Editorial

Songs of the dark times

"In the dark times, Will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing. About the dark times" ¯ Bertolt Brecht

The song of the dark days are powerful, it carries the pain and anguish of the people. It wakes up common people from their slumbering. What is happening around the world is a matter of serious concern for every politically civilized people. People's uproar in Hong Kong is going to the longest in 21st century world. President of USA Donald Trump impeached, Indonesia facing mass protest and in India over 20 people have been killed while protesting against Citizenship Amendment Act, National Registration for Citizens and now updated National Population Registration.

When one diagnoses the issue that sparks the nationwide chaos, it is a complex one. When few people are opposing the CAA and the NRC, almost many are up on the apprehension about the safety of their land, culture and economy. When those supporting the act have their own narrative of passing the act as a means to strengthen the country a stronger one, critics are of the opinion that it only sabotage the idea of India that has been existing after the British left in 1947. When political rivals strike terming the CAA a narrow political gambit to built vote bank by the ruling, common people are afraid that those illegal migrants getting citizenship may shattered the job opportunities of the citizens of the country.

People at mainland opposed NRC, NPR and CAA, while in Assam and other part of the North East states including Manipur oppose CAA but welcomes NRC or NPR.

The kind of debate over this issue has divided the country into many groups. And among these groups North East States in India unites on this particular issue of CAA, NRC or NPR. The region felt insecure in protecting the identity, culture and land from the migrants so they are opposing the CAA. It is because of this apprehension that the North East people felt that there is an urgent need of detecting the illegal or legal immigrants.

The gloomy and the grave songs need to be listened and every civilized leader should shed tears and felt the pain so that the country remains united. Or else, an idea which has been pushed up to redefine India, in the name of strengthening the country may cost the country – the fate of the then USSR.

"AWAKENING," a two day residential training for adolescents

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FXB India Suraksha as part of its project Mukti-an Anti Trafficking project to address issues of human trafficking and child sexual abuse, organized a two day residential training programme titled, "Awakening" for the Adolescents from different schools across Imphal East and Imphal West on issues related to Child protection and safety at Youth Hostel, Khuman Lampak, Imphal on 23rd and 24th December, 2019.

The main objective of the programme was to make children aware of their rights and the mechanisms available to ensure their safety and security and how they can be change agents in ensuring the same. 63 adolescent students were part of the two day residential trainining programme.

The programme was conducted as part of project Mukti-an Anti Trafficking initiative to combat human trafficking and child sexual abuse in Manipur implemented with the support of ECPAT Luxembourg since 2015 in Imphal and Ukhrul. In the last 4 years project Mukti did not limit itself to concentrate within its proposed project areas but spread out to different other districts to propagate its mission to combat human trafficking and reduce instances of child sexual abuse from. Through the project more than 10,000 school students were made aware, above 15,000 adolescent boys and girls trained and above 30 adolescent clubs were formed.

M.. Premchandra Singh, ZEO, Zone II inaugurated the two day training programme. He appreciating the effort said, "This residential training is first of its kind and is of high value. We hope that the students get exposure to learn about issues which they may not have discussed earlier. Child protection issues are of high concern and it is very necessary to start a dialogue amongst children in

order to prevent abuse and exploitation."

The two day training programme was facilitated by Mr. Sunil Meitei, Project Officer, Imphal, FXB India Suraksha, Wungreiso A Sangh, Project Officer, Ukhrul, FXB India Suraksha and Grace Jajo.

During the programme the participants were trained on the basics of Child protection and safety where they were told about the roles and responsibilities that families, communities, institutions and as a nation has in order to create a safe space for children to lead their life in dignity. The participants were informed about the different forms of abuse, how to identify whether there is an abuse or not, the preventive measures and redressal Mechanisms available.

The children were also given sessions on life skills and how they can be ambassadors to prevent violence and exploitation towards children. Children were given group work too to showcase their thoughts on how to bring change as child ambassadors and the initiatives they wanted to take up in their respective schools on trafficking in persons and child sexual abuse. The two day training programme also witnessed recreational activities such as games, dancing, playing and storytelling.

Awakening is a unique initiative that seeks to empower adolescent girls against human trafficking and sexual abuse. This residential training programme aims to bring together adolescents children in the age group of 10-18 years from different schools of Manipur, who would be trained as Peer Leaders. These participants would in turn lead the movement against human trafficking by educating their friends and classmates. The primary objective of the initiative is to bring about change in attitudes and knowledge on gender related issues and thereby empowering the adolescents to combat trafficking.

Computational Thinking(CT):Education for 21st Century

By:Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh
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Today people have realized that education translates into opportunity and hope for the future. They have understood the fact that the ability to get an education, to foster creativity and curiosity, to seek answers will allow mankind to continue to grow. The education culture in India has reached interesting times. Teachers are more qualified, students are more aware, schools have better facilities, and fee structure have gone over the roof. Modern day education is certainly aided by computers, projectors, the internet and much more. Everything that can be simplified has been made simpler. Technology and Science have explored every aspect of life. Internet provides implausible knowledge and there is no end to it. Education in India includes Primary, Secondary and higher education. Elementary Education goes on for 8 years, Secondary and Senior Secondary education goes on for 4 years. Higher Education in India starts after passing the higher Secondary Education and post-graduation courses are generally of two to three years of duration.

