

KEN

NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of Knowledge Exchange Network

16th Feb 2018
Volume 1, Issue 2



Issue Stories

- State of Youth imbroglio and Economic Empowerment in the Indian subcontinent: a perspective on Manipur
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Rojit Sorokhaibam - President, KEN
Serial Entrepreneur | Strategy & Technology Advisor

Dear Friends:

It gives me an immense pleasure to announce that KEN-Manipur (Knowledge Exchange Network-Manipur) is introducing its online digital newsletter for the second time as a step to share knowledge and expertise of global Manipur is and their friends with the youth of Manipur. As you probably know, the primary goal of Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) is to focus on knowledge exchange with a view to bring genuine change and foster development policy in the state.

KEN and its members, in the recent past, have worked successfully with the government of Manipur and Manipur University, both formally and informally, in the areas of IT (Information Technology), Business Entrepreneurship, and public utility services by sharing knowledge and experience earned from the outside of Manipur by its valued member volunteers.

We are confident, in the days to come, KEN and its volunteers worldwide can share valuable ideas and knowledge for the development of Manipur to various stakeholders in the state.

I am happy to say that this digital Newsletter will cover the stories of diverse community members from around the world sharing their valued success stories, knowledge and expertise on our online platform especially for the benefit of youth of the state.

KEN has taken steps to promote entrepreneurship in Manipur by giving free professionally structured consultancy to aspiring and existing local entrepreneurs who are based in Manipur to streamline their business process and modalities how a professional organization would operate.

For the first time in Manipur by any overseas diaspora union, KEN is all set to offer fully financed training programs on computer enabled entrepreneurship skill to the youth of the state to enhance their self-employability status. KEN would continue to work and offer a platform where all our citizens can reach out to our professionally experienced community members, interact and take consultation.

We, in the KEN are determined to support organization(s) dedicated to improving the lives of local people of Manipur through programs which would lead to social and economic empowerment. For this, we are proud of our volunteers and donors who, without seeking any return have sacrificed their valuable time and money.

Thank you

President – KEN

Editorial

The spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship

Greetings of the season! I on behalf of KEN wish you a Happy New Year!

The world is evolving constantly. Humans have come very far since the Stone Age. From Newton's apple to Steve's apple, we have tasted a myriad of new things and experiences. Our civilization is millions of years old. However, humans everywhere are having disparity in lifestyle, income, stability of life and so on. This is because, some change, some adapt to the change and some do not change with time.

Some constantly innovate things around themselves. Civilization rests on changing: developing new things, exploring new ideas, developing technologies, ushering in new ways of living and so on. If we do not innovate, do not discover new things, we would remain in the same state of living we had thousands of years ago. So, in order to move forward, we constantly need to bring in new, innovative things that complement the previous one. Everybody needs to have a life dwelt on freedom, liberty and sense of pride among themselves. Development is one core area where one feels these things.

Innovative mind is the key to opening door to development; thinking out of box to solve problems we are facing is another dimension to ease out the tension. Today's youth need to develop this area of thinking. Youths are the pillars of the nation. Wise youths are the assets of the society. They need to be empowered socially, economically

and technologically. The traditional way of achieving economic empowerment through government jobs is a stale idea. We cannot expect everyone to be provided a job. There comes the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship to fill the gap. Youths should explore new ideas and innovative ventures in order to get economic freedom. They need to continuously innovate, be in business culture, and open the floodgate for new things for themselves. The state also needs to foster a regulatory environment that nurtures new ideas to market and taking of risks. Unlike the past, we see many successful entrepreneurs in Manipur. Essence of entrepreneurship is the cutting edge of innovation. A vibrant innovation culture is critical to Manipuri's economic culture.

We know that India is now the world's fastest growing economy. But, in order for this tremendous growth to be sustainable, it will require urban planning, modern infrastructure and clean energy. We should keep in mind the current state of affairs and assess where Manipur stands in the picture.

Establishment of regional ecosystem of start-ups, small businesses, mentors, venture capitalists and angel investors and other partnerships are crucial for entrepreneurship. We all need to leverage resources –human, environment and technology. Investors, accelerators, entrepreneurs, industrial partners etc. need to build an active connected community to eliminate poverty and create a level playing field in society.

KEN is a platform, a sort of mentoring network to inspire, facilitate entrepreneurial ideas, and help ventures to take off or fix the problem or grow it bigger. Here, we welcome the sort of the things mentioned above. Anyway, let's hope the year 2018 a great time ahead!



Dr RK Lilapati Devi



About KEN

KEN is a non-political and not for profit association of people of Manipur origin and their friends living in different parts of the world with varied professional backgrounds, experiences, skills and expertise.

