

Editorial

Thursday, August 22, 2019

Restoring public education system

Education is considered as the cornerstone of socio-economic and cultural development of a society or country. Education has emerged as the most important single input in promoting human resource development, achieving rapid economic development and technological progress, creating a social order, based on the virtues of freedom, social justice and equal opportunities. Education plays a vital role in the present world, for not only raising the standard of living but also as a mechanism to prevent conflict situations. It has been widely regarded as the best opportunity for an individual to acquire and broaden the knowledge and skills to make informed judgments and choices for a better and fulfilling life.

With the recent unfortunate incident where a minor girl was allegedly murdered inside a private school hostel and the issues and disruptions that followed, the focus is once again on the education system and the manner or method of implementation of laws and regulations in the state. Much debated, discussed and deliberated as it is, the condition of government schools in the state still portrays a sorry figure, statistically and figuratively. Preceding governments have framed policies, announced 'radical' changes and promised revolutionary steps but nothing has yet to materialize from all the efforts. The present government is no exception, and the government schools remain as a symbol of hopelessness, a last resort and refuge for the utterly helpless and rejected lot, if not worse. Shunned by the high and mighty, these schools remain mere numbers with nothing much more to write about, except of its failures and hopelessness and above all, its potentials.

It is these stigmas- the accepted belief that there is no future for students in government schools which drove the parents to clamor for private schools in the state. This rush fuelled the scramble for establishment of more private schools to the extent that it is now practically impossible to control or manage them, not that the state government has done much in this regard on their part till now. Over the past few decades, lower middle-class and middle-class families have come to believe that private schools will ensure their children a bright career. The subsequent mushrooming of English medium private schools have led to the decline of public schools and many public schools that once teemed with children are facing closure. Others have shrunk and cater to a homogeneous section of children from working class and migrant families.

Data from the Department of Primary and Secondary Education reveal that many schools in the state were "temporarily closed" during this academic year. Schools were also merged with another. While officials argue that the department never declares a school "closed" - the official word for it is "zero enrolment" school - the fact is that a large number of public schools function with 10 to 15 students and one or two teachers, or with no students and only teachers.

The school education sector thus becomes a happy hunting ground for profiteers who do not give the slightest regard to the actual welfare and development of the students. On the other hand, the state government is still shouting hoarse of plans to overhaul and revamp the government schools, with even a few 'model schools' to show for it. It is still spending a considerable amount of money and resources with very little expectations. Evidently, there are very serious and grave lapses and mistakes in the system of government education system, from planning to implementation and evaluation. It is only when these faults are identified that corrective measures can be formulated and taken up.

Another big hurdle in the effort to improve the government schools in the state would be the patronizing attitude of the government authorities, partly from the fact that their children are in private schools or in schools outside the state. It would be interesting to observe their response and commitment to the development and welfare of these government schools if their children are made to study in these schools.

Where there is a will there is a way, and so if the state government put their heart and soul into it, a solution is never impossible. All it would require is determination, perseverance, dedication and willingness to go the extra mile. A good public education system can contribute to state-building and reduce- if not remove- much of the social hurdles on the path of progress and prosperity. With so much at stake, shouldn't the state government roll up its sleeve and make a real and genuine effort to change the society?

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WHAT VOWS DOES A CATHOLIC PRIEST TAKE?

By : Sanjoo Thangjam

Catholic priests take up to three vows, depending upon their affiliations.

Since various religious institutes exist within the Catholic Church, the vows priests must take vary depending upon their affiliations. Not all priests must take the same vows. Most institutes require that priests take vows of CHASTITY and OBEDIENCE to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. However, some institutes exist, such as the Eastern Rite Catholics, that do not require priests to remain celibate.

VOWS OF POVERTY

The strictest Catholic institutes require priests to take a vow of poverty. Other priests do not take this vow at all and can engage in the world's economy and can even hold side jobs. Whether or not priests have taken poverty vows, all clergy are admonished to live

modest and simple lives by abstaining from unnecessary extravagances. Those who do take vows of poverty generally receive a meager living stipend for basic personal needs. Any goods they use, such as housing, vehicles and clothing, do not belong to the priests themselves, but to the institution.

