

# Editorial

Thursday, December 19, 2019

## Journalism and activism in the time of decaying democracy

A journalist must seek the truth from facts, from the facts the truth is revealed. The truth sought would be then spoken to power. The fact now is the government is not allowing any democratic voice against its policies, at the same time claiming that peaceful protest is acceptable. The views from all sides must be heard, the principle of democracy, is being violated. The facts are peaceful protesters are stopped from protesting. These facts reveal the truth that there is a severe gag on democratic voices. With a severe gag on democratic utterances from the public, it would be a myth that we are ruled by unbiased people. When it comes to unbiased reporting, it is only possible when the rulers are unbiased, in a world where democracy is. Ours, as of now, is not the case. Many have lots their lives now protesting against CAB. The protests that erupted in Assam and Tripura has travelled far and wide in Indian campus where students are being brutally lathi charged. When it comes to unbiased reporting, it is only possible when the rulers are unbiased, in a world where democracy is. What matters here for us is the facts and the facts matters because they reveal the truth. The truth is what has been said above.

Where does journalism end and activism begins? This question does not have a clear answer. The divide does not have a clear line. Much debates have happened amongst those who study journalism, as a profession. When we see objectively in the world of journalism, we find that it is also a world of political beings. We need to understand this crisscrossing of journalism and activism. We must remember the great political and social movements and the journalists who were involved in it. How can we forget the young Marx who was a journalist. We should remember John Reed, the American journalist whose body is now buried in Kremlin as a respect to his service in the great Russian revolution. On the one hand, we have journalist who laid the foundation of American invasion of Iraq by reporting wrongly that there are weapon of mass destruction in Iraq. On the other hand, we have journalist with strong political views against exploitation and oppression such as Amy Goodman persecuted by the American government. When we look into India's fight against British Colonialism, we see Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak becoming journalists. We should also remember our puwari. Lamyamba Irabot is the father of journalism in Manipur. These instances make us think about the crisscrossing that journalism and activism have and the blurring of boundaries between the two. Lamyamba Irabot was a journalist because Manipur at that time needed journalism and he saw it. It is tool of the people to seek the truth from the things that they see happening. Further, the profession though is the most important it should not take away our humanity.

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Water pollution is the contamination of water bodies usually as a result of human activities. Water bodies include lakes, rivers, oceans aquifers and ground water. Pollution results when contaminants are introduced into the natural environment. Introduction may be from releasing inadequately treated wastewater into natural water bodies which lead to degradation of aquatic ecosystems. In turn, this can lead to public health problems for people living downstream. They may use the same polluted river water for drinking or bathing or irrigation. Water pollution can be grouped into surface water pollution and ground water pollution. Sources of water pollution are either point sources or non-point sources. Point sources have one identifiable cause of pollution, such as a storm drain, wastewater treatment plant or stream. Non-point sources are more diffuse, such as agricultural runoff. Pollution is the result of cumulative effect over time. Water is typically referred to as polluted when it is impaired by anthropogenic contaminants. Due to these contaminants it either does not support a human use such as drinking water or undergoes a marked shift in its ability to support its biotic communities such as fish. Natural phenomena such as volcanoes, algae blooms, storms and earthquakes also cause major changes in water quality and the ecological status of water. Water pollution is a major global problem. It requires ongoing evaluation and revision of water resources policy at all levels

## Water Pollution: Causes & Effects

(International down to individual aquifers and wells). It has been suggested that water pollution is the leading worldwide cause of death and diseases. Water pollution accounted for the death of 1.8 million people in 2015. India and China are two countries with high levels of water pollution. An estimated 580 people in India die of water pollution related illness (including waterborne diseases) every day. About 90% of the water in the cities of China is polluted. As of 2007, half a billion Chinese had no access to safe drinking water. In addition to the acute problems of water pollution in developing countries, developed countries also continue to struggle with pollution problems. In a report on water quality in United States in 2009, 44% of assessed stream miles, 64% of assessed lake acres and 30% of assessed bays and estuaries square miles were classified as polluted.

