintegration of one time super power Soviet Russia and formation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) by coming together different newly independent ethnic groups. Now Russia had abandoned communism. It has become a democratic state and started giving attention to market reforms. It is an astonishing 70 years history of Russia. Though it cannot exactly be compared and perfectly matched, the circumstance is very much similar with our history- the difference is only a matter of bigness and smallness of the scale and size.

In our present generation, it would not be an exaggeration to say that those who emerges to spearhead and bear the responsibility of the state emerges mostly from among the youths. They must mostly be from among those who come under 50 years. That is why they need to properly investigate and search from the roots the incidents happened in that point of time. Let us all look together. Khongjom war and different wars with Burma (Myanmar) have been fought. In both the cases, the people under the leadership of the king have fought the wars, first against the British Empire and second against the Burmese. The war that happened after that was the war to drive out the expansionist land-thirsty British Empire from the Indian subcontinent. At that point of time, India was politically divided into two: 1). British India; and 2). Indian India, that is India which was directly ruled by British and another is India which is ruled by kings. Manipur is a state which is ruled by kings. The status was also lesser from other states as Manipur being a state which gave tribute to British government. State was ruled along with a political agent. All the states, nevertheless, came under the British paramountcy irrespective of whether big or small. The people of Manipur were subjects under two different authorities - one for the Manipur Maharaja and another for the Political Agent. What the people of British India

and Indian India wanted at that point of time was to bring the British power to an end from the whole of India. It is because the whole of India being under British colonial subjugation, and furthermore subjected to bondage under kings was a great challenge to the people of India. The people of Manipur were also in this trend of thought. In connection with it, it can be remembered that the objective of the women's war that happened in the year 1904 and that of 1939 were different. The Women's war of 1904 was waged against the British Empire by the people putting their life at stake to resist the colonization of Manipur. The Women's war of 1939 on the other hand which was directed against the Maharaja who rule Manipur alongside with the British arose out of the famine like situation, atrocities in the name of religion, charging water tax without letting to drink water, imposing 'mitseng santri', 'pothang (practice of forcing the people to carry the luggage of the touring officials)', forced labour, artificial scarcity of rice and concomitant rise of human casualties. At that point of time, a struggle to thwart and drive away the British was on the rise in every nook and corner of India including the states. The people and the states of India also began to suffer like the people in Manipur. At that point of time, the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi launched an intense struggle with a call demanding the British to quit India. The people in the states who were not contented with the autocratic and despotic nature of the king also started having a preference of and started rising for democratic form of government having legislative assembly with elective representative. The Indian National Congress in British India and 'Praja Mandal' in states began to launch an intense struggle. The State's People Conference was the conglomerate which encompasses the 'Praja Dal' of all the states with Dr. Sitaramiya as the President. Manipur Congress was also a branch of the Congress.

Now, let's come back to Manipur again. It has also been mentioned above that there hadn't been any political party as institution up till the year 1948. In the year 1934, a 'sabha' was organized under the patronage of Maharaja Churachand to come together the Manipuris settled in different parts of India and discuss on social, philosophical and religious matters. The said sabha very much bore fruit. In it, among the youths who participated there were Pandit Lalita Madhav Sharma, Pandit Banka Bihari Sharma and Irabat who eventually became the leader of the masses. The said sabha was named Nikhil Manipuri Hindu Mahasabha. As it ought to be, the sabha was however short lived. The Swadeshi movement started gaining ground in India and states and increased suffering and wretchedness of the people

alongside with the impetus by the Second World War to the Indian Congress which led to the situation of inevitably gaining Swaraj (independence). Because of this reason, Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha being sectarian organization, the step could no longer be slow paced under it. That is the reason why, under the leadership of Pandit Lalita Madhav Sharma, Pandit Banka Bihari Sharma and Irabat, the word 'Hindu' was dropped as desired by many of the youths in the 4th Session of the Mahasabha at Chingga in the year 1938. In this session, it became a political party with a name, Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha which had a wider social base and encompasses all communities. The president of this new party was Hijam Irabat. From that day onwards, Manipur started having a political party. This party desired to form a fully responsible legislative assembly the member of which were elected on the basis of adult franchise and a council of Minister responsible to the assembly with the position of the king as the Constitutional monarch. In a short spell, the Mahasabha became a branch of the Congress.