VOWS OF CELIBACY

The Western Catholic division of the Catholic Church selects priests who have taken vows of celibacy. However, this is not universal for all practitioners of the faith; priests in the Eastern Rite typically are married. The tradition of celibacy vows dates back to medieval times. The Catholic Church argues that it does not mandate any Catholic to abstain from marriage. By default, it does not mandate abstinence as sex is only permitted in a heterosexual marriage. EVEN SO, MOST DIVISIONS CHOOSE PRIESTS

AMONG CANDIDATES WHO HAVE TAKEN THE VOW OF CELIBACY.

(Exceptions include people who were previously sexually active before converting to Catholicism. CATHOLICS BELIEVE MARRIAGE SHOULD ONLY SERVE THOSE WHO ARE TOO WEAK TO TAKE VOWS OF CELIBACY, AND CELIBACY OFFERS PRACTITIONERS A HIGHER SPIRITUAL STATE.) VOWS OF OBEDIENCE

Most Catholic priests take a vow of obedience, an attempt to put the good of the Church before their own personal good. They work for what they consider to be the betterment of the community and not their own personal benefit, and by doing so, they are dedicating themselves to the service of the church. They see the commitment as a means of obtaining ultimate freedom. The vow also mandates that priests

follow the order of the Catholic Church hierarchy, with the pope at the top, followed by the bishops. Priests may still appeal to higher authorities within the hierarchy if they disagree with a decision. Other Responsibilities of Priests Priests are responsible for the spiritual guidance of their practitioners, as well as for participating in community projects. Some priests live in communes, where they focus on meditation, prayer and study. Others work in the community, spending time visiting the sick, running community programs, conducting counseling services and holding mass and prayers. Some members of the clergy work in education as teachers for Catholic schools and universities in addition to their responsibilities in leading church services. The writer is a lay Buddhist and Human Rights' Activist for People Who Use Drugs (PUDs)

Bacardi Nh7 Weekender 2019 Announces Eclectic Artist Line-Up For Meghalaya

Karnivool, Intervals, Shubha Mudgal, among the artists to headline the festival this year

By : Vikash Singh

Meghalaya: August 2019 - India's happiest music festival is all set to take centre stage in the beautiful hills of Meghalaya from November 1-2, 2019. The fifth edition of the much loved BACARDI NH7 Weekender just got bigger and better with its exciting line-up of local and global artists.

The festival will see electrifying performances by international artists like Karnivool and Intervals, with more to be announced soon. Indian artists who will play at the venue are Shubha Mudgal, Benny Dayal and Funktuition. When Chai Met Toast and Raja Kumari. Among some exceptional talent from the Northeast set to perform this season are Soulmate: North East Blues Special, Imphal Talkies and Khazi Bloodz.

"We're thrilled to be back in Meghalaya for our fifth year in the state. Since our festival's journey began in 2010, BACARDI NH7 Weekender has programmed extraordinary talent for an equally passionate and growing audience of music fans. The festival began as a home for indie musicians to connect with their fans like never before, and over 10 years, it's been surreal to witness the festival grow in the most organic way - both sonically and as a community. With over 82% of our lineup making their festival debut this year, we hope to see fans, old and new to celebrate this decade of happiness with us." said Supreet Kaer, Festival Director.

Anshuman Gouka, BACARDI Director Marketing, India commented, "Ten years ago, BACARDI's passion for music and our inherent legacy of creating immersive experiences, led to a creative partnership with OML, giving India one of its first music festivals ever - BACARDI NH7 Weekender. Fondly referred to as India's Happiest Music festival, our commitment to providing unique experiences and showcasing true talent, remains undeterred. In the last ten years, BACARDI NH7 Weekender has successfully brought independent music to mainstream culture and we are confident that in the next ten years, the community will grow bigger and stronger. This year, we look forward to celebrating the festival, our fans and the spirit of always doing what moves us."

After its opening act in Meghalaya in November, the festival will travel to Pune from November 29-December 1, 2019, where it will celebrate a glorious decade of bringing the best musical talent to all music aficionados. Since its inception in 2009, BACARDI NH7 Weekender has

emerged as one of the biggest and most awaited music festivals in India. Over the last decade, it has featured over 600 artists from India and around the world across genres.

Those who've missed the pre-sale of tickets for the concert in Meghalaya, can now buy tickets - Season and Under 21 - from www.nh7.in.

