

Editorial

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Understanding 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 happens, 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 live 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.

The relationship between science and technology

By: Harvey Brooks

Science, technology and innovation each represent a successively larger category of activities which are highly interdependent but distinct. Science contributes to technology in at least six ways: (1) new knowledge which serves as a direct source of ideas for new technological possibilities; (2) source of tools and techniques for more efficient engineering design and a knowledge base for evaluation of feasibility of designs; (3) research instrumentation, laboratory techniques and analytical methods used in research that eventually find their way into design or industrial practices, often through intermediate disciplines; (4) practice of research as a source for development and assimilation of new human skills and capabilities eventually useful for technology; (5) creation of a knowledge base that becomes increasingly important in the assessment of technology in terms of its wider social and environmental

impacts; (6) knowledge base that enables more efficient strategies of applied research, development, and refinement of new technologies. The converse impact of technology on science is of at least equal importance: (1) through providing a fertile source of novel scientific questions and thereby also helping to justify the allocation of resources needed to address these questions in an efficient and timely manner, extending the agenda of science; (2) as a source of otherwise unavailable instrumentation and techniques needed to address novel and more difficult scientific questions more efficiently. Specific examples of each of these two-way interactions are discussed. Because of many indirect as well as direct connections between science and technology, the research portfolio of potential social benefit is much broader and more diverse than would be suggested by looking only at the direct connections between science and technology.

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Social Evolution of Meiteis



By- Dr. Sougajjam Priyokumar Meitei

The Meitei ethnic group primarily has two forms of religious systems. One is Vaishnavite group, a sect of Hinduism and other is Sanamahi, a revivalist group of Meitei traditional religion. However, this difference in belief system cannot separate between these two groups because Meiteis are compactly bound together by social history, kinship system, marriage system, rites & rituals, totems & taboos, food habits and attires. Therefore, being a Manipuri, understanding the social history and cultural evolution of Meitei people by studying its various forms of social institutions is very much necessary.

From the very beginning, sense of oneness among the individuals and social groups is brought up by social organisation or civil society organisation, of which village organisation, local clubs, Meira Paibi (Women Association) may be mentioned. Whenever, there is any political or social crisis, these organisations play an important role in resolving the issues. Keeping in mind this common Meitei belongingness, sense of solidarity must be retained irrespective of the religious belief system, caste or creed. Reviving the cultural identity through revivalist movement such as giving due importance to Ebudhou Pakhangba (ancestral God), developing Meitei Script (Meitei Mayek) are handful contribution of revivalist movement in Manipuri society. The leaders and intellectuals who dedicated in such struggles should be paid

high regards. Paying respect as well following to the pathways of such selfless leaders who restlessly work for their society is the duty of the present Meitei generation. Meanwhile, it is indeed required to enlighten the youths who are future pillars of society through proper education and enculturation in bringing inclusive development of the nation.

The Meiteis are considered invariably as early people of Manipur. It had its own kingdom covering the areas surrounded by Kabaw Valley on the east, Naga hills on the north, Chin and Lushai hills on the south as well as some areas of Barak Valley on the west. Apart from it, boundaries were extended further through invasion towards east as well as towards west. Meitei or Manipuri kings were never remained isolated from its neighbouring people. Meiteis reside not only in Manipur, but also scattered in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Barak Valleys, Tripura, Guwahati, etc. There are evidences that some kings of Manipur had brought other peoples from various other regions, new cultures from neighbouring lands to strengthen own society and own culture. For Example, King Churachand brought Teli people to Manipur in order to meet the demands of vegetable oil in the light of economic needs. Therefore, acculturation, assimilation and cultural integration were in practice knowingly or unknowingly.

Owing to the Meitei kings being very powerful, external influences could not engulf Manipuri culture, rather the king got other ethnic people assimilated to the host society. Even, Hindunisation, could not wipe away the cultural identity of the Meitei, rather adopted and modified the Hindu elements, synthesized a new one with traditional culture. It shows the excellent creativity of Meiteis. Hindunisation was like immunisation to Meitei culture and made it immune to afflictions caused by other culture. Meitei culture had undergone beautification by fabrics of Hindus and indigenous elements being dominated by the later. In Manipuri culture, despite of Hinduism, Meitei ideals, art, knowledge, worship patterns,

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Manipuri kings had numerous noblemen and intellectuals (Maichous) who persistently facilitated the kingship. There were proper military system, record system, cultural and heritage preservation system. Meitei king fought Burmese, Chinese and could defeat them at different intervals. It means that there was capable kingdom having motive of kingdom expansion, neither marginalised nor separated from the essential features of a kingdom. One wise thing, even though people adopted Hinduism, the ill practice of caste system, child marriage, sati system etc were never in a position to victimise the Meitei king and his people. Some amicable concepts such as penalising for clan or sub clan endogamy which has scientifically cause and effect relationship from the genetical point of view as well were introduced. And, such practices are not similar with that of caste system and inter caste marital restrictions. The whole practice of the Manipuris was worth mentioning and done in a very calculative way for cultural growth.