Surface water pollution includes pollution of rivers, lakes and oceans. A sub set of surface water pollution is marine pollution. One common path of entry by contaminants to the sea are rivers and also directly discharging sewage and industrial waste into the ocean. Pollution such as this occurs particularly in developing nations. In fact the ten largest emitters of oceanic plastic pollution worldwide are from the most to the least ,China, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria and Bangladesh largely through the rivers Yangtze, Indus, Yellow, Hai, Niles, Ganges, Pearl, Amur, Niger and Mekong and accounting for 90% of all the plastic that reach the world's ocean. Large gyres (vortexes) in the oceans trap floating plastic debris. Plastic debris can absorb toxic chemicals from ocean pollutions, potentially poisoning any creature that eats it. Many of these long lasting pieces end up in the stomach of marine birds and animals. This results obstruction of digestive pathways which leads to reduce appetite or even starvation. Causes of ground water pollution include: naturally

occurring (geogenic), on-site sanitation system, sewage, fertilizers, and pesticides, commercial and industrial leaks, hydraulic fracturing, and landfill leachate. Surface water seeps through the soil and become ground water. Conversely, ground water can also feed surface water source. The specific contaminants leading to pollution in water include a wide spectrum of chemicals, pathogens and physical changes such as elevated temperature and discoloration. While many of the chemicals and substances that are regulated may be naturally occurring (Calcium, Sodium, Iron, manganese etc.) the concentration usually determines what is a natural contaminant. High concentration of naturally occurring substances can have negative impacts on aquatic flora and fauna. Oxygen depleting substances may be natural materials such as plant matter (e.g. leaves and grasses) as well as man-made chemicals. Other natural and anthropogenic substances may cause turbidity (cloudiness) which block light and disrupts plant growth and clogs the gills of some fish species. Pathogens or microorganisms found in contaminated surface water that have caused human health problems include: Burkholderia, Pseudo mallei, Cryptosporidium parvum, Giardialamblia, Salmonella, Norovirus and other viruses ,parasitic worms including Schistosoma type. Organic water pollutants include: Detergents, disinfection by-product, food processing waste, insecticides and herbicides, petroleumhydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, chlorinated solvents, perchlorate, various chemical compounds found in personal hygiene and cosmetic products, drug pollution involving pharmaceutical drugs and their metabolites. Inorganic water pollutants include: Sulphur dioxide from power plants, Ammonia from food processing waste, Chemical waste as industrial by-products, fertilizers containing nutrients-Nitrogen, Phosphates. Heavy metals from motor vehicle, secretion of cresol,

preservative into the aquatic ecosystem, silt (sediments) in runoff from construction sites. Some of the waterborne diseases are-typhoid, cholera, paratyphoid fever, dysentery, jaundice, amoebiasis and malaria. Chemicals in water also have negative effects on our health. Pesticides- can damage the nervous system and cause cancer because of the carbonates and organophosphates that they contains. The main problem caused by water pollution is that it kills organisms that depends on these water bodies. Dead fish, crabs, birds and seagulls, dolphins and many other animals often wind up on beaches ,killed by pollutants in their habitats ( living environment). Water pollution disrupts the natural food chain as well.

Down to our tiny land log state Manipur; are our water bodies (may be rivers, lakes or public ponds) pollution free? I don't think so. We all see the health condition of Nambul River which falls in Loktak Lake. Then what can we say about the quality of water in Loktak Lake? Probably Loktak could have been badly polluted as seen from the health of Nambul River. Not only Loktak Lake, lake like lamphel pat is also highly polluted by the bio-medical waste of RIMS and other Hospitals. Very recently the problem of pollution in Kongba River was reported due to the medical waste from JNIMS. **Rejuvenation and conservation works of Nambul River began at Thong Nambonbi from 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019 which was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister before Parliament Election's Model Code of Conduct was enforced but the progress of the initiated work is yet to be seen and it looks like tiger on the paper.** Nambul River as such, is one of the most polluted river in the world. If we are to maintain a healthy Manipur, we need to make Loktak and our water bodies healthy which in turn need to keep Nambul River clean and our mindset clean. That's the only solution else we are bound to extinct which no legality in this Universe can save us.

