

Editorial

Thursday, April 18, 2019

Judgment day

This 17th Lok Sabha Election is important for the people of the state. For the people of Manipur it is not only a fight between political parties having different ideologies, but also a fight for the rights of the various ethnic communities and freedom from autocratic ideologues. In democracy, oratory skill matters, the one who can convince the voters with reasonable explanation of their stand on various contentious issues certainly gets peoples' mandate. Does this really work when it comes to the election of the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency is a matter whom some sensible citizens are asking. This has been asked as beside the oratory skill political parties are reported to use money and muscle powers to win this election. There are even rumours about fielding candidate by some political parties to minus the voters of candidate who played well by taking up public issues. Above this, exercising imposition to vote for the candidate of their choice, there are reports of distributing money to voters. Plus goons are alleged to have been interfering the election by supporting for a specific political party at some Assembly constituency of the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency. This is being stated as per the allegation by CPI at which their workers received death threat from taking part in the electoral practice at three assembly constituencies.

Well, everything is fair in love and war. By 4 pm today fate of the 11 candidates will be locked in the EVMs and people have to wait and see who played well in getting best number of voters. In first-past-the- post electoral system, that is practice here in the country, the candidate who get highest number of vote win the election, no matters he is rejected by 70% of the voters. It is for this reason that the speculation about politicking the election by sending out some candidate who can minus the voters from aspirant candidate is being assumed.

Saying so, when result declared, no voters of the state need not to be frustrated. Those in the forefront are definitely the politicians who played better game and the winner is the best player. Each of these candidates has their own feeling of their motherland. The essence of patriotism runs in their blood in one way or the other remain similar, even though they ideology on the definition of patriotism differs.

The one who gets the best number of voters will be the representative of the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency. And the appeal from this newspaper to the one who will get elected is that - he should work for the people of Manipur and put out all his effort for protection of the Manipuri people. Else, the joy of getting peoples' mandate may lost forever, not only for you but for the all the future generation.

High profile candidates to file their nominations today

Agency
New Delhi April 18,

In Uttar Pradesh, many high profile candidates including Samajwadi party chief Akhilesh Yadav will file their nominations today. Poonam, wife of Congress leader Shatrughan Sinha will hold a roadshow today in Lucknow before filing her nomination. Congress nominee for the seat

Acharya Pramod Krishnam will also lead a foot march in city and file his nomination this afternoon, since today is the last day of filing papers.

SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav is scheduled to file his nomination for the Azamgarh Loksabha seat. He will also address a public rally there. Senior BJP leader and union minister Maneka Gandhi will file her papers today from Sultanpur constituency.

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Protective Thinking:

The current status of Naga-Kuki relations in Manipur (Part-I)

By : Mr. Pakinrichapbo (Advocate)
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The Nagas and Kukis in Manipur are in a state of political hangover thanks to intense contest for winning the outer Manipur Lok Sabha seat and may not want to be distracted by other topics except on election. Elections will come and go but will the Nagas and Kukis stays forever in Manipur deemed by them as temporary shelter house? Their relations will decide their fate.

Beyond Ethnicity

To carry out meaningful debate in any topic, Nagas and Kukis have to think beyond ethnicity. I shall do my best to present my unbiased observations and my understanding of Naga-Kuki relations with concise reference to past, counting the present atmosphere for the sake of harmonious future

Turning History pages to understand current status of Naga-Kuki relations

To truly understand Naga-Kuki relations, one has to carefully start turning pages of history without any iota of biasness; here history implies under what circumstances, these two ethnic groups came into contact with each other for the first time in the distant past as consequences of past dealings still haunts them. And what really transpired after they came into contact, whether they first met as friends, well wishers or as enemy, one group trying to finish the other. Without clear understanding of the first phase of their encounter, history will be distorted uninterruptedly by certain interest groups.

Taking responsibility of Historical wrongs

Making the matter worst, the concept of acknowledging historical wrongs done by predecessors has no takers; in fact they justify every wrong, which further strain today's relations. Disastrous consequences

unleashed in the distant past as these two ethnic groups came into contact for the first time and in recent past while pursuing extreme ethnic nationalist goals appears not to have taught any lesson to these fanatic ethnic groups. In fact, observing the attitudes of the current decision makers from both sides reveals a disturbing atmosphere.