The current system of education in India needs many changes. Teachers need to experiment with different styles of teaching. One must understand, teaching must change not the students. In a World where methods and people change all the times, it is said to see that education follows the same archaic method. It is time for a change. Navigating the challenges and opportunities of 21st century requires flexible and creative thinkers who can adapt to an increasing pace of change. Mainstream Education system in India is not creating such thinkers. The problem is as much about how students are taught, as much as it is about what is being taught. We need to teach students in the same way as we want them to act. Creatively, collaboratively, constantly interacting and driving to output with structure and logic. And

we need to teach them content that helps them interpret many of the new challenges. Teaching Computational Thinking (CT) answers both challenges. Computational Thinking (CT) is thought processes involved in formulating a problem and expressing its solution(s) in such a way that a Computer-Human or machine can effectively carryout. Its constructivist play-based approach to teaching and CT content are what our schools needs for developing 21st century learners who will not only become better job seekers but also job makers. We believe that introducing CT education early on would be game –changing in Indian schools. India's education system has struggled to teach both fundamental and as well as higher order thinking skills and CT education at early ages could be a highly effective way of trying to fill these gaps. While other interventions are also touted for addressing such gaps, we believe CT education is particularly important for Indian context.

Educational agencies around the World are now recognizing the potential of CT education. In the largest global curriculum change in the past decade, CT is being introduced to children as early as in Kindergarten and primary schools. Finland, which leads on traditional education benchmarks, is reinvesting itself by integrating CT across existing subjects. As automation and productivity increases are replacing execution – oriented jobs and other countries are moving ahead, India cannot afford to fall behind. A quality CT course is not just about learning a programming language. In these classrooms, learning is project-based and teachers are felicitators. They focus students to work in groups and reflect on their own thinking processes. Teaching coding and CT from an early age is important as the benefits of developing higher order thinking skills are greater in early ages. Contrary to the popular belief, school can deliver a well –designed CT course even in low resource environments. Much of core of such courses do not even require computers. A movement called CS unplugged includes several activities and lessons on how to teach computational concepts and ways of thinking without any technology. These activities try to get students to understand fundamental concepts in an intuitive way. For example; to teach students about sequence in Algorithms, a teacher might ask students to write

out the steps for making an ice- cream sundae. The thinking required to instruct someone to make this sundae in the same step-by-step thinking needed to design algorithms. At higher levels where devices can enhance the learning by making the concepts come alive, one lab equipped with 20 to 30 low-cost tablets or laptops per school could be adequate.

Interactive coding courses that have access to devices can allow students move at their own pace. Teachers are encouraged to group students by ability and students do much of their learning by doing and so can take more or less time as needed. The majority of students in India do not experience interactive and best practice teaching. There have been many calls over the years to improve teaching quality and make learning more child centric. The 2005, NCERT guidelines have tried to make child centered and constructivist pedagogy the norms in all subjects. However it is difficult to change the way teachers currently teach. Coding and CT education is new to many schools and so teachers are often looking to learn how to teach it. Teachers training on coding education become an excellent opportunity to promote child-centered learning. Since coding and computational thinking (CT) courses for this age group are project- based and naturally pedagogy is more likely to actually happen in the classrooms. Certain research also shows that when teachers experience teaching in a more interactive manner in one subject they often transfer those habits into other subjects. India has started to recognize the importance of equipping the country's future generation with CT skills. There are budding programmes across a spectrum of delivery formats; hardware-driven, software-driven; in-school; after-school and in boot camps. The Central Government's policy think- tank NITI Aayog recently launches Atal Thinking Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India with a vision to cultivate our million children in India as Neoteric Innovators. The Government is providing the hardware infrastructure to foster makers for 500 schools to begin with. Several organizations have developed programmes and curriculum and currently piloting them in schools across the country. For example. Curricula like that of CSPathshala has created an open-source curriculum for grade 1-8 which is being piloted in over

100 schools this year. Andhra Pradesh has been experimenting with the Google Code to learn course in over 300 of its residential and tribal schools. However the overall scale of these programmes is still a drop in the ocean compare to 1.2 M Schools in the Country.

