

# Editorial

Friday, April 19, 2019

## Revisiting reality

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.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : [imphaltimes@gmail.com](mailto:imphaltimes@gmail.com). For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.

# Realisation Day; Echoes the wake up call of the indigenous people.

By - **Safur Rahman Maibam**

Manipur literally translated as the "Land of Jewels" is a society which is multi ethnic in character. Manipur is bounded by Nagaland to the North, Mizoram to the South, Assam to the West and Burma lies to its East. Manipur before the advent of British Rule in the year 1891, was able to fight back Burma and other neighbouring countries and its domination was extended to parts of Burma, Naga Hills District (now Nagaland) and Assam. Manipur regained its sovereignty from British Rule on 14 August 1947 before India got it. The Manipur Constitution Act 1947 was promulgated on 1st July 1947 and election were held on 11 & 18 June 1948 in the valley, on 26 and 27 July 1958 in the hills area which was based on the universal adult franchise. The political history of Manipur is unique. After Manipur merged into Indian Union the right of the indigenous people is threatening because of immigrants and State arrogance. Series of popular hues and cries have been raised from time to time for the protection of Indigenous people of Manipur. Immigrants issue & British Rule - Manipur lost its sovereignty to British following the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. During the British period, Manipur devised a very effective system of controlling the entry of Non-Manipuri called the permit or passport system. The permit system was brought under the Foreigner's Department in 1931 for revenue and Judicial purposes concerning the foreigners. This help in maintaining the distinct identity of Manipur. Immigrants issue & Manipur as an independent entity- Manipur regained sovereignty on 14th August 1947 and Manipur adopted Manipur Naturalization Act 1947. It differentiated foreigners (including

the Indians) from Manipuri. The permit system to enter into Manipur was continued to retain by the Manipur Council Resolution No. 4 of 1948. It controlled and regulated influx of Non-Manipuri and formed and important item of revenue. Immigrants issue after Manipur merged into Indian Union- In 1949 Manipur became a part of India. In the first time Manipur was put in the Part-C status and the pre-existing permit system was arbitrarily abolished by the then Indian Chief Commissioner of Manipur Mr Himat Singh on 18th November 1950. As a consequence, the uncontrolled & unchecked influx of nonindigenous people in all major, small town and most of the villages in the valley and hill district occupying the land, building, snatching away jobs, eroding/monopolizing of economy affecting the day to day life and peaceful coexistence. This has caused slow transformation in outlook, identity and culture of Manipur. It gives impact in demography, socio-economy and polity of Manipur. Migrants assimilated to Manipur society by marrying local woman & changing the surname to Meitei surname. Many localities of Manipur were flooded by the migrants such as Serou, Sugu, Seiton, Jiribam, Thangmeiband, Khurai, Nagamapal, Keisham pat, Chingmeirong etc. Two major economic hub Thangal Bazar & Paona Bazar are controlled by Non-Manipuri. Because of political unrest in Burma many people were infiltrating through the porous borders of Burma & settled in hills area but they are difficult to differentiate because of common in language with the local. Non-Manipuri has the potential to snatch the political rights of indigenous people. In the last Panchayat election of Manipur a student organization called

Kangleipak Students Association pointed out that 66 Non-Manipuri were contesting in the election. The apprehension about the subordination of Indigenous People Rights, Human Rights and displacement of indigenous people from their own land by the outsiders in the course of Act East Policy, Construction of Big Dam, Hydro Project, Oil drilling and extension of railways is deep rooted in the indigenous people's movement of Manipur. Series of indigenous people's struggle for existence- First phase, after 1950s Manipur facing a demographic invasion because of the absence of an effective mechanism to regulate entry of non-Manipuri because of this foreigner issue erupted in Manipur. In 1980s, The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) & The All Manipur Students' Coordinating Committee (AMSCOC) launched a strong agitation with the motto "Go Back Foreigners" demanding detection, deletion and deportation of foreigners from Manipur. The then HSLC examination was boycotted as a part of the movement & during the agitation two students martyr's Potshangbam Premananda (Lukhoi) and Huidrom Lokendro were killed by the forces. Their death anniversaries were clubbed & are being observed as the "Realization Day" by The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) on 17th April of every year. This is the first awake up call of the indigenous people. Till date the indigenous people's struggling for Rights was in a new direction. After a prolonged agitations, AMSU & AMSCOC come to an agreement with the then state government. Negotiations meeting were held on 22 July 1980 & 5 August 1980. They entered into the final round of

negotiation in the last meeting and signed the agreement consisting of 16-points. The agreement categorically mentioned that the government would start the process of detection, deletion and deportation of foreigners on the basis of the census report of 1951, National Register of Citizen 1951 and Village Directory 1951. It was also mentioned that a specific sub-section would be inserted in MLR & LR Act 1960 (Under section 158) as a preventive measure to check transfer of immovable properties from Manipuri to Non-Manipuri in the erstwhile central district. It was also clearly mentioned that the Government of Manipur agreed to send back foreigners in Manipur with citizenship certificate from West Bengal, Tripura and any other states of India to the state concern. But the government never implemented the agreement of detection, deletion, deportation of foreigners, the points of the agreement have remained only on paper. Second phase, In 1994s the agitation on immigrants issue erupted which came to an end with a memorandum of agreement signed between the state government represented by Chief Secretary and AMSU in presence of the then Governor on 9th November 1994. The agreement reaffirmed the agreement signed in 1980 between the representatives of AMSU, AMSCOC & State Government. Unfortunately even after the second agreement, the provisions contained in the agreement were never implemented. Third phase of the movement start for the protection of indigenous people with the demand of ILP system in Manipur by forming the ILP system Demand Committee on July 2, 2006. By induction of CSO, Joint Committee on Inner Line Permit System was formed on 4 July, 2012.