With the world has become a global village and has witnessed an IT boom during the last two decades, many people of Manipur origin are now found working in every nook and corner of the world.

Their knowledge, skills, incomes and expertise can be tapped and exchanged to build a competitive state which can enhance confidence among the public and investors which at the moment is in a challenging state in Manipur.

Knowledge is power; KEN believes, this will be the pivotal in bringing the much needed changes in Manipur and in the mindset of Manipur.

State of Youth imbroglio and Economic Empowerment in the Indian subcontinent: a perspective on Manipur

By Bishwajit Singh Okram

“The quality of life for the growing number of young people in urban centers around the world will depend on how the youth population is able to transition into economic independence and freedom.”-

Mohamed Ali, Harvard International Review (2014).

Far away in the North-East corner of India, there lies a lovely state, Manipur, a land of picturesque beauty with its pristine flora and fauna decked in the numerous hill ranges. Though a tiny state, 2500 kms away from the national capital, New Delhi, the state is proud of its numerous sports prodigies like Marry Kom, Kunjarani, Sarita Devi and Dingko. Like any other states of India, the state carries a dismal figure of around 700,000 unemployed youths according to a report carried out by the Hindu on the 18 May, 2014. These educated energetic youths constitute 31% (UN Report) of the Young India’s population who are on the way for a total economic freedom and liberty in life.

28% of India’s 15-24 years old are unemployed according to a UN report. If 700,000 are in Manipur which has a population of 2.71 million (publicly available reports), then statistics say, 25% of population of Manipur are unemployed. UN report says 85 percent of the world’s one billion youth between 15 and 24 years old, live in developing countries. At the global level, 300 million youths are working in poor state of employment earning less than 1USD a day. Youth in India and Manipur are unfortunately bracketed within this category.

These migrant young people when they leave their native places in search of jobs in cities, they not only add to the population figures of the city, they also face harsh economic and social challenges: social exclusion and marginalisation and poor accessibility to other resources. This is a real dark spot in the inclusive growth road map of the cities. It shows that cities have failed to create jobs for this growing number of youths. The rapid economic growth of India has not resulted in similar pictures in case of youth employment.





If this fundamental issue of our society, the high youth unemployment and disenfranchisement are not addressed on time, we are sure to face a toxic cycle of social unrest, disharmony, instability and poverty which will undermine peace and normalcy of the state. The visible cases of rising extremism, poverty, drug addiction and other anti-social activities among the youths is a clear indication of disillusionment. It can be reminded that Manipur has more than 300, 00 drug addicts, and more than 23% of national HIV infected persons belong to this place.

Although every political leader has sworn to the potentials the state possess and had promised grand economic packages, their rhetoric had never been translated into any visible outcome. Many Prime ministers in the past had announced astronomical economic packages from time to time. Prime Minister H.D Deve Gowda, Narashimha Rao, I K Gujaral, VP Singh, Chandra Shekhar, Dr Manmohan Singh and now, Narendra Modi had announced various special economic packages just for the north east India. Had all these packages been implemented in true letter and spirit, we could have seen real growth and development in the region. Unfortunately, we have not seen any visible change so far.

As concerning the state of youth demography, we can remember the following: *“Developing countries are experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift leading to a youth bulge - a high proportion of young people aged 15 to 24. There are a greater number of young people today than at any point in history, but this demographic explosion, which has been largely absorbed by cities, has not been met by a similar growth in economic opportunities for the youth.”* said Mohamed Ali. And it is not an exaggeration that we see frustrated faces of youths everywhere. Like little drops of water make a mighty ocean, every small amount of dissatisfaction can potentially become a threat to the very geo-political existence of the state in the long run. Come to the case of Manipur, many small groups of ethnic people or insurgents in the state are fighting for their identity and ideology; it all stems from this very reason-unemployment and economic disparity. Manipur has more than forty groups of arm rebels and each is fighting for their own identity. Manipur does not have many pioneers or leaders who can chalk out clear cut road map for entrepreneurship for the unemployed youths. Youths lack motivation and inspiration to stir up their ideas and propel growth on their career. Government also does not provide proper and adequate platforms to showcase youth’s talents and enterprises. In short, leaders lack the vision, the state ought to become ten or twenty years down the line.

Developing right strategies and harnessing the potential of the youths to achieve economic freedom is the need of the hour. Government needs to identify the present day needs of skill set that the youth of the state would benefit from the present economy. Also the kinds of futuristic skill sets needs to be discovered beforehand and make aware of it to the youth. For example, urbanisation would need lots of manual skill experts like plumber, carpenter and car mechanics. Other skills connected to computer and electronics will always be in demand. Robots are already introduced to assist several kinds of workforce in the future. It is high time for our youths to scale up the level of skills to meet the challenges of the future.

