

Editorial

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Restoring the picture of the similar regalia

The prolonged social tensions and manifestations of discontents have taken various shades and hues with the course of time. What is becoming more apparent with each passing day is not the clarity for the expressed demands, but for the implications of such agitations.

The increasing rigidity of the stances of the opposing parties has increased the necessity for an effective and speedy intervention. The state government however, having found itself caught in the middle as always, has started the process of implementing its tried and tested formula of dumping the whole issue with the centre, or at least making it seem like so. Meanwhile, the adamancy of the extremists in sticking to their ends of the issue has elevated the present imbroglio up another notch in complexity. But for all the wise talks and fervent campaigns, the very fact remains that political boundaries and areas are never constant, and can be changed.

The history of Manipur is one which is made up of the myriad cultures and customs being practiced in various forms and regions. It would indeed be a great insult to our forefathers in whose name we are preparing to take up the cudgel, if we are to part ways for the sake of our different cultures and customs. But if ever things have to come to such a pass, the prospect of bidding loving farewell is a distant dream. For those who are hatching the plots, there is more to life than a few acres of land or a few thousands worth of freebies. Who knows, the rest of the world might even leave their countries with us for more prospective planets while we are still drawing and redrawing our claims.

Interestingly, 'Matsyanaya' - an ancient concept of the Hindu politics is becoming relevant in today's Manipur. This was already put up by Imphal Times in this column.

'Matsyanaya' in English language means 'Law of the Fish'. It means the swallowing up of the smaller fish by larger fish.

If one takes a look in the present political trends of India the politics of Matsyanaya seems to be a fair game.

The Right wing political parties are now using it as a tool to reach their goal of making the country - 'a nation of one religion and one community'.

If a critic look from the other end of the tunnel, then definitely the idea itself is a gross violation to the rights of the indigenous community adopted by the International community.

If hard core Righties explain from their own perspective it is only means to make the country a strong nation.

If one agree to the concept of the right wing political party leading the government in the country then it is a fair game.

A common idea with a common religion is perhaps the only means to sort out the differences among the people.

It was only at the time when India became a one nation, one religion that the country will be united and if united then the country will become one of the most powerful country in the world.

The dream of the right wing group to make India a one religion nation started way back in the early seventies.

What is more interesting is that the law of Fish is the tool for their success but with slight modification.

Well the purpose of this write up is to make aware the people on how important is 'Unity' for a group to reach their goal.

Since the beginning all groups under the right wing idealism group remain united till today.

The popularly known Sangh Parivaar is one of the most successful conglomerates of many organizations which still remain united.

In this state of Manipur, it is unfortunate that the erstwhile nation have never successful in the making of a common united forum - be it about the regional political parties, or be it the civil society organizations or be it the intellectuals who were groom up in different schools of thoughts, they had and is never united even though they all comes up for the same goal.

Even those rebel groups which are expected to be over 50 in numbers in the state of Manipur still do not have a common platform to struggle for the same cause.

In the valley major rebel groups fighting for the restoration of the freedom of the erstwhile nation have failed time and again to unite themselves.

The same is happening among the Legislatures of even the ruling political party.

A recent example is the differences among them which kept the running of the government to a stumbling block.

We the Metieis, the Tangkhuls, the Kukis and the Pangal were good in showing their essence of patriotism and commitment, however, we lack the sense of self respect to convert what we delivered into action for the good of the people.

When the members of the Right Wing groups sacrifices and remain united to fight for their cause, we the Manipuris cannot even sacrifice a little bit of our own self for the cause of the region.

It is a matter of shame that we the Manipuri even failed to unite even by becoming the members of the right wing group.

Imphal Times didn't say this, but it is the recent political drama which had unfolded in public over the battle for power in the BJP led government in the state.

Let's not forget American revolutionary hero John Dickinson's war song of pre-Revolutionary "The Liberty Song", that was first published in the Boston Gazette in July 1768.

Where Dickinson wrote: "Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all! By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall!".

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Transgression of suppressed sexuality: Liberating the consciousness of indian women

By - Dr. Aniruddha Babar,

"Woman, especially her sexuality, provides the object of endless commentary, description, supposition. But the result of all the telling only deepens the enigma and makes woman's erotic force something that male storytelling can never quite explain or contain."

- Peter Brooks

The everlasting battle of devils of darkness with the angels of light has always been fought on the fronts of 'morality'. The questions of good-bad, just-unjust, fair-unfair, right-wrong, moral-immoral have been centred around the sacred fire of certain dynamic truth. Those who held the societal moralities in high esteem, those who abide by the moral laws of the society often judged as noblemen and those who transgressed were severely condemned. The battle of devils and angels is an age old battle. In this battle on the battlefield of ethics, it is women who have been victimized for eternity. The devils, angels and their ignorant masculinity persistently challenged the sacred femininity. The philosophy of morality was an outcome of an insecure masculinity that on one hand written the *Kamasutra* and on the other *Manusmriti*.

