

Editorial

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Youth and Contemporary Issues
(Depoliticisation of youths and its impact in the social change)

An idea without fear

With the increase in reach and dependence on information technology in the present world, detailed descriptions and knowledge on any subject matter can be had at the touch of a button. The virtual world has shrunk to such an extent that anyone can receive and relay information on someone or something as it happen, anywhere in the world. This has led to an unexpected broadening of one's views and opinions of other people, places, religions, beliefs and customs. A more tolerant temperament is the result of the ever shrinking virtual world today.

The world as we know now is ever evolving and changing, and it is upto us to adapt and make the best of it. But just as everything that is continually changing, there emerges a breed of hardliners who are insisting on carrying on with the traditional way of life, and even thinking. While the concept of preservation of culture and tradition for posterity and more importantly, for the preservation of one's own identity and those of the community is without doubt, a vital part of our responsibilities to the future generation, yet the insistence on keeping up and following the traditional way of thinking, to restraint ourselves to the set dogmas and beliefs is nothing short of denying ourselves the freedom to grow- spiritually and intellectually, to think and use our rationality and to pursue our dreams.

It is basically denying ourselves the freedom to life as we see fit, so long as our beliefs and practices does not infringe on that of others. Change is inevitable, and the sooner we accept and embrace it, the better will we be prepared to face the future, uncertain and unpredictable as it will be. Resisting change and attempting to cling on to the old ways of thinking which at one point of time would have served its purpose or even prove vital for survival would prove futile and even regressive. Our way of life changes with the changing times. What was once a necessity, like the caste system which was vital for preservation of communities and races, becoming more rigid to keep the increasing intruders and invaders from mingling and diluting a particular race, has now become a major roadblock in the effort to integrate the nation which is intrinsic to its progress. The time to walk the line without questioning the rationale behind the diktat is well and truly past. It is time to develop and encourage a scientific temperament which questions and provides a reason for the things we do and think.

Tolerance and understanding other's point of view, while, at the same time, retaining the liberty to follow and practice one's beliefs and principles will pave the way for a more inclusive society bound by trust and understanding. How one lead one's life should not be a subject of discussion, it should rather be an accepted personal judgment that needs to be respected. There are more important and pertinent things to occupy our minds and collective concerns in these volatile times. Progress is not made by adjusting the changes to suit our needs and beliefs. It is through accepting facts and adjusting ourselves to the best we possibly can to these changes that we can prepare for a better future- our true gift to mankind.

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By - Dr. Dhanabir Laishram

Youths are those youngsters who are always in romantic reverie with full of hope and desire to lead meaningful life. They always dream for brighter future and meaningful life. They know that to come on earth is only after getting one way ticket; they were not borne in the past and not born again after they were passed away. So it is very much valuable and bounded to do something. But if there is no clear vision they always associated frustration, anxiety and even depression. That is the result that some are drug edicts, some are misguided youths and some are earning money antagonize to welfare society. They are very far away from wealth and welfare. They can't see the meaningful world of them through the windows of parents, teachers and ruling elites. This is the fate of maximum numbers of Indian's youths in general and Manipur in particular.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: The main issues confronted by our youths are unemployment and poverty. Why we are talking about poverty, because of shortage of income, shortage of income means unemployment. In other words both the main issues are related each other. In India our youths come across twelve plan periods since 1950. However one analyses the plan periods by two important parameters that decreasing of people who are living below the poverty line and decreasing of unemployment, one comes to understand that both of them are increasing more and more. In this case the victims are the youths of the nation. Since 1992 after India followed new economic policy Liberalization, privatization and globalization more than two lakhs and seventy thousand were committed suicide because of unable to repay the loan and starvation. These are not good news to the youths of the nation. Most of them are their parents. In short both educated and uneducated youths are confronting this issue in this contemporary India.