If we are to truly get quality CT education into every school in India, we will need to convince state government to adopt it as a core part of the curriculum. The key to this lies in taking an experimental approach that encourages many more prototypes to emerge, linked together by a structured evaluation framework that build evidences for what works. The cultural and physical diversity of India require that the essence of computational thinking (CT) education be adopted to multiple contexts. Government will engage when they see evidences of outcomes and a pragmatic path to implementation. Much like what computation thinking education teaches us, now is the time to build on the various small-scale initiatives to test, debug and create for scale. Ultimately if campaigns such as make in India are to succeed, we need more creators in India. Hence serious investment reforms in how we develop our human capital is required. A good computational Thinking Education initiative can be catalyst for that change. As we participate in the digital revolution, we need to train our children on skills for the digital age. Computational Thinking (CT) has been recognized as one of the key 21st century skills and involves understanding a problem, designing a solution and expressing it in a form that a human or a machine can execute. CT has been introduced into the mainstream curricula in many countries and India has joined them with the "The draft National Education Policy 2019" recognizing CT as a fundamental skill. The education policy recommends teaching from age 6 using well designed worksheets. CSPathshala is an Association for Computing Machinery India (ACM India) initiative to bring a modern computing curriculum to Indian schools. To prepare our students to participate creatively in the digital age CSPathshala proposes an activity based unplugged computational thinking curriculum for primary and secondary schools.

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From Anti-CAB total shut down to pro-CAA rally: A Recap of how the tables have turned

By - Cecil Thounaojam

Ever since the Indian armed troops started pouring in Manipur in the pretext of Naga peace talk issue and as the winter session of parliament was slated to commence from November 18, people of Manipur had speculated if the downpouring was a preparation for what was going to come next as the passing of Citizenship Amendment Bill. It was certain that the Bill would be passed this time, given the BJP's manifesto, its assurances, and the absolute majority it enjoyed in both houses in parliament. At the same time, people were mentally prepared for the protests that were going to follow, as it was what they had witnessed the last time. It was as if the people and the government made the same calculation, and the preparations were done on both sides.

Manipur People Against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 (MANPAC) announced a series of protests against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 which would commence from December 8. MANPAC also announced to join the NE-wide protest by imposing shut down from 1 am on December 9 till 3 am on December 11. Following this, All Manipur Students Union (AMSU), a component body of the North East Student's Organisation (NESO), called for 15 hours total shut down in the state of Manipur on December 10 in support

to the total shut down called by NESO. Two more students' bodies – Democratic Students' Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) and Apunba Ireipakki Maheiroi Sinpang Lup (AIIMS) extended support to the intense agitation announced by MANPAC. It seemed like there was going to be a massive uprising that Manipur had never seen before.

December 9, CAB was introduced in Lok Sabha and Amit Shah re-introduced ILP in Manipur, too. Hell broke through. For a matter of fact, CM N. Biren Singh had already announced for a celebration, unofficially, claiming that Amit Shah had assured him over the phone for the implementation of ILP in Manipur. People of Manipur had already started panicking then, leaving MANPAC in a state of confusion. Soon after assuring the people that the agitation should continue, MANPAC suspended its agitation against CAB. BJP supporters celebrated the announcement with thabal chongba and bursting crackers. Manipur government grandly celebrated the announcement in Bheigyachandra Open Air Theatre and declared holiday, too. However, AMSU announced to go ahead with their 15 hours total shut down. Soon, 5 student leaders of AMSU were arrested.

Following these series of events, an extraordinary Gazette notification in

the regard of extending ILP in Manipur has been issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. In no time, CAB was passed in Rajya Sabha and NESO announced Dec 11 as Black Day.

Despite many opposition, Citizenship Amendment Bill had become an Act with the assent of President Ram Nath Kovind late on Thursday night. MANPAC announced to conduct a review meeting soon, but was postponed in no time. Nevertheless, they held a review meeting and re-affirmed to intensify protest against CAB. MANPAC organised a protest, but it was stopped by the police. A deafening silence prevailed in the state of Manipur against CAA while the rest of northeast, especially Assam and Tripura, were burning.

NEFIP also called to intensify the protest and organised a candle light vigil in front of Western Kangla gate. NEFIS and MUSU also organised protests against CAA in Manipur University, with mass arrest of NEFIS members.

Meanwhile, a group of citizens of Manipur from different walks of life came together and protested in front of Western Kangla gate, supporting the anti-CAA movement and showing solidarity with Assam and Tripura. The group continued to protest at Kangla and Khwairamband Keithel in the following day. There was also

strong criticism from the people of Manipur on social media regarding the silence of MANPAC in terms of anti-CAA protest. On the other hand, CPI, Manipur State Council, announced for a general strike on December 19. While addressing a crowd for organising a successful and peaceful general strike, L. Sotinkumar was arrested. After CJM Imphal West released him on bail, he was re-arrested by Manipur police on December 21. L. Sotinkumar along with other leaders and activists were slapped with sedition charges. In another case, a YouTube vogler, R.K. Echanthoibi was arrested for criticizing Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in a video for unfairly claiming the credit for ILP in Manipur. Recently, a transgender rights activist was also threatened by Manipur police to delete her post about criticizing CM N. Biren Singh regarding the extension of AFSPA for six more months and post an apology on social media.

Amid all of this, the group of citizens of Manipur came out again and staged another protest against CAA in Iroishemba and Khwairamband Keithel, singing protest songs, holding placards, and chanting slogans. The very next day District Magistrate (Imphal West) imposed Section 144 of the CrPC in Imphal West for 2 months. Surprising it may sound, BJP - Manipur Pradesh also announced for a rally in support of CAA on December 29 as a part of the pan India campaign.