

# Positive attitude brings positive opportunities in life

IT News  
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Positive attitude brings positive opportunities in life, said Information and Public Relations Minister Thongam Biswajit Singh on Tuesday. Minister Biswajit was speaking at the World Red Cross Day, 2018 observation organised by the India Red Cross Society, Manipur State Branch at its M.G. Avenue, Imphal head office.

Addressing students attending the observation, the Minister said that one cannot achieve success without hard work. He said that we should also understand that luck favours only those who are hard-working. He said that we should also have a positive mindset to attract success. We may get all the guidance and



support from our parents, elders and teachers, however, we will succeed only if we act our part and be hard-working, the Minister added. He also said that inspiring, encouraging and guiding the younger generation is also very important in building a society.

"Life is full of uncertainty, and we must act our part during our lifetime for the future generation", Biswajit said while adding that peace is important to bring development. "Without peace there will be no development and to bring peace in the society, we should

## - Minister Biswajit

bring unity amongst ourselves", the Minister said. "We should bridge the communication gap amongst the different communities to bring unity and peace", he continued.

Biswajit also lauded the society and its volunteers for the service it has rendered in the State.

The observation was also attended by IRCS-MSB chairman, Management Committee, Dr. R.K. Nimai Singh IAS (retd.) and General Secretary, IRCS-MSB Dr. Y.Mohun Singh among others. Meanwhile, prizes were also distributed to winners of various competitions including painting, debate and extempore for various age groups held on April 6 as part of the observation.

# 1st Ayush Medical Camp for AR

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27 Sector Assam Rifles is organizing first AYUSH MEDICAL CAMP for the Assam Rifles troops at Churachandpur, an initiative which was supported by Ministry of AYUSH. This holistic treatment focused on traditional forms of medicine and healing therapies to improve the health of Assam Rifles soldiers. These soldiers, mostly from North Eastern States including Manipur suffer from various ailments which was aggravated due to the tough service conditions of containing insurgency in the North East.

A team of 18 doctors & staff from the Department of AYUSH, Govt of Manipur will



offer counseling, treatment on Ayurveda, Homeopathy and Yoga session is also planned. This unique camp will benefit 450 soldiers of Assam Rifles. Yoga techniques and life style changes will be suggested along with alternative medicines from Ayurveda and Homeopathy. This initiative will also uplift the morale and motivate them towards their

health and duties. It also aimed at improving the LMC state.

## Th. Radhesyam attends 'go to village mission'

Imphal, May 9: Education, Minister Thokchom Radhesyam attended the Go to Village - Khungang Chatse Mission camp held at Leirongthel Community Hall, Thoubal. As part of the 'Go to Village' mission, PMAY certificate for housing, old age pension (Social Welfare Department), ration cards under NFSA (CAF & PD), Smart cards for Chief Minister's Hakshelgi Tengbanga, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (CAF & PD), UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable Lighting for All) Scheme etc. were distributed to the beneficiaries today. Stalls of different departments were set up. A health camp and ADHAAR enrolment centre was also organised.

# Lady reporter attacked; JFA demands stern action against assailant

By our Correspondent  
Guwahati, May 9,

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA) expresses shock over the incident of physical attack over a lady reporter in Guwahati city on Sunday morning and urges stern action against the culprit.

According to the young reporter, a mason engaged in her rented complex in the southern part of the city tried to grab her while she was

washing her clothes. The reporter however succeeded in throwing the man and called help from the house owner. The culprit, understood to be named as Babul Ali, immediately fled from the location. Later the reporter lodged an FIR at Dispur police station and accordingly three co-workers of the culprits were picked up by the police. Later they were released with the condition to get reported as and when

needed.

"We demand justice for the reporter. The city police must arrest the culprit and book under the law. The house owner should also come forward helping the police in identifying the culprit. Finally we urge the city police commissioner Hiren Nath to look into the matter seriously," said a statement issued by JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria.

# Sapphire Jubilee Celebration at Keithelmanbi

IT News  
Imphal, May 9,

Sapphire Jubilee Celebration of Keithelmanbi Youth Association was held yesterday at Brigadier Sirohi Ground of Keithelmanbi Village under Kangpokpi District. Works Minister Th. Biswajit and Social Welfare Minister Nemcha Kipgen attended the celebration as dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion Biswajit urged the youths to strive hard to achieve their goals and bring changes in the society.

"Youths should play a significant role in the society to touch the hearts to be remembered by the generations to come as our forefathers did", Biswajit appealed.