After assimilating Meitei Brahmins (Bamons), the Meitei cultural identity became significant. Meitei style of dishes were enhanced and promoted to a larger extent by Meitei Brahmins. A total of 108 dish items coupled with aesthetic values, cooked in ceremonial feasts & festivals, rites and rituals is really a wonderful gift to the cultural resource of Manipur. The then kings at their different eras, made strategic planning for social, cultural and political growth. To strengthen religious system, Brahmins were made assimilated,

Muslim were made assimilated to strengthen military and economic system to the Manipuri society. Also, by witnessing the art forms of Vaishnavism, Meitei people created several innovative and unique things. Manipuri classical dance, Manipuri food, architect of Govindajee temple is some of such creations. Manipuri rice field (mostly in other states of north east) is famous because of Meitei Brahmins or Bamons for the unique styles of cooking.

Nevertheless, worshipping of Tulsii plant (Holy Basil) in the centre of courtyard is acculturated, the uniqueness in Manipuri style is still observed and identifiable, in the forms of praying, design of Tulsibong, design of mounding lump of soil or concrete altar where Tulsii is planted and circular sacred space around the Tulsii plant. Making fermented fish, Ngari, even though the fish is imported from Assam or Bengal, it is Manipuri style and will remain as the unique elements of Manipuri culture. From this progressive cultural phenomenon, it is revealed that Meitei culture did not lose anything by Hindunisation. Rather, Meitei culture had undergone beautification by amalgamating Hindu and indigenous cultural elements where uniqueness is distinctly observed. In fact, Manipuri culture is occupying a significant position in the universe because of Meitei ideals, arts, skills, food habits, etc. which can invariably be enshrined up to top classical level.

Meitei ideals are still capable of culminating integrity, peace and multi-cultural development in the state.

Contd. from Yesterday Issue

'Nationalising Losses, Privatising Profits Has Become Govt Policy': BMS President

Do you think that policy decisions like demonetisation and GST hurt the MSME sector that generates most of the jobs in India?

Demonetisation and GST initially affected the economy but now they have already readjusted. So that doesn't make much of a difference.

Why has the BMS disassociated itself with the other ten central trade unions?

BMS did not separate from them. They separated from us. BMS is the largest trade union. We had only one condition for joining all the trade unions - that party politics should not come in the way of the trade union movement. The moment it does, we are not with you. Whoever is in power, let us unite on the issue of labour. We should look at government policy in terms of their attitude towards labour. If they are against labour, we should oppose it and if they are for labour, then we have to appreciate it.

There's also a view that the BMS, as part of the RSS, is close to the BJP government and might be prejudiced in its sympathy to the Modi government on even anti-worker issues.

No. Never. BMS is the only organisation that has protested against the slightest anti-worker moves. We have opposed such moves immediately. For example, this labour code - we are the only people who have objected. Then on the public sector - 92 PSUs have been listed for disinvestment. That's another question that I wanted to jump to.

There also, our public-sector unions have immediately come together. We have already started our agitation.

Why do you think the NITI Aayog has taken this decision to disinvest even from profit-making PSUs now? Earlier it was just loss-making or sick PSUs, but now they are saying that they'll disinvest from profit-making PSUs as well.

Why do you think they are doing this?

Because India doesn't have a policy on the role of the public sector. What is the role of the private sector? No political party has a view. They mix up the role of the public sector with the private sector and the private sector with

the public sector. This is applicable to whether it is NDA or UPA or even the Communist government in West Bengal. Everybody mixes it up. So what we are demanding is that the NITI Aayog should formulate what is the role of the public sector in national development.

First, you decide, then you interpose. Go for privatisation or nationalisation accordingly. Before 1991, everybody was going for nationalisation. After 1991, everybody is for privatisation. The public and the private sectors have their own roles to play in India's development. Nationalising the private sector or privatising the public sector cannot be a solution. Before that, there should be a discussion with all stakeholders, then only it should be announced.

What do you think of the view of the industry that the government has no business doing business? Do you agree with that?

There also the government has shown a double standard. For example, when the IL&FS issue came out, the government was thinking of assisting those people. That means the government's policy is

nationalising losses and privatising profits. This is the policy. Whichever is running on profits, they will go for privatisation, wherever there is the private industry making a loss, the government is taking over.

This is wrong and has been going on for the last 28 years. Since 1991, when globalisation started. When Kingfisher went into a loss, immediately Manmohan Singh said that we are going to take over. So, this is the wrong policy. They are playing with public money. Nationalisation and privatisation both are not medicines or an eternal cure. They should be done with caution; they should be done after discussion with all stakeholders.

There's also this argument that because of the stringent labour laws, many small enterprises are not able to scale up. The industry is demanding more flexibility. They say that they can't let go of workers easily even if they are making losses. They can't hire workers on short term even when there are temporary export-related demands. What is the way out from that?

(To be Contd.)