As we all know, neither the governments nor the big corporates will be able to provide employment to all the youths, the only effective way to economically empower the youth is to make themselves the catalysts for change and economic growth, which is none but else through entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship can give youth a sense of ownership and participation in economic activity. It can not only unfold their immense personal potential, but also leverage the economic potential of India which is one of the fastest economies of the world. However, only few youths can afford to start entrepreneurship without plenty of seed money; seed money is the initial capital one needs to start a business. Next, other incubating incentives like tax benefits and other government grants are required to groom the business to its success. Many countries have billions of dollars in their budget to support start-ups. The India government has also introduced over 50+ start-up schemes in the past few years to encourage its launch and support SMEs, MSMEs, Businesses, Research Institutes, Incubators, Accelerators, etc. These government schemes for start-ups operate in sectors ranging from tech-specific verticals to agritech, greentech, science, academic innovation and social uplift and many more in the country. They operate under different ministries of Government of India. For example, schemes for start-ups like SUIS (Stand up India Scheme) under SIDBI provide loans to Women, Dalits, SC/ST and other backward classes to start their own business.

Whatsoever the case, let's have a look at the following figure showing the income disparity among the people across the globe.

IMF Per Capita Income-India	IMF Per Capita Income-World Avg,	IMF Per Capita Income-Developed world.
USD	USD	USD
1850	10750	45070
Times	6	24

The figure above highlights that we need to work six times harder to attain the per capita income that of the world- average and twenty four times harder that of the developed countries.

To create more jobs, more business for empowerment of the youth, everyone needs to join hands with the policy makers to ensure the road ahead is well chartered and clear. We, at KEN (Knowledge Exchange Network) provide young entrepreneurs the training and support to launch their own businesses, fix any sort of business problem at any stage of growth. Its mission is to help to make Manipur a developed state in the long run.



Why soft skills are very important?

By: Mr. Lakshmikant Laikangbam

Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills and other attitudes borne out of a person's intelligent, emotional, social and spiritual quotients. Having a fair level of soft skill enables people to effectively navigate their social and work life well with others. He can perform well, and achieve his goals combined with other hard skills.

Knowing how to get along with people – and displaying a positive attitude – are crucial for success at several points of time. The problem is, the importance of these soft skills is often undervalued, and there is far less training provided for them than hard skills.

Why Soft Skills Matter?

Everybody has certain hard skills, be it technical expertise or possession of theoretical knowledge. But it comes to the soft skill when one has to differentiate oneself from the herd. Having a fair level of soft skill makes a person always stand out from the crowd.

Recommended Soft skills for students and professionals

1. Communication – oral, written, presenting, listening.
2. Courtesy – manners, general etiquette, business etiquette.
3. Flexibility – adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, open to new things.
4. Integrity – honest, ethical, high morals, personal values.
5. Interpersonal skills – nice, sense of humour, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, patient, sociability, warmth, leadership.
6. Positive attitude – optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident.
7. Professionalism – business like, well-dressed, presentable.
8. Responsibility – accountable, reliable, gets the job done, resourceful, self-disciplined, conscientious, common sense.
9. Teamwork – cooperative, team player, agreeable, supportive.
10. Work ethic – hard working, willing to work, loyal, initiative, self-motivated, punctual, regular.

To get, and keep a job, you typically need a repertoire of technical skills. Dentists need to know how to fill cavities. Secretaries need to type 100+ words per minute. Accountants need to be certified.

Beyond these technical skills, when it comes to our purpose, we may be stuck which dentist should we go to? The one who is pleasant and takes time to answer our questions; or the one who treats us like a number in a long line of numbered mouths? In another case, which secretary do you retain when times are lean? The one whose attitude is positive and upbeat, and who is always willing to help; or the one who is inflexible and has a hard time admitting mistakes?

Likewise, think about accountants. The one who has a great work ethic and encourages his colleagues is the one who would be most likely to excel in his position and the organization as well.

In these situations, and all the others like them, it's the soft skills that matter. While your technical skills may get your foot in the door, your people skills are what that leads to most of the doors to come later. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the soft skills that are crucial for success in your career.

With these soft skills you can excel as a leader. Problem solving, delegating, motivating, and team building are all much easier if you have good soft skills. Knowing how to get along with people – and displaying a positive attitude – are crucial for success.

The problem is, the importance of these soft skills is often undervalued, and there is far less training provided for them than hard skills are done. For some reason, organizations seem to expect people know how to behave on the job. They tend to assume that everyone knows and understands the importance of being on time, taking initiative, being friendly, and producing high quality work.