The Story of Adam and Eve is very pertinent. In Bible, *The Book of Genesis* tells us that Adam and Eve, the first man and a woman, contravened the command of God when they ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. According to the Biblical record it was Eve who induced Adam to eat the fruit. It reveals the undercurrents of "sexism" in Bible. Obeying the command of God to not to eat a fruit was an act of morality, however, the moment forbidden fruit was eaten the evil and sin was brought into the world-hence the immorality was introduced. In this entire story, poor Eve was shown as a villain who by an alleged act of "transgression" gave birth to darkness. The roots of Anglo-Saxon-Victorian morality can be found in the Book of Genesis that convicted Eve of moral transgression.

The epidemic of the virus of 'Male Paramourty' has spread all over the world since the dawn of human civilization. Women not only were condemned by the great ancient Indian civilization but also its contemporaries. The Hindu sage, Manu condemned woman to eternal bondage. The Greek, in their period of highest culture imprisoned their women within their houses and denied them all rights. The Spartans often destroyed women who could not give birth to healthy children. Even the most magnificent and civilized empire of Rome granted its women no legal rights. In Rome husbands had absolute control over their wives and treated them as slaves. Aristotle and Rousseau branded qualities like modesty, femininity, sensitivity and meekness as womanly and natural for the female sex. Plato did concede them an equal status in his Republic but that is stray example which should be further examined in the light of his shocking advocacy for the system of 'communism of wives' which shows his utter disregard and contempt for women that reduced the status of 'wife' merely to a public commodity. The socialist thinkers led by Karl Marx, Engels and others believed that women had been transformed from free and equal productive members of the society to subordinate wives and wards when humanity entered into an agrarian age which subsequently gave birth to the concepts, institutions of marriage and family which caused further degradation of status of a woman in society. No Civilization, No Culture, No Religion, No God had ever spare a woman from the wrath of the politics of 'Phallus of Patriarchy' that gradually destroy the sanctity of the physical and emotional existence of women in society.

The concept of Moral Transgression is standing on a very slippery ground. Since time immemorial this very idea

has been poorly understood by the ignorant, self-centered, egoistic, sexist mind-set of society. History has taught us, that every civilization that has prospered on Earth attempted to subjugate women by glorifying their feminine nature and inherent strength as well as destructive powers for e.g. various female Deities in Indian religious culture. The contradiction is visible. On one hand women have been made the slaves of patriarchy and on the other, the same patriarchy; by granting them the status of deity elevated their religious status. What mystery, what contradiction is this? How has the sexual objectification of a woman transformed into a religious objectification? The answers to the question lie in an age old conspiracy that made women the sacred object of veneration by declaring them as living goddesses. The moment living human beings starts to be venerated as a God or Deity they ceased to exist as a human being, as a result, their whole existence gets devoid of the human rights they lawfully claims by virtue of being born as human. God has no rights, isn't it? Declare woman a Goddess and deprive her of all her Human Rights, individuality and dignity. Glorification of compulsory suicide of woman after the death of her husband was done by declaring her *Sati-Maata*. The dark legacy of the 'Sati' tradition is still alive, adored and venerated in the form of various temples built in the memory of 'Sati Mata' scattered over different places in northern India. Sati tradition was the best example as to what extent the society could go to degrade the existence of woman. Another example can be given is of Temple Prostitution or Sacred Prostitution which is also known as Dev-Daasi tradition wherein women who were dedicated to the God by their parents were declared as married to the Deity of the temple and were required to submit and serve 'MEN' who would come to take blessings. The Dev-Dasi tradition was largely prevalent in southern part of India, however, presently the Dev-Dasis are rehabilitated by the efforts of government but the tradition is very much in function. The example of *Yallamma Cult* in state of Karnataka can be given; that still glorify the Dev-Dasi tradition. It has been seen that most of the women dedicated to the temple were of untouchable or lower castes who were not allowed to enter into the temple. The system that disallowed untouchables to enter the sanctum-sanctorum of the temple, appointed their women to serve the servants of the deities, where else in the world could we find the greatest example of hypocrisy and slavery?

The ideas of morality, the philosophy of chastity and purity are the result of gender conflict, masculine supremacy, sexual insecurity and fear. The morality can be defined as a set of principles that make distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour. The aforesaid simple definition of morality is self-evident of its hollow character. In Indian society, male species has always had a dominant hand. The socio-cultural status of women was comparatively lower than their male counterparts (let us not cite the typical examples of Gargi And Maitreyee all the time). The masculine ignorance mistook delicate feminine body as a sign of weakness and feminine beauty and sexuality always considered as threatening, damaging and challenging to the 'Tower of Power' of traditional male dominance. What is threatening should either have to be destroyed or brought under the absolute control. This is exactly what happened with women all over the world.

Therefore, in the interest of the existence of Indian civilization the efforts needs to be made to examine the gender conflict and the suppressive imposition of false moralities pertaining to sexuality upon women in socio-cultural premises of India. There is, undoubtedly, a link between gender conflict-superior female sexuality-insecure male masculinity-impositions of false morals to suppress female sexuality-transgression of sexuality and liberation of trapped consciousness. Therefore, fundamental inquiries into the field of morality, sexuality and human psycho-sexual behaviour needs to be made so that the traditional notions about the status of woman in Indian society could be challenged.