During the visit the association submitted memorandum to the to the works Minister demanding improvement of road conditions and others. Works Minister assured black-topping of the road at the earliest and said that new lanes will also be marked for smooth connectivity. Households without electric connection in and around

Keithelmanbi will also be electrified free of cost in consultation with the local MLA, he added.

Social Welfare Minister Nemcha Kipgen also assured to make Keithelmanbi as a Model Village which is also the largest village in Kangpokpi district. She also assured to upgrade the high school if the criteria to upgrade permits. The Sapphire Jubilee Monolith was unveiled by Minister Th. Biswajit. Cultural dance and songs were performed by the locals.

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# Nation and State-Building, Self-Determination .....

**Myanmar**  
Myanmar is currently undergoing a process of limited transformation and 'guided transition' after being in political isolation for many years. The problem in Myanmar is symptomatic of a problematic decolonisation process that has never been properly addressed. The current on-off ceasefire agreement with the 14 ethnic nationalities in the country shows just how difficult a nation building process is and can be. The 1947 Panglung agreement could have paved the way for peace with at least some of the minority ethnic groups but was never fully accepted and implemented. The result has been the continuation of pre-independence era issues of nation and state-building, compounded by internal struggle for power and dominance within the country. Further, it has resulted into military domination and oppression as well as violation of civil and political rights of the people, the continuous bloody self-determination struggle of ethnic minorities and persecution of other ethnic minorities, most notably the Muslim Rohingya population in the Rakhine state. Pressures from outside including ASEAN 'constructive engagement' and sanctions from many countries has resulted in the 'softening' of the military approach and the opening of Myanmar to outsiders, including investors. This year's ASEAN Civil Society Conference organised in Yangon in March drew about 3000 people all demanding change and faster transformation of Myanmar, albeit under the watchful eyes of the State. It is accepted that Myanmar needs a constitutional reform to resolve the existing problems, and this would only come about after a national dialogue and successful

peace process with the ethnic minorities. While all these are being planned, the self-determination struggles of the minority ethnic groups continue.

**Challenges in Resolving Self-Determination Type Struggles**  
The continuous existence of self-determination type struggles in the region shows how difficult it is to resolve these conflicts. The use of weapons and violent means on all sides only compounded the problem even more. Over the last 50 years, only Brunei has peacefully become independent in 1984. Even Singapore's independence from Malaysia in 1965 was preceded by violent riots in some cities on the peninsula. Timor Leste's independence was preceded by an armed struggle of the Timorese people against Indonesian domination and was only made possible by international pressures on Indonesia in the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis in 1997. All in all, decolonizing and becoming an independent nation is never easy. Even after independence the problems continue as has been noted in the previous section. Lingering issues continue during the power struggle between the new ruler and the newly ruled groups demanding self-determination. Some challenges and lessons learnt from the cases in the region include the following.

## Power Struggle between the Centre and Periphery

Becoming a new State entails recognition of sovereignty by the international community, including admission into the United Nations. More importantly, and prior to that, this recognition has to come from within. There has to be recognition of State sovereignty by the people being ruled. The people in most cases just follow

the lead of elites in giving blessings to the new State. The elites then in turn commandeered support for the creation of the new State through a liberation movement, a referendum, a 'social contract', even an armed uprising. The act of State creation then goes through various phases, including the handing over of sovereignty of the people to the State and giving the State the mandate to rule over the people. Unfortunately, the process also involved manipulation of the majority and even the State to ensure that territories are included and groups pacified and persuaded to join the new State. Take for instance 'social contract' between the Malays, Chinese, and Indians prior to independence of Malaysia in 1957; the formation of Malaysia in 1963; the London Treaty of 1909 between Siam and Britain; struggle for independence of Indonesia in late 1940s and Panglung Agreement of 1947 in Burma, etc.

The power struggle between the centre and periphery that resulted after independence show the dissatisfaction between the State and the people, especially those forced or manipulated to be part of the new State. This in turn would be translated into movements to support self-determination aspirations of the aggrieved populace in the affected regions. The questions asked include the legality of inclusion and the question of sovereignty – sovereignty of whom over whom; sovereignty of State over the sovereignty of the people or likewise; and the question of indivisibility of the State.