What is this disturbing atmosphere? The social atmosphere which originated because of unsettled past conflicts followed with intensifying war of words where a sane mind cannot guarantee permanent peace or recurring hostilities in the days to come is a disturbing atmosphere in the context of Naga-Kuki relations in Manipur. Taking the lead role in creating disturbing atmosphere are powerful civil society groups, nationalists' armed groups from both sides not to forget numbers of press statements, articles published in media and war of words between battles hardened social media warriors in social media platforms.

Contested Claim to Manipur Hills

The endless debate on the claims and counter claims of being the traditional landowners of Manipur Hills has not find any consensus winner as both ethnic groups depends on their own source of history to be hundred percent accurate and its history beyond corrections. It is essential that historical truth need to be acknowledged duly to come to a permanent settlement but reaching a timely compromise between Nagas and Kuki in Manipur is unlikely as these two ethnic groups uses their distinct history to push forward the agenda of ethnic nationalism and therefore consciously chooses not to close the ongoing debate. As their claim to hills of Manipur is the life blood to their ethnic driven nationalist movement.

And I shall not dwell deeply on the debate on who has the right claim to the Manipur Hills. Rather I shall add

how the debates are carried out and present my short reviews on the debate:

Kukis Injuncts

A Kuki writer wrote that the rich cultural heritage and neat administrative setup which is the chieftainship system practiced by Kuki tribes enabled their predecessors to rule over the Naga tribes in Manipur Hills, as a result the several Naga villages paid tribute to the Kuki chiefs. Based on these historical facts, he claimed that all the hills of Manipur belong to the Kukis. Based on accounts of colonial writers and traditional account, the writer is not exaggerating when he say that Kuki chiefs of the past could easily subdue and uprooted several Naga villages since Naga social set up was a village republic where inter village feud dominates their social, economic and political life, the main reason why Kuki chiefs could subdue them and captured their vast lands. But he will be exaggerating if he meant all Naga villages paid tributes. All that changed with the rise of AZ Phizo lead Naga movement, Phizo could gain solid support from fellow kindred Naga tribesman living in Manipur hills as they are of the same stock and had also suffered terribly for such a long time at the hands of powerful and well organized New Kuki groups and Meitei entity. Had the Kukis and Meites been nice and cool to the Nagas, I feel the flames of Naga Nationalist Movement won't have spread like a wildfire in the hills of Manipur. So now employing the rhetoric of Kacha Nagas or absence of Nagas in Manipur would not make up for the past dominance. In fact, Kukis must not forget that when Meiteis speak of Manipuri unity it include Kukis too.

Nagas injuncts

That Kukis are refugees from Burma, arriving late and settling in the

ancestral lands of the Nagas with British help. To support the Kukis refugees' theory, apart from oral history, Naga writers would present hard evidences such as Government of Manipur reports on resettling Kuki Refugees, administrative reports of British Political Agents, extractions from history books by colonial writers and contemporary writers, order passed by then President of Manipur State Darbar.

My reviews on the debate

Kuki and Nagas will not make any political gains in this generation by continuously engaging in meaningless debate on their history and yet failing to settle territorial disputes. Rather its time they should focus on taking equal responsibilities for the hurt caused to each other in the past and finds a way out before it's too late. In the end, people cannot decide everything from historical point of view shutting our eyes to the present reality. And what I find disgusting is that both ethnic groups will cry victim after what they have done to each other. I again urged the readers to analyse how their predecessors treated each other when they first met and also count from the first year, they came into contact not starting from 1880, 1917 or 1992 onwards.

Nagas and Kukis in the same situation

Therefore the young minds must seriously learn to start thinking beyond ethnicity even if the current decisions makers are not in a mood to settle their differences in order to construct their relations for the sake of harmonious future before they replace the older generation not forgetting that past generations had hurt each other, more so, the present generation are in the same situation whether they like each other or not. Submitted

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Continued from Yesterday Issued

Youth and Contemporary Issues

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

Fourthly, The Government's policies have weakened the PDS and reduced its capacity to provide relief from food inflation. The APL/BPL division has led to large-scale errors of exclusion denying the poor access to cheap food grains. There was a national outcry at the planning commission's fraudulent estimate of poverty quantified at only Rs. 32 per capita per day for urban areas and Rs. 26 per day for rural areas. But these estimates continue as the yardstick in all targeted policies.

