

Editorial

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KCP Nando escaped from custody is a threat to Manipur

“Justice delayed is justice denied.” William Ewart Gladstone the then Prime Minister of Britain wrote. It's over 100 years that the political thinker had written this sentence understanding the needs for rendering of justice to the victims without delay. And the delayed in delivering justice to baby Lungnila Elizabeth has now been denied as the prime accused has been escaped.

2017 AD, the current year, where communication technology reached its peak, where people across the globe are fighting for human values and rights, when political leaders promise justice for all, where human rights is the concerns for the world community, legal complications or perhaps system errors still leaves thousands in India deprive of what they deserve. Even dead souls would have floated between heaven and hell waiting for the judgment on where he would go.

Its over 16 years, that soulless death body of 8 years old Lungnila Elizabeth, a student of class IV of Little Flower School, Imphal was found at Tera Sadokpam Leikai here in Imphal. The Indian system detent the culprits , who were reportedly involved in the killing of the minor without delivering justice for 16 plus year.

The year 2003, the year at which the minor girl was found death, cry for justice by punishing the culprits filled the air of the state. The inhuman heinous killing had shocked almost all people of the state and the thirst for blood of those child murderers joined the law enforcers in hunting them.

The kind of uprising was not because, father of Lungnila Elizabeth was a Minister of that time, but because no people in the state ever thought that there would be animals minded human being who can kill an innocent child for money.

The poor angel was allegedly kidnapped by the bloody murderers for ransom of Rs. 10 lakhs. She was kidnapped by the bloody murderers on November 4 of 2003 and her death body was found on November 12, 2003. Only God knows how the innocent child was kept in custody for 7 days by the gruesome murderers.

After so many years 3 out of 4 accused were in judicial custody after one accused identified as O. Deven @ Arnold committed suicide. And of the three accused the mastermind criminal identified as Th. Nando escaped from the judicial custody at RIMS where he was reportedly undergoing treatment for over 4 months.

May be because the then state law enforcers are not very efficient in dealing with the case, the case had been handed over to CBI on February 6, 2006. Since then, the trial of the four accused namely Thokhom Nando, Letkhousei Haokip @ James Kuki and Ningthoujam Rome Meitei are being conducted in Special Court, CBI, here in Imphal. Nando's escaped is a great threat to the people of the state as everyone knows his capacity of committing crime even he was in jail. Murder , extortion and killing occurred in the state have his name involved when he was in jail. One wander the kind of criminal activities that Nando may carried out if he is let free.

By now, many of the classmates of Lunilla Elizabeth may have been in government service or may be doing higher studies. For sure some of them might have been in the investigating agency or some may be in the Judiciary service. This is being said because if she survives she would be 22 years old by now.

The escaped of the main accuse speaks volumes and people suspect a conspiracy as election time is coming. Lets watch and see but let's not waste without showing our effort in delivering justice to our daughter.

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Utlou incident and the culture of Nupi Khongoinaba

By : Lukhoi Meitei

The attempt here is to probe what happened in Utlou that day. I try to gain clarity on what transpired in Utlou that day by casting away false arguments and debates which have muddled the horrible incident. The incident, I argue, should be seen as a case of violence against women. It is the regressive feudal practice of *nupi khongoinaba* which entailed the mob attack. I appeal that we must collectively apologise to women who were attacked that day in Utlou.

1. *Laan ba-Laana da ba* debate and the clash of cultures

Is the attack made to preserve the Meitei culture? There is a general perception that Meitei men were not abused or beaten in the mob attack. And, men are half the population, half the culture. Why were not men attacked? It implies that there is more to the attack than just preserving culture. There is no denying that there is a cultural difference between the people who attended the party and the people of Utlou. Yes, such a *yausang* party, where men and women drink and dance wearing clothes which men and women of Utlou do not wear, is not the culture of Meitei peasantry. And, it might be that only men drink in Utlou and not women. Therefore, the party might have offended the sensibilities of the people of Utlou. And, there is a clash. It might be a clash between two cultures, as people have presented in the mainstream media. Yes, many of us might not endorse such a culture but it does not mean that one culture is right and another is wrong. *Chatna ba- chatna daba* is very different from *laan ba - laan da ba*. Culture is about *chatnabi*. It is not about who is right and who is wrong. It is quite odd to say that one culture is wrong and another is right. A culture can be decadent, regressive or progressive. That's all we can say. So, the matter of *laan ba* and *laan daba* or right and wrong when it comes to culture does not arise. Therefore, it does not make any sense to raise the question that those women at the party were right or wrong.

