

Editorial

Thursday, January 16, 2020

Indigenous People's Movement must also defend the environment

The wealth of the indigenous people is not just the land but also the things that grows on it, lives on it, rest and dwells below it. Therefore, it is imperative that when we struggle to save the indigenous people we must also include our environment, our plants and animals, in the discourse. Indigenous people's movement must include the conservation of our surroundings. We should not just remember the relationship between various indigenous communities but also these communities have with their environment.

The destruction of the environment by local people as they need more space and more income have affected the environment. However, a place like Manipur in anyway cannot contribute much to the destruction of the environment at the global level. The blame should squarely be handed over to multinational companies who destroy the environment globally. Manipur cannot escape from the wind of destruction that is sweeping across the world. We can wait for them to come here and destroy the environment. We should be very careful in allowing things in the name of development that affect our environment. Anyway, whose development we are talking about. Can the destruction of the environment go hand in hand with the development of the indigenous people?

The indigenous people and their environment are intertwined. Can indigenous culture be dissociated with the environment in which it grew up? These questions must make us see the relationship between the two. The two must go hand in hand. Our forests are now being destroyed, hills that dot the valley are losing their green coverings fast. Illegal mining is rampant. Our indigenous animals, including the indigenous dog, Awang Huijao or Haofa, is now endangered. Shrinking of paddy land, destruction of wetland and forest must be addressed properly. Many of our indigenous plants and animals are now endangered. Even our indigenous domestic animal, Haofa, popularly known as Tangkhul Hui, is now endangered. Our rivers are severely affected, wetlands are shrinking, flooding is becoming a major issue which destroy the livelihoods of many. Will the indigenous people recognise their environment after some decades? How are we to call ourselves indigenous if our forest, hills, pants and animals are gone? We will be indigenous people living in concrete jungles, mine quarries and barren land.

The responsibility should not be just for the government. It is also the people who are responsible for it. It is our responsibility to defend and safeguard our environment. We cannot wait till a different reality knocks on our door and we find ourselves lost in a new world where we do not recognize our surroundings.

Destroyers of Civilizations

'Regarding news', Menon would tell cub reporters. 'The basic principle of news may be what Charles Dan of the New York Sun voiced a century ago - man biting dog; but taking it seriously in the changed social and media scenario would be like comparing the Wright Brothers aircraft with a Boeing 737. While talking to journalism students, Menon would add a few more points to this observation.

'The dog and man story was created when the reporting field was nascent with very limited scope. Now you have a lot more subjects on your plate to deal with. Vast strides have been made in the fields of audio visual communications, transport, industry, socio-economic changes, globalisation, opening up of markets, tourism, medicine, sports, wars, international terrorism, refugees and diplomacy.

And the most important of them all - absence of competent, well informed leaders to meet these challenges.'

The lecture would be invariably followed by his favourite quote from Herbert Casson to warn future journalists to keep an eye on the back brained people who occupy positions of power.

'The fear, and many other feelings that we must get rid of or bring under control are the back brain activity. It contains instincts - mainly lower grade feelings like rage, hate, fear, greed, cruelty and lust, and a few of the higher grade feelings such as love of offspring.

For the last 10,000 years, there has been a struggle between the front brain and back brain people. Here and there, a body of front brain people would create a civilization and invariably, the back brain people overpowered and destroyed it.

In India, Assyria, China, Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome, civilizations were created by the front brained people, and destroyed by the back brained class.

After warning that the struggle is still on, Menon would continue: 'The back brained are dominant in several countries. It is a tragic fact that in the streets of our proud cities, there are thousands of back brain people - the Goths, Huns and Vandals of our times.

They are the sort that destroys civilizations. They walk past our noblest buildings, waiting their chance to pillage and destroy. And our supreme national problem is how to lift them up to a higher level to make them fit to live in a civilized nation.'

Menon is believed to have almost memorised it by frequent repetition. The lecture would end with an appeal to the students not to limit their vision to the man biting dog example while on the media job, but broaden their vision with extensive reading, and interaction with front brained people.

Writer - T. Kannamala

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3-yrs RI to businessman on charges of molesting B Wood actress

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai Jan 16

A 41-year-old Indian businessman Vikas Sachdeva was awarded three years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 25,000 by Special Judge A D Deo of the Special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Court, Mumbai on charges of molesting a former Bollywood actress in a Delhi-Mumbai running flight three years back.

The Special Judge A D Deo, convicted Sachdeva under section 8 of POSCO Act and section 354 of Indian Penal Code Section

(assault or criminal force on woman with an intent to outrage her modesty).

A former actress, who was 17 years old then, had claimed that she was molested on a Vistara flight from Delhi to Mumbai in December 2017 by co-passenger Sachdeva. She accused him constantly nudging her shoulder and rubbing his foot along her neck and back. She said that while she informed the flight crew about this, no action was taken. The airline later issued an apology and ordered an inquiry into the incident.

She was travelling by business class and was seated on seat no



"One F" and her mother was in a adjoining seat. The accused Sachdeva, sitting behind her, put up his feet on her armrest. She brought this to his notice but he ignored, she stated in her complaint. Later she shared her experience in a video on Instagram. She accused Sachdeva of constantly nudging her shoulder and rubbing his foot along her neck and back. It continued for another five to ten minutes and then I was sure of it. "I tried to record it on phone to understand it better but the cabin lights were dimmed, so it was even worse. I failed to get it."

