

Employment opportunity for Naga youth: A thought

The term 'unemployment' did not exist in tribal traditional society. It is of recent origin. In the traditional society, it would be of great amusement to hear of someone saying, "I am unemployed." To say that one is unemployed would be a great shame not only for that person but also for the whole family because only lazy person would have no work then. Everyone worked in their own field and hence everyone has work. Today, economic system has changed and so is one's profession.

Subsistence economy that provides work and food for everyone is replaced by money economy which has far reaching consequences to modern society. Now the former is considered as unproductive and hence neglected whereas the latter is highly valued and pursued with all strength through modern education. Parents rush their children to schools believing that without modern education there is no future for them.

Despite promising many great things modern education delivers little. Modern education system being theory oriented has separated mind from physical body. Today, children are brainy academically but did not know how to co-ordinate their mind, hands and legs to earn their living. This has led to the creation of host of educated unemployed youth in our society today. Every week, every month and every year, thousands of our youths are migrating to mega cities and towns in search of work (to earn money). The few lucky people get respectable jobs with handsome pay. Majority suffers. Many are mistreated, verbally abused and even sexually harassed. The neighbouring communities of the Nagas such as Meiteis and Mizos are doing their best to arrest migration of educated youth through protecting their economy.

As the number of educated unemployed youth surges high, the Meiteis are demanding for the implementation of Inner Line Permit System (ILPS) to check the migrants flocking to the State from the mainland India. Now the hill areas of Manipur are experiencing the impact of ILPS movement in Imphal Valley as more and more migrants are coming to hill districts.

In Mizoram, the economy is protected to a great extent as they controlled most of the business activities. In this way money (wealth) is circulated within the state and its people. It is difficult for a migrant trader to get licence to set up their business in Mizoram. In Naga inhabited areas, there are no active measures to neither protect the local economy nor attempt being made to give employment to its educated youth. Naga youth,

especially those in Nagaland, seems to be expecting the state government to provide employment to all of them. That is impossible.

The initiative of any movement or organisation to protect local people's economy is to be appreciated. However, good intention does not produce desirable result all the time. For instance, the Naga national movement becomes an important 'employment source' for thousands of Naga youths. If taxation is completely halted at this juncture, thousands of Naga national workers will lose their livelihood.

Hence from employment opportunity point of view, complete stopping of taxation is likely boomerang harmful result instead of the intended good one. My personal view is that one must fight against 'extortion' but not against legal 'taxation' till viable solution is arrived at. However, public audit may be required to check misuse of funds by vested interests.

The crux of my write up is about employment for Naga youth. One of the best ways to give employment is to work together with the mainland traders who are running business in Naga inhabited areas. In money economy, those who control trade control also the people. There should be give and take policy. As we allow the mainland traders to run their business freely in our land, they also must help local people too. My suggestion here is: "every rich trader from outside of Naga land (traders from mainland India, Tibet, Nepal, etc) employs a Naga (man or woman) in their shop." This will give employment to thousand of Naga youths.

It will also help in building good relationship between the business community and local people. In return, it will help the traders to smoothly run their business.

Naga civil society organisations such as Naga Hoho, NSF, NMA, UNC, NPO, ANSAM, ENPO, ENSF and other such respected tribe or area civil organisation as well as politicians and social workers must take the initiative to work out details for implementation of 'employment' with traders. If necessary, the Naga civil society organisations may pressurise the state government (in the manner of Meiteis ILPS movement in Manipur) to amend Bills or pass new laws for employment of local people in the shop run by outsiders.

This will create employment opportunities, enhance local economy as well arrest the problem of migration of Naga youths to faraway cities and towns for jobs. It is high time for the Naga people to adopt 'give and take' policy