2. Manipur, a dry and patriarchal state

Women organisations ban the sale and consumption of alcohol in most parts of the valley. The government banned the sale of alcohol in Manipur since 1991. However, people brew and consume local alcohol in Chakpa villages and tribal *khun-s* in the Imphal valley. Therefore, the state is not that dry. One logic behind the ban is that men drink alcohol and beat their wives and ruin their families. The ban reduces violence against women. The ban is justified to that extent, as it offers a temporary respite to women, especially to the women of the working class and peasantry. Not that alcohol is the reason for men beating their wives. Since the ban on alcohol is to reduce violence against women, it should not further propagate violence against women. The mob, we must remember, attacked women at the party. Most importantly, the ban is not because women drink alcohol. There might be few cases of alcoholic women who need help in the Imphal Valley. The ban is primarily against men drinking alcohol. If an anti-alcohol raid happens, who needs to be dealt with first. The apparent answer is men who were drinking and not women who were drinking. It is men who are in grave danger. Many of them have become alcoholics, and they perpetrate abuses. Now, should the incident of Utlou qualify as a well-thought-out raid in a private party for consuming alcohol? It seems not. It was a raid which ended up abusing women. Not only men, but even the state machinery seems exonerated, except the women in the party.

3. Utlou Incident, the feudal practice of *nupi khongoinaba* and not an expression of class struggle

We have seen that the attack seems to qualify neither as an attempt to preserve one's culture nor a well-thought-out anti-alcohol raid. Now, I examine an understanding of the incident which is worth settling. The narrative argues that the incident is an expression of class antagonism. Yes, there is a stark class difference between the people of Utlou and those who attended the party. Since there is a class difference, there is class antagonism. The people of Utlou might have been offended by the class arrogance of those at the party. However, what transpired in Utlou that day is not an expression of class antagonism or hatred towards the class arrogance of the Imphal elites at the party. If it were that, it would have also attacked the state machinery which was guarding them in the party. It would

have also attacked the compound where the party was going on. Moreover, the general perception is that the mob which attacked the party did not physically assault Meitei men who were there. It means the crowd knew where to strike. The women at the party were the targets. How can class antagonism be selectively expressed towards women? It means there is something more to it.

Khwaitrakpam Renuka in her 2011 paper on the pre-vaisnavite culture of Manipur mentions *khongoinaba* as a punishment awarded to women for committing crimes such as the murder of husband, abortion or stealing children. The feudal punishment finds it mentions in the *Chietharon Kuinpapa*, in a late 16th-century entry in the royal chronicle. Colonial ethnographer James Johnstone also describes the punishment in his book, *Manipur and the Naga Hills*. He says the convicted woman is stripped to the waist, her breast painted red (most probably lime and turmeric mixture) and tied with a rope on the waist and paraded in the market with people shouting, "come and look at this naughty woman!" This sort of public shaming specific to women is a feudal practice. What transpired in Utlou that day and afterwards in the social media is a case of *nupi khongoinaba*, where women were specifically targeted for violating the feudal norm that women cannot drink but men can drink. The attackers did not bother the men who were drinking. So, it is not about banning alcohol per se for reducing violence against women. It is about enforcing the norm that women cannot drink but men can through perpetrating more violence toward women. Hence, there was nothing progressive about the Utlou incident.

Furthermore, *leikai gi wayen*, which is an old and effective means to resolve disputes at the local level, should become progressive than the state's rule of law which often protects the rich and powerful. And, *leikai gi wayen* should abandon the feudal practice of *nupi khongoinaba*. Our society in the name of the culture should not carry this practice forward, just like we do not endorse the feudal punishment of cutting off limbs for

stealing royal garments anymore or the practice of *amang-aseng*. 4. *Achit Akom Yengba Pamba* and Social Media on Utlou Incident

Women, at the party, were attacked publicly. The attackers tried tearing clothes of the women; they beat up women and filmed them forcefully. *Nupi khongoinaba*, a wrong thing, happened in Utlou that day. To compound the wrong more, the videos of the incident made rounds in social media. And, the people watched and circulated videos of women, who were violated that day, all over the internet. "Come watch this naughty women," the words of Johnstone describing the practice of *khongoinaba*, we see it in the social media in many ways this time. It was a blatant display of *achit akom yengba pamba* and sadism. It warrants strong condemnation.

