

Stop Violence in Manipur Immediately! Restore Peace and Harmony!!

Nowadays Manipur does not mean a place of beautiful mountain ranges and green valleys.... it is now a place where the people are burnt alive, a place of murders and atrocities. At present Manipur does not mean huge waterfalls and thick forests.... it is now a centre of devastation, arson and slaughter. Now Manipur is not a beautiful area with blue lakes..... It is an eternal burning pyre like that of Nazis! Here wind blows hot, water releases red blood and its soil is turned into ashes now!

Violence which Shivers us :

An old woman of eighty years, wife of a freedom fighter was locked inside of her house and burnt alive. A boy with a bullet shot in the head rushing to hospital in an ambulance was blocked and scorched along with his mother and a relative by a gang of rioters. Two women were paraded naked and killed after gang rape. They beat black and blue the father and brother of those women who tried to protect them. They beheaded a man and placed the head on the fencing of his house. After coercing young women working in a car service centre, their plaits were cut and threw them into the saws in a saw mill nearby where they died. The students of a nursing school were harassed and tortured. They played with another woman like a toy and posted a video of that in social media. They dragged a youth from police custody and beat him to death. A village was totally burnt and killed many in that fire. So many incidents... inhuman incidents are coming to light every day. In spite of these unruly incidents the central government is keeping silent. After 77 days of the incident which became viral in the social media the Prime Minister Modi broke his criminal silence, shed crocodile tears and talked about it for 36 seconds! The Chief Minister of Manipur state commented that such incidents occur very frequently and the internet was blocked only because of these incidents. All these comments are heinous.

Manipur has been burning with the flow of blood since May 3rd. More than 160 people were killed. The rioters are getting help and support from some people's representatives. Some others were forced to hide in the mountains. There are thousands of people in rehabilitation camps. 60 thousand tribals ran away leaving their houses and properties. 4300 violent destructive incidents took place. 3500 houses and 275 villages were ransacked. Approximately 357 churches were destroyed. Some temples, hospitals and even ambulances are being burnt every day. Children, pregnant women and old people are dying every day as medical help is not available. The educational system is shattered to pieces. Most of the children are in rehabilitation centres. Their schools were burnt. As the mutual hatred and communal rivalry reached to the mass level, water resources were

made scarce to the rivals, and their crops were burnt and pet animals were killed. The local agriculture was completely damaged because those who left the houses and farms are not in a position to return and even if they return they have no hope of survival. All the channels through which food grains come from outside are blocked. Even the Supreme Court pleaded helplessness in controlling law and order. Though there is army throughout Manipur, rioting gangs are massacring their rivals with modern weapons. How did they get these ultra modern weapons? Why did the violence abate even when the central home minister Amit Shah stayed in Manipur for four days? There is no answer to these questions from the side of the government. Moreover the central government promulgated article 355 on May 4th itself declaring that law and order in Manipur are at a stake. From that day onwards the centre has taken the control of law and order in Manipur state. As such for all violent acts and crimes that happened from that date onwards the Centre and the Prime Minister are responsible.

Manipur and Contradictions among its People :

The British government created Manipur area for their administrative convenience by combining 90% mountain area and 10% valley area. The British government did not show any interest on this area before occupying Burma. At that time it was called Jo nation. But after occupying Burma, Manipur became an important area. There were constant conflicts between the Adivasis of mountain area and the people of valley. Two areas which do not have any type of cultural or social uniformity were forcibly combined for their interests by the British. After the colonial rule Manipur joined in the Indian Union in 1949. It merged at full level in 1969. It acquired the status of a state through article 371(C). A legislative assembly came into existence.

Though the aim of this article is to provide self governance to Adivasis and protection of their interests it does not guarantee any security to them.

