



Editorials

Culture and Progress

How much is culture responsible for the progress made or the lack of it of any given society? Or more provocatively in our context, how much is culture responsible for the embrace or resistance to modernity and development? These are questions that keep returning because of their continued relevance. There are any number of books written on the subject, addressing and seeking the roots of so much disparity in development all over the world. The intriguing nature of the question has also assured many of these books to become best-sellers. Just to cite two examples in the possession of IFP are Jared M. Diamond's "Guns, Germs and Steel" and Professor David S. Landes' "Wealth and Poverty of Nations". But another one "The Central Liberal Truth" by foreign aid worker, Lawrence E Harrison, which says culture does make a world of difference in attitudes to modernity and development must also be in the list of important works on this subject. The thought if pursued, developed, and applied earnestly and consensually, can also pay dividends for the Manipur society. How much have our own varying cultures been a catalyst or inhibitor of modernity and development? Complaints about the lack of these qualities as consequences rather than causes of lack of development are not uncommon, but what has been uncommon is any sincere, soul-searching attempt to gauge the conditions that might have possibly contributed to things going wrong on the way. What has been the role of culture and tradition in our grappling with this issue of gravity? It would indeed be an interesting academic study to make an assessment of the correlation between development and the willingness of a community to accept change. We would for one vouch that the praxis, at least in this case is extremely strong.

Another study by American economists Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel, to demonstrate the same praxis between cultural grounding and development is interesting from this vantage. The study takes into account records of illegal parking tickets earned by diplomatic vehicles from different countries in New York. The figures seem hardly a coincidence. The two economists found out that diplomats from countries that rank high on the Transparency International corruption index pile up huge numbers of unpaid tickets, whereas diplomats from countries that rank low on the index get barely any at all. For instance, between 1997 and 2002, they found out, the UN Mission of Kuwait picked up 246 parking violations per diplomat. Diplomats from Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Mozambique, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Syria also committed huge numbers of violations. By contrast, not a single parking violation by a Swedish diplomat was recorded. Nor were there any by diplomats from Denmark, Japan, Israel, Norway or Canada. The reason for this as per their conclusion is, human beings are not merely products of economics, but are also shaped by cultural and moral norms. "If you are Swedish and you have a chance to pull up in front of a fire hydrant, you still don't do it. You are Swedish. That's who you are." In this light, another politician thinker of the mid

Random Items

Man stabbed to death, another injured over obnoxious remarks

IMPHAL, December 6: In a bizarre incident, a man stabbed two individuals killing one over obnoxious jokes of his divorce today at Yairipok Kakmayai Khunjin under Nongpok Sekmai Police station, Thoubal district. Meanwhile, angry mob torched the residence

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Symposium cum poetry recitation held

IMPHAL, December 6: As part of its ongoing four days Imphal Literature Festival, Sahitya Thoupang Lup in collaboration with Library and Information Centre, Kakching organized a symposium cum poetry recitation at the auditorium of the centre today. A rrrll.....

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Union Home Minister to call for a report on UNACCO incident

IMPHAL, December 6: The Union Home Minister has assured to call for a report from the state government report which regards to the UNACCO incident that injured eight individuals on the day when the result of Thongju and Thangmeiband by-poll was declared.

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HRI questions police reformation, modernization in Manipur

IMPHAL, December 6: Police reformation or police modernization is not only about upgrading weapons they use and not about training them to suit the changing times and abide by various laws while performing their duty. This was stated by secretary of Huma.....

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Seminar on Narrative Arts ends

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20th Century, Walter Lippmann, who once said in a speech: "All cultures have value because they provide coherence, but some foster development while others retard it. Some cultures check corruption, while others permit it. Some cultures focus on the future, while others focus on the past. The question that is at the centre of politics today: Can we self-consciously change cultures so they encourage development and modernization?"