When it comes to the role of Manipur's mainstream media, ISTV's discussion on the matter is worth mentioning. The title of the discussion was "Orgy Like Parties During Festivals." The title suggests that the party was not an orgy. It was orgy-like. But, what exactly are "orgy-like parties"? Women wearing shorts, drinking and dancing with men is neither an orgy nor orgy-like, if there is such a thing as orgy-like. Therefore, the only meaning we can infer from the title of the said program in ISTV is that it wanted to use the word, orgy, anyhow. The matter is serious, and it should not be spiced up. We should not be following the mainland Indian media and avoid sensationalising such a thing. There is nothing happy and exciting about this incident.

Lastly, our struggle for social and material equality and national identity is not just against the rich and powerful who oppress us. Our struggle is not just against *mayang* oppressors. It is also against our past, the feudal practices we inherit. This regressive feudal practice came to our face when Utlou incident happened followed by a blatant display of sadism and *achit akom yengba* in the social media. The only redemption is a collective apology. We must collectively apologise to women victims of the Utlou incident for redemption as we are the ones who have carried forward the feudal practice of *nupi khongoinaba* till now unchallenged for centuries.

Babies who born deaf

(Importance of early identification of hearing loss)

Hearing loss is one of the most common birth defect. Most babies are born with perfect hearing but 2-3 in every 1000 healthy babies are born with hearing loss. Most estimate suggest that 1-3 per 1000 children are born with hearing loss. All parents wants their child to be able to developed their full potential. So, parents will experience a huge range of emotions which discover their child is deaf. Children relied on their hearing to learn from the beginning. It is crucial to identified any remedy problems as early as possible. With the right treatment, most children with hearing loss hear again and grow up normally if treated early, attending mainstream school (normal school), reading and speaking like peers. Congenital deafness may be of two causes in children. One is due to lack of hair cells receptors in the inner ear that convert sounds into pulse signals that activate the auditory nerve and the second cause is a malfunction of the nerves. A child may be born with what appears to be a normal inner ear, but the hair cells do not "communicate" with auditory nerves and the child cannot hear. The Newborn Hearing Screening programs ensure that every child born with a permanent hearing loss may or may not be associated with high risk criteria like absent Birth cry , Neonatal Jaundice, Birth Asphyxia,

Premature delivery etc are identified at the time of birth or before three months of age are provided with timely and appropriate intervention services before six months of age. Obviously, the earlier we can identify hearing loss the sooner we can begin to treat the problem and have better outcomes for that individual. Two types of newborn hearing screening tests are used: One is Otoacoustic Emissions or OAEs. In this, a miniature earphone and microphone are placed in the ear which stimulates the outer hair cells and response are reflected back to screen of OAEs instrument whether the response is PASS (Normal) or REFER (abnormal). The second test called the Brainstem Evoked Response Audiometry (BERA) or Auditory Brainstem Response or ABR. For this test, electrodes are placed on the mastoid of both ear and a ground electrodes on the forehead to detect responses. ABR and is an objective test to understand the transmission of electrical waves from the VIII the cranial nerve to the brainstem, in response to sounds and can identify babies who have a hearing loss. In some hospitals, babies are first screened using OAEs. Babies who do not pass on the first OAE test can be given a second test using the ABR. Both

tests are reliable. COCHLEAR IMPLANT Cochlear implants are much different than hearing aids, which only amplify sounds. By contrast, cochlear implants is a surgically implanted electronic device that bypass the hair cells and directly stimulates the auditory nerve. The implant generates signals that are sent to the brain via the auditory nerve. The brain then recognizes these signals as sound. If the child has severe to profound hearing loss and do not get benefit from any hearing aids, then a cochlear implants could be an effective solution. The younger the child receive a cochlear implant, the easier it will be for them to meet the critical period i.e. the first two year of life that are very important in the development of their crucial language, speech and communication skills. Children who are fit with appropriate amplification before 6 months can developed language skills on a par with hearing. However, children who receive cochlear implants before 18 months of age are better able to hear, comprehend sound and music, and can speak than their counterparts who receive the implants at a later age. The child who underwent cochlear implant should go for Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT- a speech and language training approach).

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Children who do not received early treatment suffered from language delayed, reading difficulty, delayed in cognitive skills leading to isolation, low self esteem, learning difficulty and behavioral problems. So, it is very essential for the baby/child is tested, diagnosed and get speech and language therapy with the help of hearing aids, cochlear implants and other treatment to meet development of speech and language milestone at right time. It is concluded that all infants admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) should be screened for hearing loss prior to discharge, Universal screening to be implemented for all infants within the first 3 months of life, the preferred model for screening should begin with an OAE test and should be followed by a BERA test for all infants who fail the OEA, comprehensive intervention and management programs must be an integral part of a universal screening program and education of primary caregivers and primary health care providers like ASHA (Accredited social health activists) on early signs of hearing impairment is essential.