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## Article 370: Testimony on Ground

By : Inamul Haq

On August 05, 2019, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was put into lockdown. On that fateful day, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah introduced in Parliament legislation to abrogate Article 370, 35(A) and reorganize the J&K state by bifurcating it into two Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, with only the former having a legislative assembly. In a brief floor speech, Shah called Article 370 discriminatory on the basis of gender, class, caste, and place of origin, and contended that its repeal would spark investment, development and job creation in J&K. Next day, after the key legislation had passed both of Parliament's chambers by large majorities and with limited debate and discussion, Prime Minister Modi lauded the legislation's passage, declaring that J&K is now free from their shackles and predicting that the changes will ensure integration and empowerment. All of his party's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition partners supported the legislation, as did many opposition parties (the main opposition Congress Party was opposed). The move also appears to be popular among the Indian public, possibly in part due to a post-Pulwama, post-election wave of nationalism that has been

amplified by the country's mainstream media. Proponents view the move as a long-overdue, master stroke righting of a historic wrong that left J&K underdeveloped and contributed to conflict there. Basically, Article 370 was the only agreement that holds the autonomy to the state of J&K within the Union of India. Autonomy or self-rule empowers the state government to address governance and administrative challenges and weaknesses with a greater degree of self-determination. The spirit of autonomy dictates that since decision-making is a local process, there is a greater probability that the locally-formulated government programmes will cater to the particular needs of the local community. Autonomy also gives the local community the opportunity to make their leaders accountable. However, most of the provisions of the Article were taken away secretly. The most visible provision of it maintaining special status to the state and it was also taken unconstitutionally on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019. After communication blockade, I spend 20 days in the university and finally, I planned to travel back home. On 25<sup>th</sup> August, when I stepped out of the airport, I feel that the city is burning. People were salient as they were mourning of their beloved ones. As

soon as I came out from airport, I went to government established taxi stand to book the cab. After asking the fair detail to my destination, I was not in such a position to book the cab. So, I decided to comeout from the airport. I got success in coming out and I reached Dalgate Srinagar, where some other passengers were waving hands to the private vehicles for lift. I left from Srinagar from 11 am and my travel distance to my destination was only 45 minutes. However, I reached 3:30 to my destination. The vehicle, who gave me lift had to remain stranded on the main road, until army vehicles can pass. In the vehicle, there were other people and I hesitantly said, this is disgusting, and we are worse than slaves. What will happen, if there is patient in the vehicle. They remained tight-lipped and did not utter a word. I felt that they are scared and are not comfortable to discuss or debate the recent move of Indian authority. In Kashmir, I remained for at least two months. During this period, I analysed the anger, depression, anxiety and alienation among people towards Indian State and found more pro-Pakistani sentiments. On 27<sup>th</sup> August, when Modi and Imran Khan addressed the United Nations General Assembly, people were eagerly for Imran Khan's Speech. After

his speech, there were pro-Pakistani and pro-freedom marches in Kashmir. As, I was an attendant in bone and joint hospital Barzullah Srinagar. I felt people rejoicing and appreciating the speech of the Imran Khan and making mockery of Modi. Without communication, internet and basic facilities, I imagined how strong Kashmiri people are. They are adjusting their habitual according the environment. But there is a question to the rest of India: does Modi and Amit shah integrated Kashmir with India or they created a wall between Kashmir and India. The deep alienation among people will come out in one way or other way and it will be more destructive. Frantz Fanon argues that in the struggle for freedom from colonizers, the alienation comes among the colonized as they are forced to the wall and they are being tortured. All this force the colonized to take guns in their hands and to stand face to face with forces, who are on the edge to take his life. The youth who are getting more inclined towards militancy is increasing. Looking at the current figure, the rise of local militancy is constantly increasing. This shows that India failed to win the hearts and minds of the people of Kashmir and trying to suppress them with blood and iron policy. The growing radicalisation reminds the great historian Kaliahan, who wrote in Rajtarangini that Kashmir can be won by power of spirit, but not by the power of sword.