In the mountain area of Manipur, Adivasi people belonging to Kuki, Naga, Zomi etc clans are living. They are 43% in the total population and among them 95% belong to Christianity. In the plain area of the valley live Meitei people. They are 75% in the total population and among them 75% are Hindus and Muslims. While the Adivasi people are living without any basic necessities of life, Meitei people are in a better position with agriculture, breeding of horses and income through international tourism. They have ownership on land, and they are enjoying 65 to 75% government jobs in education and medical fields. They are very near to ruling classes right from the rule of kings. Out of 60 seats in Manipur assembly 40 seats belong to Meitei people. The insignia of the state government, language, script belong to Meiteis. The Adivasi Acts are protecting the people of the mountain area from Meiteis extending to their area and exploit their assets.

Aggravated the Situation by Mixing Religion to Contradictions :

In this situation, the Hindu fanatic communal forces infiltrated among them under the leadership of Modi- Shah and did false propaganda that there is danger to Meiteis from

those foreigners who emigrate from Bangladesh. So they decided to include Meiteis also in the list of Scheduled caste and to give recognition to them as Adivasis. The correspondence between the state and the centre speeded up. On April 14th the High Court of Manipur ordered that Meiteis are to be included in the list of Scheduled castes and the state government is to recommend it to the Centre within four weeks. The Hindutva supporters were ready to get two birds at one shot by withdrawing the authority of Adivasis and giving a blow to their Christianity. The Adivasis are agitated as these measures are harmful to their very existence. Several incidents took place here and there from April 27th onwards. In some places they are violent. All Tribal Student Union of Manipur gave a call for a procession of Adivasi people to show their unity. People assembled in large crowds and some violent incidents took place in the procession. Public property was destroyed and there was conflict between the two groups. By Sunday night army and police came in to the field. The Governor, who has to protect the rights of Adivasi people and minorities according to the Indian constitution, gave the shoot at sight orders. The Centre took up the law and order protection and promulgated martial law.

Sangh Parivar has been busy for a long period in poisonous hate campaign against Adivasi girijans as there are considerable number of Christians in them. Some Manipur organisations under the leadership of Meiteis complained that there is extraordinary increase in the population of mountain areas and organised dharna and processions in New Delhi on that subject. They pressed the government to maintain National Register of Citizens by taking 1951 as the basis. They also pressed the state government to push out the Adivasi people from forests. They tried to flare up differences between girijans by demanding the cancellation of reservations and forest rights to those who are converted into Christianity. Lastly they added religious differences to the already existing historical contradictions regarding land, reservations, forest rights among Meitei, Kuki, Naga and Zoë tribes. Thus they escalated the contradictions.

The Real Object is to Exploit the Natural Resources :

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has taken up a large scale survey of Manipur area for mines and rich minerals in the last decade. In the survey they found that some minerals which are rare in the world like Serpentine, Green Granite, Emerald Green, Platinum group of metals, Platinum group of elements, Nickel, Limestone, Chromite, Copper, Malachite, Azurite, Magnetite etc. exist in that area. Moreover there are coal mines in the mountain area. Even petroleum deposits were found there. This area is recognised as a centre of several valuable minerals. More than 20 million tons of Limestone, the most valuable raw material for Cement industry was found there. In 2017 Manipur government made an agreement with 39 companies on this. But as it is an area of Adivasi people with their rights, it became difficult to exploit the minerals. But it has become a grave necessity to the corporate companies to exploit the rare minerals like Limestone, Green Granite, Platinum, Nickel etc. The special Acts related to Adivasi people became a big hindrance to these multinational companies.

Without taking the permission or intimidating Adivasi people, the government with the excuse of protecting the forests is entrusting lands to corporates and trusts in the name of reserve forests, protected forests, wildlife forests, national parks, swamp lands etc. Out of 220 collective reserve forests in the country 200 are in the North East area and in Manipur there are 75% reserve forests. Most of the area in the collective reserve forests is in the hands of Wild Life Trust of India, a partner of World Land Trust of England. (The aim of World Land Trust is aggression of forest lands in various countries and displacing the natives of those forests). In 2019 the Supreme Court gave a judgement against Adivasi people living in the forests in a case lodged combinedly by World Land Trust and some Indian intellectuals associated with it. Immediately in the name of protecting the forests the Manipur government pushed out 35 thousand Adivasi people from the forests mercilessly, violently and forcibly.