The proposed Food Security Bill is highly centralised Bill that not only retains the targeted system but increases the categories in the priority (BPL), general (APL), and excluded categories, further dividing the poor. All the entitlements are made conditional. The central government will continue to override the state governments in deciding the number of households eligible for subsidizes foodgrains. All entitlements are made conditional on state governments accepting the Centre's framework of neo-liberal reforms, which include anti-people measures like cash transfers and food coupons. This will eventually dismantle the PDS and facilitate the takeover of the food economy by agribusiness and corporate retailers.

What We Can Expect From Depoliticised Students/youths.

Since the early years of the 20th century the people of NE tried to bring political transformation from monarchy to responsible government, from part 'C' state to Territorial council, then Union Territory, from union territory to Statehood. Even some districts of Assam became fully fledged states like Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh,

Mizoram and Nagaland. Still to day most of the youngsters are in the movement of political violence. The socialist cause - the emancipation of humanity from the exploitative conditions of imperialism and capitalism - released tremendous energy within the youth population. The same case was happened in the global context also such as the advance of the socialist movement, the struggle against fascism and the wave of national liberation movements sweeping the third world witnessed active participation of youngsters everywhere, often playing a key role in shaping the course of political events. Its impact could be felt in other spheres too like literature, art and culture.

This trend continued in the post-war period, especially in the third world, with the continuing triumph of anti-imperialist national liberation struggles and revolutions. The socialist project, however, came under serious challenge worldwide during 1970s. The post-war capitalist world itself was undergoing major changes during this period, with the social democratic consensus giving way to the ascendant neoliberal ideology of free markets. By late 1970s, momentum of movements too started weakening.

Contrary to global context, in the earlier phase of 1980s in the NE youths were driven to action not only to defend or secure their immediate and partisan interests but also instilled with larger causes like uneven distribution of wealth and development. Democratic system provided a vision and hope for democratic politics in future. It was

this vision, which inspired a good numbers of youths around the NE to become politically active, participates in struggle and movements, play heroic roles in them and make commendable sacrifices. But response from the government was completely nil. So, violent activities were the consequence of it. Ultimately instead of democratic movement maximum numbers of youths are in favour of political violence with arms. That is why emerging of class contradiction by conceiving the idea that it is in between reconicalisation and decolonisation process. The former phase of movement was redesigning the constitution and later it was reinvention of their own constitution. That means the conflict situation seems to be more and more spiral.

Even the civil societies when the mobilizations were on immediate issues related to government policies on education and employment, there was always an undercurrent against the system as a whole, a strong collective desire to transform society and transcend the existing system. Radicalism had also led to major debates over the role of the youth movement in social transformation. The youths' movement as a contingent of the larger democratic or revolutionary movement led by the oppressed people could give political direction of the region. Its role was envisage as one, which plays a supportive role in class struggle, providing it with intellectual and multi-class support and also serving as a recruiting field for future cadres of the oppressed people's movement.

The political economic changes since 1970s, particularly the advent of international finance capital driven

globalization, had profound implication on politics as a whole. The more advanced capitalist countries converged on economic issues; the desirability of free markets, withdrawal of the state, privatization and deregulation, the inevitability of globalization etc. In fact, the terrain of political economy itself became marginal to debates among the radicalists; the field of culture and identity became far more important in triggering ideological debates and determining political choices and outcomes. If that is in this direction instead of solidarity division after division will be coming up lastly creating enmity among the oppressed people and fighting each other will be the goal of them. Here also the youths are playing important role to minimize voluminous of internal contradiction.

The ideological impact of these changes on the students and youths since late 1980s was three fold. First, as far as fighting the 'system as a whole' is concerned, with the weakening of overarching ideological appeal of socialism, masses of students and youth became increasingly less radical or more status-quoist. Secondly, feeling of empathy for the exploited sections of society and sense of solidarity with their causes witnessed gradual erosion. Thirdly, collective activism and its reaction were replaced by growing individualism, careerism and competitiveness. So such powerful force is more and more approaching towards depoliticisation. In this critical days of our people how they dream about social security in the welfare state function of India.

(To be Continued)