India as developing country in the world maximum number of youth is educated. Some are in technical course and some are computer engineering but maximum are general line. They are all victims of neo-liberal economic policy. The Indian state capitulated under pressure from western financial institutions into policy formulation and running of state. Liberalisation is primarily beneficial to upper and middle classes. An estimated forty million Indians are living the life styles comparable to their counterparts in advanced industrial economies. Another sixty millions are on the threshold of comfortable middle class living. This middle class is going to proliferate because of the increasing of the service sectors and white-collar jobs. There is a fear that it may further aggravate the condition of rural and urban poor. The Indian state has been ineffective in creating human base for development. The Indian state could not filling the voids of basic education, gender rights, health facilities and employment opportunities for a big chunk of the population does not go well with the goal of economic justice. So the youth are not organised and are not in a position to pressurise the state to fulfill its welfare commitments.

The imperatives of economic liberalisation are identified with an aggravation of conflict between economic and political interest of the disadvantaged. Liberalisation is creating avenues for business and white-collar jobs to I.I.T and I.I.M. professionals. This suits the interests of the upper and middle class because they have the

resources like capital to benefit from new business opportunities opening up as part of liberalisation package. The youth from this section are more likely to walk away with jobs in multinational corporations with excessive salaries because of their access to quality education. With privatization and disinvestments becoming order of the day the numbers of jobs in public sector are going to be lesser and lesser. The benefit of reservation is available only in government jobs. That is why many tribal youth look at liberalisation as a conspiracy to deny them the benefit of reservation. Economic development so far has failed to create enough jobs to absorb the landless and rural and urban educated. These people have to suffer deprivations of various kinds. Youth of agricultural labourers, marginal and small peasants with small or no patch of land are the most deprived section of society. They suffer more than others from poverty and lack of education, health and housing facilities. That means the youth who belong to such families are more sufferers.

PROBLEMS IN THE AGRICULTURE.

Under the impact of neo-liberal policies landlessness is increasing and this is adding to the number of agricultural workers which stood more than 14 crore in 2012. There is no statutorily fixed minimum wage and no comprehensive social security measures for agricultural workers in many states. They are the worst hit by rise in prices of essential goods. In short the new economy policy and its strategy of withdrawal of state support to agriculture and increasing trade liberalisation through FTAs and tariff cuts are meant to drive the small peasants out of agriculture. The way is being paved for the takeover of Indian agriculture by foreign and domestic big corporate, as has happened in many developing countries under globalization. Resisting this offensive is the principal class challenge before the Indian peasantry. Here one may cited the recent case of Mizoram that one MNC gave loan to farmers for producing palm oil after Planting that trees, it will take round about ten years. But the adjustment had been made by that time's market price after ten years. At this time the price should be more triple times than when they fix price of that time. In this case how a farmer could repay the loan and regain his farm. Unfortunately leas were already made. He should be landless after ten years. The MNREGS is being diluted and the workers are being denied their rightful wages. Agricultural workers live under precarious conditions and in most states there are no efforts to provide houses sites and houses to them. In Manipur maximum houses of fisher folk which were constructed on the fumdhi were almost burned down without proper compensation. It was really driven out them from their habitats, resulting in the loss of their livelihoods.

The condition of youth agricultural workers is really worsened day by day. Indebtedness is increasing among agricultural workers and they are facing a crisis of survival. Government policies are forcing the rural poor to migrate and work under dismal conditions to other areas or to urban centres. The number of urban centres has increased remarkably. Accessory and ancillary buildings, government offices, roads, railway tracks - all require various kinds of skilled and unskilled workers. They come from backward villages. The non-availability of jobs in rural areas

facilitates the continuous supply of youth workers to urban and other big towns. Rural youth are mad in urban areas. These unorganised sector labourers remain in a fragmented state, which does not allow them to bargain or air their voice against injustice. Neither their job nor their work at a particular site is permanent. They are bereft of social security and labour welfare benefits. The central Government has refused to bring in a comprehensive legislation for the fixation of wages and social security benefits for agricultural workers.

The neo-liberal strategy of withdrawal of state support to agriculture and increasing trade liberalisation through FTAs and tariff cuts are meant to drive the small peasants out of agriculture. The way is being paved for the takeover of Indian agriculture by foreign and domestic big corporate.