In the year 1939, following the hoarding and export of rice by the mill owners in nexus with the king's government, there was a severe shortage of rice in Manipur. Because of all these reasons, Women in large numbers agitated intensely to immediately ban the export of rice. In the said agitation, women agitators battled with the Assam Rifles and eight women were consequently inflicted with bayonet injury. Hijam Irabat, after defecting from the Maha Sabha formed the 'Praja Sammelani' and led the agitation to a better well organized political movement of mass civil disobedience under his leadership. After that Irabat joined the Communist Party. From that onwards, Irabat distanced himself from the Mahasabha, that is, the Congress. The war waged by the Communist Party of India was against the British imperialism and capitalist power. So, the gaining of India's independence was not their immediate end. Eventually after Britain and America joined hands with Russia to fight the war against the Axis power, Communist Party of India also sided with the British. Irabat also because of that reason took side of the British. So, Irabat and his supporters did not join the Indian National Army.

In the meantime, a political party named Manipur State Congress Party was formed at the venue of Aryan Hall in the year 1945 by coming together all the political parties in Manipur. However, Irabat and his newly formed Manipur Krishak Sabha were not a part of that newly formed party. Irabat went underground after the Pungdongbam incident in the year 1948. Just ahead of it, in the same year, Irabat contested successfully for the State assembly from the Nambol Constituency as a candidate of Kishan Congress. Irabat and his party's stand on Merger could not be known as

he went underground. Like the political parties playing its crucial role in the agitation for legislative assembly, the role concerning merger was only between the government of India and the king. Why, because the said agreement had to be signed by the government of India with the king and not with the people's representatives. In connection with it, it is worthwhile to recollect that when the issue of Merger was introduced to the Maharaja of Mayurbhunj, the Maharaja stated that he already had handed over the administration to the people, and therefore correspondingly asked the Government of India to talk and come to terms with the Legislative assembly and Ministry. If viewed from the perspective of constitutional position, this stated stand seems very proper and correct. However, it could not be known whether there was talk or not. But merger eventually took place. Similar such stand of the Maharaja of Mayurbhunj could not be seen from the part of the Maharaja of Manipur.

The issue of Merger arose to more than 600 states of India. It's never been without disagreement at one point or the other. Let us also remember that according to the Mountbatten plan, 'Standstill Agreement' was correspondingly signed. That merger had already casted a spell of defacto merger. It is an already discussed issue mutually by the Chamber of princes, interim government of India and the British government. British Government had said - British government would surely leave India, but nonetheless want to handover to single sovereignty of one unified India. It otherwise had to handover one sovereignty to Chamber of Princes, and another sovereignty to British India. The thinking of those who had control over the administration during that time was that it is not possible to have two sovereignty considering the geopolitical and geophysical position of India, and taking into account the defence, foreign affairs and communication matters of India. Another matter is there was no referendum on merger, that is, it didn't wait for the public opinion. When Maharaja Bodhchandra refused to sign the merger, Governor Shri Prakash had sent an urgent telegraph to Sadar Vallabhai Patel seeking his advice. At this Sadar Patel had made his intention known to her daughter, "who is the Brigadier in Shillong at the moment. This telegraphed question reached the Assam Governor. When the Governor sought clarification from Manben Patel on this matter, Manben Patel, replied in this manner - the said telegraph was CRISP REPLY, and, did not continue any longer. Likewise, Sadar Patel sending much confidence and laden telegraph indicated that the CHAMBER OF PRINCES would not interfere in the scheme of things that he intended to carry out.