The question is profoundly relevant to our situation. How receptive has our own cultures been to a vision of a modernised future. Can we say the same thing that has been said of the Swedish diplomats who would not park in front of a fire hydrant even in the dead of the night when no one is watching, in referring to our own elite? Do we see signs of any moral and social obligations that would stop someone from littering the streets with their kitchen garbage? Do our consciences come to play in checking personal urges for unfair and corrupt practices? Are there any unwritten norms that make people guilty at breaking one-way traffic norms? It is indeed a telling revelation that most often it is siren blaring, flag waving VIP vehicles that violate these norms. There have also been tremendous debates as well as idle talks about the infamous, lethargic work culture in the official establishment. Has there ever been an inherent, cultural checking mechanism that informs the place that such lethargy amounts to dishonesty to profession as well as to self. These data are convincing and they show that there is indeed a correlation between such cultural attitudes and the march of modernity. Shouldn't we then self-consciously make the effort to change the detrimental aspects of our cultures so that they encourage development and modernization? We must keep in mind that little brownie points scored, as for instance in the tussles of supposedly disparate interests of hills and valley, will not matter one bit if they stand against the tide of time. In the end, nothing can stand against the future, and there can be no argument that the future is headed for the modern.

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Comments

No comments found for this entry!

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IMPHAL, Dec 6: The two days seminar on Narrative Arts of Manipur organized by All Manipur Waree Leeba Association & Research Centre, Khurai Soibam Leikai at Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy concluded today. The concluding programme commenced with P.....

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1st NE People's Parliament

IMPHAL, December 6: Coalition for Indigenes' Right Campaign (CIRCA); Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha (ASM) and Assam Meitei ApunbaLup (AMAL) will be jointly organizing the 1st Northeast Indigenous Peoples' Parliament 2015 from December 8 to 10 at Kangshang, K.....

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Land acquired for establishment of Film Institute in State: CM Ibobi

IMPHAL, December 6: Chief Minister, Okarm Ibobi Singh has said that the State cabinet has taken decision to establish Film Institute in Manipur and acquired 250 acres of land in Imphal East district. The Chief Minister stated this speaking as the chief g.....

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KSO calls 48-hr gen strike against AR brutality

IMPHAL, December 6: Strongly condemning the alleged assault on president of KSO Chandel Block and two village chiefs by 24 Assam Rifles at Khudenthabi Check Post yesterday, the KSO General Headquarters has imposed a 48 hours general strike in the hill di.....

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Government committed to developing Moirang as tourist destination: Ibobi

BISHNUPUR, December 6: Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, has said that the state Government taking up necessary measures to beautify Moirangm which is one of the tourist hotspots of the state. The Chief Minister stated this during the inauguration ceremo.....

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Awareness prog on Smart City

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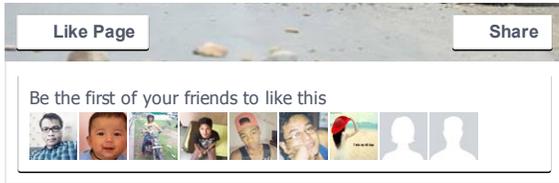
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[goroba-Green workshop and Seminar concludes](#)



Culture and Progress

IMPHAL December 6: A day-long media awareness programme on Smart City was organized by All Manipur Working Journalists Union (AMWJU) at Manipur Press Club here today. Chief Town Planner N Gitkumar Singh; president of AMWJU W Shyamjai; editor of Echel dai.....

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Chinjak Fest from Dec 13

IMPHAL, Dec 6: The 6th edition of 'Chinjak Festival-Merry Christmas 2015' will be held from December 13 to 20 at Heritage Park, Hapta Kangjeibung, Palace Compound during which around 35-40 stalls will avail various indigenous foods. As the organisers are.....

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UNLF owns attack on MGT Tata Motors

IMPHAL, Dec 6: Miscreant exploded an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) late last night near the showroom Manipur Golden Travels (MGT) Tata Motors situated along the Tiddim road Sanaiparou under Singjamei police station, Imphal West district. Sources said.....

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