Reviewing the pedagogy for a higher self

By Mr. Meghanath Nongmaithem

To a child, the institutionalization of a physical learning ground like school is just one of the many systems defined by the society until he sees this as a means to something that he wants to become in future. And I don't think we have understood how the current system has evolved inadvertently to contrasting ways to the very motive of education completely. The moment we are born, we breathe without being taught, tune to a way of living the natural way and build a symphony of life. We learn one thing or other every moment on the go. What we learn is meant to be used later in life and make a meaning at the point of the moment. Every learning is a value added to the account of knowledge library of human psyche. What you learn in a moment may be of certain help in the moments to come and this very moment is a chance of creating something new.

Our education system lacks in creating guidance and synchrony to live for the moments, and it is mostly about what you should do today is just a way to result in a good future in spite of knowing the uncertainty looming large. We are creatures who get threatened with uncontrolled consequences, because we have always been controlled by a system of understated norms. We have trust issues among ourselves, and that's because we compete with each other in the name of improvement or in the name of survival.

The idea that how a child wants to look at life and the world, is funnelled in to a very limited menu in the current education system and most of the things are forced fed with a big threat that, how unsuccessful and

unwanted he or she could become if she or he doesn't follow this or that. While we are creatures that needs some control, bringing up a child under threat and pressure have always been counterproductive. We all see some kids as young as three years of age remembering the names of entire countries in the globe, and we think it is extraordinary. It is extraordinary because there are fewer homes where they focus on recognizing the child's cognitive skills and giving the right support and direction in going after what he or she likes.



The rest of us have to follow a strict sequence of mama/papa/ABC/123/the Rhymes/ the table/ and creating fear of exams and things like IIT's are better because it would get my child a premium job and so on. This way, the child is judged on each of these non-negotiable hard steps. It becomes almost like asking a 100 sprinter to join swimming competition because that's where the audience are going to applaud more.

The system lacks in educating the children on the intrinsic core value of success which would be beyond the socially graded lifestyles, money and power. We have to move to a new vision and redefine educational derivatives, away from the existing system that bears no meaningful fruit for the society as a whole. The difference between "Who is better", "How can you be better than you" or "what is it that in you that you believe you would make you and all the people around you better" is a pertinent question to tone down the madness we put our Kids through.

By design, we human are created to live together and the very thought of living alone scares us. It looks like as though our exploration for life values for majority of us is set to be done collectively. If that being the case, the syllabus is vast and we shouldn't limit to a very myopic system just because we are afraid of being labelled as

What is important to a child would be that we teach them how to learn and not teach them how to do well in exams. Better we help them understand the value of what they are good at and, help them build the best character out of themselves. It is not about preparing them on what they would love doing 10-15 years down the line, the world is changing with unimaginable disruptions. The idea is to prepare them with the life skills in the most effective way to adapt to the changes, the need for collaboration and the attitude required to handle the chaos they are up for any time.

I wanted to be a king when I was four years old, then a Police officer, then Army officer, ***then nothing for a very long time***, then suddenly a govt. teacher, a contractor, a manager, then a lecturer, then a good father and a philanthropist. I wonder what if we could do what we love and like and be happy with what we become of. I wish we could create a system where we focus on the value of outcome in context to the larger picture of life and understand the balance between life's goals and the means to the goals. We are so used to creating a target and then shooting that we missed the very reason of creating the target.

Acknowledging the stated gaps is going to be tough, and much tougher to adapt to any new approach. There is bound to be disjointed period between the paradigms Shift. We have seen new approaches like those of Finland, and the IB curriculum spreading but the irony is, the value is being commercialized possibly to guarantee sustainability of a pick and drop model.

It needs a lot of patience and readiness of the empowered institutions to accept and imbibe

outcast, and don't want to go through the uncertainty of imbibing a potentially better approach.

Our system forces us to define life target through a very myopic vision, let's say the positions of an IAS officer, a pilot, an engineer etc. then, the whole life in front of you is mapped to a restricted view which only leads to that myopic target which is not a life but only a means

At a very high level, concepts and approach of child education system has to go with the economy, social and cultural adaptability to bring to any changes.

the willingness to experiment the outcome values in the best approach that suits the regional environment. Tuning up and changing the engine structure of a running car is prone to greater risk, however if the by product, pollution is fatal then, it is important that we pick that risk on time. The philosophy of the ways to do things doesn't have a fix path and it would always be evolving.

Walking by checking at a map and competing each other on how good you are at reading the map is totally pointless when the landscape and the road constantly changes. The reality is that we have believed and trusted our education system for a very long time and have been following it while we have outgrown ourselves from our own teachings and have come a long way. The recent trend of questioning on the education system and its holistic assessment is just the beginning of a new vision of the society, however we are still confused whether the society can act on the axiom of freewill exercise of natural course of every child's step, the path of flowering its talent in full bloom and glory.

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