A quick glimpse into what's in store this year:

Karnivool

Critically acclaimed and widely followed, Karnivool are a progressive metal band from Australia. With their acclaimed 2005 debut, Themata, and 2009's ground breaking follow-up, Sound Awake, Karnivool established themselves as one of the most vital forces in progressive modern music. Now a major international draw, appearing at festivals such as The Big Day Out, Sonisphere (France), Download (UK), SXSW (US) and Hurricane (Germany), and gaining high praise from international press titans such as Rolling Stone, Billboard Magazine, Kerrang! and Rocksound, Karnivool have belied expectation again with album number three, the brazen and introspective, Asymmetry. This expansive new work was designed in the band's Perth studio over two years, before in late 2012, the Karnivool caravan headed across the continent to bunker down with legendary producer, Nick DiDia (Rage Against The Machine, Mastodon) at Byron Bay's Studios 301. A new album is expected this year, with the band having teased it to its audience on social media. This will be the band's 3rd time in India, and their first time in Meghalaya with BACARDI NH7 Weekender.

Intervals

Intervals is a Canadian progressive metal band. Formed in Toronto, Ontario, the band has toured throughout Canada and the United States with bands such as Animals as Leaders, Protest The Hero, Between The Buried and Me and The Contortionist. Formerly featuring Mike Semesky, Lukas Guyader, Matt De Luca and Anup Sastry (the drummer from Skyharbor, a Delhi-based prog-metal act featuring artists from the world over), the band currently features Aaron Marshall with a host of guest musicians. Having made an instrumental release titled The Way Forward in 2017, the band is currently on tour across the world promoting its new, unique sound.

Shubha Mudgal

Shubha Mudgal is a Hindustani classical vocalist trained by some of the finest scholar musicians and gurus of the country. Awarded the Padmashri by the Government of India in 2000, she has received several accolades and awards and



has also worked on several projects related to music education. She was also awarded the Nana Shirgaokar Chair for traditional music at the Goa University from 2013 to 2015. Along with her specialisation in Hindustani classical music, Shubha Mudgal is also well known for her work with popular music. She performs with a group of accomplished musicians and composers with whom she has had a long association such as Dr. Aneesh Pradhan, Sudhir Nayak, Aditya Balani, Gaurav Balani, Anil Chawla, Srijan Mahajan and Nitin Joshi. While she has performed multiple times at the happiest music festival, this is her first ever performance with BACARDI NH7 Weekender in Meghalaya.

Soulmate

Soulmate is a blues rock band from Shillong, Meghalaya, India. Often referred to as legends of the rock and roll and the blues scene in Shillong, the band is primarily made up of Rudy Wallang and Tipriti Kharbangar, although they frequently team up with session musicians when on tour. Tipriti is considered one of the finest female singers to have emerged from North East India and Wallang remains one of the most respected blues guitarists of India.

Benny Dayaland Funktuition

Primarily inspired by the genres of Funk, Soul, R&B, Disco, and Pop, Funktuition is a rare combination of a live band playing dance music. The band with Benny Dayal on vocals, Carl Fernandes on bass, Alok Merwin on synths and keys, David Joseph on drums, Allwyn Jeya Paul on percussions, Joshua Satya on guitars, and Toby Joseph on sound, started out playing covers of funk music from the '80s and '90s, while their front-man, Benny Dayal, began to make his mark in the film music industry.

Though Benny's Bollywood career kept him supremely occupied, he, along with the band were determined to evolve into their own identity, and slowly started writing their original music. This mellifluous funk band has been making waves in the Indie music scene since its inception in the year 2011, also at the same time traveling all across the country and the world playing Benny's Bollywood hits but with a funk-twist. They finally released their first Tamil-Funk EP 'Funk Katcheri' in January 2019 prior to which they dropped their first music video 'Oora Paaru' in November 2018. The band has a unique energy which started making waves ever since they came together. They have also collaborated with various other artists for gigs and generated some fantastic numbers to the delight of their audiences. Their biggest asset is their ability to adapt funk into regional languages such as Tamil, Hindi as well as English. They also love putting in a bit of R&B, Disco, and Soul which effortlessly blend with the genre.

When Chai Met Toast

When Chai Met Toast is a four-piece, neo-folk band from Cochin, Kerala formed in 2016. Their debut EP 'The Joy of Little Things' was released in 2017, followed by their second EP 'Believe' in 2018. They are constantly touring multiple cities and are a festival favorite across India. Their YouTube channel is going strong with over 3 million collective views. Apart from their releases, the band has also worked with the stand-up comedian Kenny Sebastian on the soundtrack of his Amazon Prime Show, 'Die Trying'. They are known for their foot-tapping energy and unique brand of infectious happy music, which transcends age, genre and even language.