"I just landed, the whole irony of this that I yelled... and this is not done... this is not how you should be treated or made to feel. This is terrible. This is how they will take care of girls? No one will help us if we don't decide to help ourselves and that is the worst thing," she said.

According to reports, his wife had claimed that it had just been an accident and that Sachdeva had fallen asleep while keeping his feet on the armrest of the actor's seat. Sachdeva, residing at Powai in North East Mumbai, was arrested

by Sahar police the day after the actress complained and an offence was registered on 9 December 2017. He was charged under sections of POSCO Act, 2012 and the Indian Penal Code. A sessions court in Mumbai had released him on bail of Rs 25,000 on 20 December, 2017.

The accused Sachdeva had told the court that "we had gone to Delhi for last rites of a relative. While returning back we were travelling by business class. I fell asleep soon after the flight took off. Next day after reaching Mumbai, when I had gone out for purchases, my wife told me that the police had come home. After some time, the police registered an offence and arrested me.

While seeking minimum punishment for Sachdeva, his lawyer Adnan Shaikh argued that the accused was the sole breadwinner of his family. He also said that his client was a first time offender and had no previous criminal record. On the other hand, the prosecution sought maximum punishment for the accused. The victim had announced her "disassociation" from the field of acting last year.

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"Over 5 crore elementary students in the country lack in foundational literacy": NEP



While 30.9% of students in the 6-14 age group were in private schools in 2018, the figure was 30.6% in 2016 and 30.8% in 2014. This is less than a percentage point growth since 2014. In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, there is a two percentage point drop in private school enrolment. In Gujarat, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, it has risen by a similar margin. Private school dependence in Manipur (70.4%) and Haryana (55.3%) is much higher than the national average.

There is considerable scope for expanding anganwadi outreach for three and four-year-old children. All-India data from 2018 shows that slightly less than 30 per cent children at age three and 15.6 per cent of children at age four are not enrolled anywhere. But these figures are much higher in states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The children enter Standard I at age

six and that they proceed year by year from Std I to Std VIII, reaching the end of elementary school by age 14. The Right to Education Act also refers to free and compulsory education for the age group six to 14. However, the practice on the ground is quite different. ASER 2018 data show that 27.6 per cent of all children in Std I are under age six.

In many private schools, parents are encouraged to bring their children at age four or five into kindergarten (LKG or UKG) and not directly into Std I. Poorer parents, who cannot find accessible or affordable preschool alternatives and who do not see anganwadis as an option for education, enroll their children in Std I in the nearest government school. These patterns lead to very different age distributions in Std I in government school and private school.

National News

'PMC Bank accused virtually granted bail': Centre moves Supreme Court against Bombay HC order

Agency
New Delhi Jan 16

The central government on Thursday moved Supreme Court against a Bombay High Court order directing authorities to shift Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan - prime accused in the PMC Bank scam - from jail to their residence. The father-son duo of Wadhawans were promoters of Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL), and triggered the PNB Bank scam.

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the apex court that the Bombay High Court passed an unusual order on Wednesday by releasing the two accused, who were in the management of the bank, and are currently in judicial custody.

"It is an unusual order. The high court has virtually granted bail on a PIL," said Mehta.

Mehta sought urgent listing of the case saying that the two accused will be released immediately. Chief Justice of India SA Bobde asked Mehta to procure diary number of the case from the court registry and mention the matter again at 2 pm today.

The Bombay High Court had constituted a three-member committee on Wednesday for auctioning the assets of companies owned by the two accused and distribution of amount so realised to the depositors of crisis-hit PMC Bank. The high court had also ordered that the two accused should assist the committee in its exercise to realise amounts from auctioning properties. The accused, the court said, will remain in custody with two guards each posted at their residences. They would also not be allowed to travel beyond Maharashtra, the Bombay High Court further said in its order.

The order was passed by the high court on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by an advocate Sarosh Damania.

On December 27 last year, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai Police had filed the first chargesheet in the multi-crore scam in Esplanade Court.

The EOW had arrested 12 people in connection with the case, however, chargesheet of over 32,000 pages had been filed against the main accused Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan, Waryam Singh, Joy Thomas, and Surjit Arora.

7th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, India Region to start today

Agency
New Delhi Jan 16

The 7th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region will start today at the legislative assembly building in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will inaugurate the Conference in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Governor Anandiben Patel will address the Valedictory Session tomorrow.

AIR correspondent reports, around 100 Delegates of 15 state assemblies and representatives of some foreign countries have reached Lucknow to take part in the 7th Conference of CPA India Region.

On the eve of the Conference, the

Meeting of the Executive Committee of CPA India Region was chaired by the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Wednesday evening.

Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Lalji Tandon will address the Inaugural Session today while Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha, Harivansh and Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi will deliver the Keynote Address during the Plenary Sessions.

The main theme of the conference is ROLE OF LEGISLATORS and during the two days delegates will discuss the Capacity Building of Legislators for Scrutinizing Budgetary Proposals and Enhancing Focus of Legislators on Legislative Business.

Budget Session of Parliament to commence on January 31

Agency
New Delhi Jan 16

The Budget Session of Parliament will commence on January 31 and conclude on April 3 with a recess in between. The first phase of the session will be held from 31st of January to 11th of February and the second phase from 2nd March to 3rd of April.

President Ram Nath Kovind will

address a joint sitting of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in the central hall of Parliament at 11 am on 31st of January. A communication from Lok Sabha said that to enable the standing committees to consider the demands for grants of various ministries and departments and prepare their reports, the House will adjourn on February 11 to meet again on 2nd of March.