Man was born out of chaos and living in the chaos, and therefore it is unnatural to not to give justice to the basic human instincts of a man. I believe in a quote of William Shakespeare that says, "There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so". If we desire to demystify the fire of chaos in which we all have been burning since antiquity then the focal point of our inquiry and understanding should be female sexuality- a trapped sacred energy that since ages imprisoned in the dark chambers of moralities and ethics. In a world full of ignorance, and injustice the transgression by breaking the chains of laws, burning the mansions of injustice, hammering the ghettos of oppression, sometimes remains an only way towards the path of liberation.

There have been some voices of powerful men of honour raised from society against the historical oppression of women on the time scale of history. It was Raja Ram Mohan Roy from the then Bengal province in British India who condemned the brutal Sati tradition of Hindu society. The movement of Brahmosamaj started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy threw powerful challenge to the Brahminical social order of Hindu society. Another example is that of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule; who along with his wife Savitribai started first ever school for girls in India in Poona; changed the course of Indian society and further planted the seeds of 'feminism' in the nation. Phule was severely condemned by the society which was predominantly castist as well as sexist. The legacy of Mahatma Phule ably carried forward by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who advocated absolutely equal rights for women in every sphere of life. He was the one who introduced Hindu Code Bill in parliament when he was the first Law Minister of newly independent India; however, unfortunately, the sexist members of the then parliament raised their voices against the Bill and condemned Dr. Ambedkar as if his draft of Hindu Code Bill had blasphemous elements that could destroy the Hindu Society which characteristically based on Caste and Gender inequality. The stand of Ambedkar was indeed revolutionary since for the first time in the history of Indian civilization a 'Lawmaker', a 'Statesman' was determined to give the right to 'power' to women which Indian society denied for the centuries. Along with Dr. Ambedkar there was one more voice which was fearlessly arguing for the rights, especially sexual rights of women, it was no other than Raghunath Dhondo Karve, one of the greatest social reformers and professor of Mathematics, who relentlessly fought for the rights of women but as a return had to face severe discontent of sexist society of the then Bombay. Karve started his professional career as a professor of

mathematics at Wilson College in Mumbai. However, when he started publicly expressing his views about family planning, population control, and women's right to experience sexual/sensual pleasure as much as men,

the conservative Christian administrators of the college asked him to resign from the professorship. He then, along with his wife started first Birth Control clinic in Mumbai and also introduced Condoms for the first time in Indian society. When Karve and his wife started educating people, especially women about the use of contraceptives like Condom the fundamentalist, sexist people especially Brahmins of Mumbai started openly condemning him, accusing him of spreading dirt of sex in society. Those men had even gone down to such an extent of accusing him of encouraging and advocating "Free Sex among women" in society, however, undoubtedly, Karve and his wife Malati staunchly advocated the right to sexual pleasure of women among others. It was Dr. Ambedkar who stood with Karve throughout his struggle as his friend and supporter who himself too propagated the idea of family planning, birth control and liberty in his discourses on women's rights. These were the voices of people who gave utmost importance to the psycho-social-sexual-political liberation of women. Dr. Ambedkar said that, the growth of society should be measured on the scale of growth of women in society. How true, and how apt! It was people like Roy, Phule, Ambedkar and Karve; released women who were chained in the invisible *sanctum sanctorum* of the "temple of unjust social order" that on one hand condemned and on the other venerated the women as goddess, as mother, as Shakti.

The hypocrisy and double standards of Indian society has been successfully killing the soul of women irrespective of their social status. The Freedom of sexuality and sexual expression is a natural right that has been consistently denied to women. Today, a woman can fly, can rule, can cast her influence in every sphere of life, but does she own her own body and feelings? Does she have a right to sexual pleasure? Is she empowered enough to make sexual choice? Can she give justice to her sexuality without being made a victim of politics of guilt and target of judgmental society? Does she have right to challenge dominance of male sexuality which causes 'Bedroom Politics of Power'? It is important to understand that the female sexuality has been ruled and governed by male chauvinism against which women from time to time tried to revolt and therefore, to subvert the patriarchal norm a free discourse as to the oppressed and oppressor, positive shades of women's sexuality, desires, self-pleasure, safer-pleasurable sex, sexual exploration and positive communication on affirmative sexuality has to be initiated. The 'recognition' and 'acceptance' of woman as a human can change the dynamics of society. Relationship between man and a woman should not reduce merely to the covenant of power, but must remain as a bond of freedom, liberation, understanding and love.

**** The writer, Prof. Aniruddha Babar is a PhD, MA (IGNOU), LLB (G.L.C, Bombay), LL.M (University of Pune) and is presently the Asst. Professor of Political Science Dept. Of Political Science Tetsu College, Dimapur, Nagaland. Earlier he was an Advocate at The Bombay High Court OS/AS. He can be reached at Mobile: 08692925420 or WhatsApp: 09462996985