In the last year, the farmers of Assam were crying for market-price for their grains due to lack of FCI procurement centers. The minimum price fixed by the Food Corporation of India for procuring rice grains is Rs. 1020-1080 per quintal. But due to the lack of FCI procurement centers in the State, Farmers are left with no other choice other than to sell the grains to unscrupulous middlemen for less than half of the FCI fixed price. The land Acquisition & Rehabilitation Bill proposed by the Government does not adequately protect the farmers in term of the compensation and rehabilitation criteria and does not make its provisions mandatory for private land acquisition. Mineral rich tribal areas will be opened to corporate, adversely affecting tribal rights on land.

Let the ruling elites understand poverty means shortage of income, shortage of income means lack of employment, lack of employment facilities means because of more and more state deregulation. Measures: Priority should be given to good governance in order to utilize human resource and natural resource properly. More state regulation rather than more privatization. Large scale automation should be checked. Effective programme of self help groups, Appropriate loan to the small scale industries workers, Government should fight protectionist measures taken by European countries and America in this globalization process, because they have opened free market and Down sizing, instruction given by World Bank and IMF should be checked, not followed hundred percent.

CONFLICT SITUATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Conflict situation in Manipur means contradiction between re-colonisation and decolonisation. In a simple language, non state actors claimed that Manipur was colonised by India after occupying coercively without the consent of the State Legislative Assembly of 1948, the members of the house, who were elected by the people based on adult franchise. After that Armed Forces Special Power Act 1958 was imposed to Manipur and deployed army, Para-military, border security force and CRPF. All the characteristics of colonization like accommodation of surplus population, extraction of raw materials, captive market economy, and violation of human rights could be seen in Manipur. So they are in the process of decolonization by waging war against India as resistance movement with arms. So robotically unvented incidents and worsen atmosphere of political violence and political crudeness as lawless state are coming up.

As impact of this political violence it severely hurts to the students of

both lower and higher education in Manipur. So long time academic calendar could not be followed. Attendants are low owing to bundh and strikes, maximum number of students is in the outside of the state, maximum of them are going down in the drug abuses and some of them are counting the days for death. These are part of counter insurgency measures taken by both the union and the state government. So now the students are sandwich in between state and non state actors. They are facing a lot of problems including wanton human rights violation. Even students were killed by security personnel with their school bags. They were detained at the roadside, lining on the ground in the combing operation, detained in the army camp if the security forces suspect them. In this environment no one could imagine better education for them. It was happened and would be happened again because of continuing political violence in the state. Even during their exam they have heard sound of the guns and blasting of bombs. In this situation they are compelled to study by hook or crook.

Now the pertinent question is that who architect this nasty social and political environment. The answer of this question is the objective of this paper. So my papers deals with some of the crucial issues like students in the carrot and stick measures, students in the Neo-Liberalism, depoliticisation and its consequences, role of students to bring another world is possible. The notable thing is that whenever we have any proposition in any issue no one can discard the neocolonial process of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. All of us including non state actors are in the process of LPG.

In any society the potential human capitals are the students, who try to see the world through the window of education for being social, political, economic actors, scientist, sports persons, peasants and workers. In other words they are the parents of tomorrow. So the young generation occupies a special place in social environment. They are vital part of society. The young and rising generation constitutes a representative of the future in the broadest sense; the future of any society depends on the practical politicising of the youth. They have to educate for understanding of general system and political awareness then in politics in order to understand policy. After that they should make interaction and reaction with the existing political system if the ruling elites deviate from the willingness of the masses. That is the real citizen in this modern society. There is no political formula to affirm that student should not join politics. That was British political formula applied to India for colonising so long time as they like. It should not be applied to India today particularly to Manipur also.

All societies pay special attention to the students. No challenges for possession of national characters can be victorious without the effective education, organisation and mobilisation of the youth into effective action. So my first attempt in this paper is to find out students' role to our society and to education then conflict situation and its impact on higher studies. My proposition is that I don't like to give generally sharing views on youths, mainly students and society instead it's better to highlight the reality of their sufferings because of conflict situation and its significance in our country in general and NE in particular. My presentation is based on logical inquiry with observation and interpretation.

(To be Continued)