Processions, dharnas and agitations protesting against this forced evacuation took place for some time in a phased manner throughout the state. As the Chief Minister of Manipur branded all those agitators as aggressors, smugglers of drugs, illegal refugees the dissatisfaction became intense. Even after driving out of thousands of Adivasi people from the forests in the name of protection of forests, still the government is displacing the people who are living in the mountains. If this policy is continued Adivasi people cannot get even 10% of land. The government on one hand is characterising Adivasi people as aggressors by violating the existing legal Acts. All this is being done to exploit the mineral wealth of that area.

Attacks on Different Tribes in Different States :

In three districts of Chhattisgarh state Sangh Parivar organisations divided the Adivasi people and made them quarrel mutually and die in the name of religion. If anybody who belongs to converted Christianity dies, land is not allotted to him for burial and thus socially boycotted them. In the name of Ghar Vaapasi the Adivasi people are compelled to convert into Hinduism. They are being frightened by the warnings that Christians should not demand reservations and other facilities. This trend now extended to Telangana. Recently a meeting was held in Adilabad by Jana Jaathi Jagaran which demanded cancellation of reservations and other facilities to converted Christians or other converts. They are thus conspiring to bring a division among Adivasi people. In fact Adivasi people do not belong to any religion. They used to worship nature even before the birth of all religions. They are being branded as converts by entrusting a religion to them. It is a conspiracy against them. People have to understand the conspiracies of religious fanatics. Today Manipur is aflame. Tomorrow it may be another state. The rulers cancelled 370 article aiming the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. Today they are trying to remove the rights of Adivasi people of Manipur. The communal fanatics are selecting a social group in each state and attacking it.

Our Unity in Diversity is a Big Farce :

Even though all the North East states including Assam are geologically a part of India, majority of Indians are not considering the people of those states as Indians. There is a misunderstanding even among the educated Indians that they do not belong to Indian nationality and they belong to Chinese nationality and they are backward people. This is not a mistake of those people. It is the result of the failure of the rulers to integrate North East into the social fabric of India. There is no correct understanding to any ruling class hitherto about the stand to be taken towards areas in which different nationalities and clans live. They are satisfied with the slogan of unity in diversity but they do not find time to practically think about it. In order to achieve friendly conciliation among them we have to respect their cultures and entities. We have to encourage give and take policy among them. An adjustment attitude is to be followed. All these things can be understood by the civilised and sensitive parties and rulers only. Only then a real unity in ideas flourishes among different groups of people.

Let us Fight for Peace and Harmony:

This type of delicate sensitive problems cannot be solved unless there is an opportunity for political negotiations among different groups of people. Rulers are away from this type of sensitivity. They do not have humane response towards the problems. The BJP is following the rule of divide and rule of the imperialists. Its efforts of converting Adivasi people into Hinduism are fast growing. As a part of this programme Sangh Parivar is holding All India Banjara and Lambadi conferences. On the one hand BJP is encouraging the converted Hindus to come back and on the other hand it is converting the Adivasis by incorporating their deities in to Hinduism. The ruling classes are converting Adivasi people as their vote bank by creating hatred and rivalry among them.

On the surface the issue of reservations may appear as the cause of the present violence in Manipur. But the real intention of the rulers is to exterminate Naga, Kuki, Mizo, Jomi, Hamar etc. Adivasi people and to handover the lands and mineral wealth to corporates. After annulment of Article 370 which gives special status to Jammu and Kashmir, BJP aimed at Article 371 which guarantees special rights to North East states. If the rights guaranteed to Manipur Adivasi people through constitution are abrogated tomorrow the same may be repeated in another state. Each and everyone has the responsibility of safeguarding the country from the religious fanatics and fascist ruling gangs which are creating rivalry between the majority and minorities among the people for their selfish motives. Let us extend our support to Adivasi people of Manipur who became the victims of rulers. In one word all the oppressed classes and sections, youth, democrats and intellectuals unitedly should bring pressure on the Central and State governments to stop attacks on Adivasi and minorities and restore peaceful atmosphere in Manipur.