## Multiplicity of Actors

An important part of the problem is the multiplicity of actors involved on all sides. In many cases, there are simply too many actors involved and this has compounded the problem of

finding a solution that can help pacify the interests of all. In the case of Myanmar, the needs of more than 100 ethnic groups have to be addressed. Even the current ceasefire agreement with only 14 groups is very complicated. In the Patani struggle of Thailand, there are multiple actors on both sides – on one side the politicians, military, royal family and on the other side the PULO, BRN and BIPP, etc. Similarly, there are multiple actors in the Bangsamoro struggle – government, military, MNLF, MILF, Abu Sayyaf, etc. All actors have stakes, interests and needs in the conflict. The question then involves not only addressing the issues and answering the questions but also how to balance these multiplicities of needs and interests. The question also involves the sincerity of the elites (for whom and for what?) and the issue of representativeness – how much do they actually represent the grievances and aspirations of the people.

## Strategy and the Use of Weapons by the Actors

The next issue involves strategy and the use of weapons by the actors. When the self-determination movements turned into an armed struggle, it elevates the conflict to another level. On the movement side, this is to address the asymmetrical nature of the conflict and a necessary precursor to future talks. They need to be taken seriously and in their minds they will not be taken seriously until they can show that they are capable of inflicting pain on the other side. On the side of the government, this is an affront to the State's sole monopoly of the use of arms and need to be put down. Oft times, too, the State does not wait for armed uprising to happen and take unilateral action to

violently suppress the movements. This in turn usually will result in likeminded actions on the other side even if there was no real intention to use this strategy. Cases in point would be Aceh, Mindanao and Patani. Prolonged use of this strategy usually results in the creation of a culture of violence which is very difficult to put down. The issue needs to be addressed though if resolution is to be achieved. Difficulty of Finding Solutions

## Bilaterally

A problem with self-determination struggle is the difficulty of finding solutions bilaterally. The positions of the sides are usually too entrenched for them to move on. Third party interveners can help. The problem is convincing the parties that they need this help, especially the government sides of the conflict. De-colonisation issues and unsolved problems connected to these issues are seen as internal matters that should be resolved internally.

Furthermore, we are talking about the sovereignty of the nation and the reputation of the State. The State would feel more comfortable if the process of finding the solution is one that they are in control of. Third parties are accepted if and only if they subscribe to the principles of the sovereignty and indivisibility of the State. Cases in point – Aceh, Bangsamoro and Patani. But when they are invited, these third parties have shown that they are not only capable of helping to improve the situation, but in many cases becoming crucial components for alleviating the violence, implementing agreed actions, guaranteeing and monitoring decisions made and so on.

## Models of Ruling

When we try to settle once and for all the problems of

decolonisation, especially in regards to self-determination issues, we have to take into account not only the points mentioned above but also the models of ruling that is capable of pacifying the needs and interests of the sovereign people. In general, there are three models of ruling as given below.

First is the 'simple majoritarian rule of ruling'. It refers to elimination of all kinds of differences to become one. Centralised and unitary form of governance will be representative of this one coupled with insistence on nation building based on the majority dominant tradition in the country such as Thailand. This is not a good model and has given rise to many self-determination struggles by groups that feel the need to preserve their identities and collective rights.

Second model is the 'complex representational model' that will guarantee justice and equality. This includes the model of federalism, even decentralisation which is being touted as a lesser form of the federal system in the unitary model i.e. Malaysia and to a certain extent Indonesia in its current form. The same model is also being mentioned as a possible solution to the Myanmar problem.

Third is the 'Hybrid model'. In this model, certain parts of the country are ruled by one model while other parts of the country are ruled by different models. It includes the autonomous or special autonomy model being used in some provinces of countries like Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. This is also the current preferred solution to the problems in the Bangsamoro – the State within a State model created by the Bangsamoro peace process. In many cases, the State did not start out with this form

after independence. The failure of the chosen model points to the need to adapt existing form of governance to one that will address the demands of the aggrieved populace. Further, failure of the models will result in civil war. On the plus side, however, it may even result in alternative forms of governance. Who knows, maybe we will get a new model that caters to the special needs of the region coming out of the self-determination struggles in this area.

## Conclusion

Self-determination as reflected here is not a dirty word as banded by those in power. It is not something that was created for frivolous reasons, but something that has come up because of unfinished business in the decolonisation process of a nation. It represents collective rights of a distinct group of people and is a driver of genuine democracy.

It is, thus, a form of conflict resolution because it envisions a solution to the problem through the restructuring of relationships, modes of governance and addressing real needs of the people. For it to be successful though, it needs to be translated into action and into actual new relations, guided by a new arrangement, constitution or structure. When this happens, you will see peace in the region. These are the lessons we have learnt from the challenges of decolonisation in Southeast Asia. They might be of use to friends here in the Northeast part of India.

(This write up was delivered by the author at Imphal on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 'Arambam Somorendra Memorial Lectures')