Continued on page 3

Continued from Yesterday Issued

## Youth and Contemporary Issues

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

### Consequences of Depoliticisation:

While sarcasm towards democratic politics among the masses created a depoliticized mainstream, reactionary hate politics of various shades reappeared in our country more overtly to the states of NE, which are neglected in all sectors. This has been in keeping with the growing space of identity-based politics in the period of globalization. While globalization has widened inequalities, the section of society facing oppression and discrimination on grounds of race, caste, gender, language, religion, nationalism etc. have been at a greater disadvantage. Marginalization of these oppressed sections, in terms of economic opportunities, has been complemented by increasing instances of physical violence and hate crimes against them.

The most common form of hatred politics witnessed in the NE as part of capitalist country is racial attacks directed against non-NE and immigrants - because they are stealing their jobs and spoiling their culture. Moreover neo-fascistic sectarian and communal violence of various kinds have witnessed a rise. Not surprisingly all energetic and potential youths have been at the forefront as well as at the receiving end of such violence. Majoritarian hatred politics has provoked its extremist counterparts within minority groups too. Terrorism of various shades, particularly those based on religion, is a complex phenomenon, which has several underlying historical, political and geo-strategic factors. However, a notable aspect of terrorism is that

most terrorist - especially those who carry out dreadful attacks killing innocent civilians - are young people. While many of them sign up out of the desperation of poverty and unemployment, some educated youth, even middle-class professionals, have been drawn into terrorist activities too which points towards the ideological appeal of religious fundamentalism. This can also be seen as the most extreme form of depoliticisation, where both the status quo as well as any vision for progressive social change has been rejected in favour of a thoroughly reactionary ideology, which simply flies one with hatred towards other faiths and dehumanises their followers. The final result of depoliticisation thus lies in barbarism induced by hate politics of various hues. Solidarity is far cry but enmity among the people of NE is more and more increasing. Some of them dream about supra state body instead of giving common aspiration of supra state organisation. So the two options - unite and perish are reflected in the minds of the organic intellectuals. Here also our youths open their eyes and try to give more political space to them.

### Youths/ Students in the Neoliberalism:

As we know people are crying about their security, security of health, education, employment, food and lives. The whole range of oppositional movements developed during this period of LPG outside the ambit of the organised radicalism. These new social movements were by and large focused on single issues either related to human security,

environment, gender or racial equality, fair trade etc. They also shared the suspicion towards any kind of politics and political parties with the depoliticised mainstream. However, these social movements increasingly found themselves potholed against globalization and neoliberalism from their own point of view.

In the NE, dealing with diversity of opinions and views, democratic practice and open-mindedness had been found inadequacies. Even among the oppressed people they are fighting each other. Each of them tries to assert only the interest of their though reacted by other groups because of having other forms of oppression and discrimination based on ethnic politics. They never realized such uneven development and marginalized them are the outcome of capitalist economy. So some are talking about periphery from Delhi and other groups claimed that they are periphery within periphery. In short they didn't try to see the whole system and its failure. That means they are in the trap of parochial political culture to follow the idea given by their community leaders and try to put it in to practice. Community chief means democratic. Even global village has also chief though many scholars emphasise this globalization as global village. But the problem is that some groups of people who are in the urban areas are influenced by participant culture and could act as political actors of it. However their new relationship with modern machines in day to day life create big barrier in between two individuals and people to people.

Maximum number of remote areas in the hills of NE, people gets mobiles and its tower but not electricity, hygienic water and health care facilities. They could contact people living in abroad but can't contact their neighbours.

The economic changes ushered in by the neoliberal regime also entailed major changes in the sphere of education as well as the structure of employment, which shaped the thinking among the youths. The thrust of education policies since 1970s was towards the withdrawal of the state and increasing privatization and commodification of education. With the welfare state on the decline, state funding on education - especially university and higher education - tapered off. Student fees were increased substantially making higher education costly, thereby restricting access for the lower income groups. While further expansion of state funded higher education was halted, profit-making private institutions emerged on large scale. Conceptually, higher education came to be viewed by students solely as a vehicle for building their professional careers, on which they tended to narrowly focus. Comparative grades and percentages became the overwhelming concern, and not what was actually being learnt either inside or outside of lecture halls and seminar room. Moreover, increasing expenses on higher education also came to be seen as financial investments meant to yield returns after a given period, with students from middle or lower income families' often taking bank loans to finance their studies.

(To be Continued)