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# Research maGma

## An International Multidisciplinary Journal

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### **A STUDY OF ‘THE AFTERMATH OF THE INCIDENT’ BY N. KUNJAMOHAN SINGH**

**Dr. Anuradha Nongmaithem**

Assistant Professor of English, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences National Institute of Technology Agartala Jirinia, West Tripura

#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the impact of gun violence and bomb culture depicted in “The Aftermath Of The Incident” by N. Kunjamohan Singh. The story was originally written in Manipuri language and it was translated into English version by Thounaojam Ratankumar Singh. The present study is done on the translated version. The story is taken from the Akademi award-winning Anthology of Manipuri Short Stories *The Taste of an Hilsa and Other Stories*. The story is about ordinary woman, a daily vendor trying to survive by selling dry fishes in the Imphal market. Manipuri literature contains violence because violence reveals the underlying conflicts in all social relationships and Manipur for the past 65 years is a war zone area. The study reveals the conflicted place from the eyes of the main protagonist Ketuki.

#### **KEYWORDS:**

Bomb- blast, Khwairamband Bazaar, gun – violence, bomb- culture.

#### **THE STORY:**

The story is about a daily vendor woman named Ketuki, who sells dry fishes and look after her family. As usual she comes to *Khwairamband Bazaar* to sell her things. And accidentally there was a bomb blast on this faithful day of kang (Rathajatra festival) and the market was deserted. She somehow managed to reach home and next day after the blast when she went to the market, there was bandh and all the women folks in the market went to meet the chief minister with their complaint and outside the bungalow, she collapse and felt down. She was admitted to the hospital and she had a paralysis attacked.

#### **THE INTERPRETATION:**

Manipur is the extreme northeastern state of India with a rich cultural heritage. The language, dance, songs, dress, festivals, beliefs, agriculture, administration, and sports have greatly contributed towards Indian culture as a whole. Since the ancient time, Manipur was an independent, autonomous

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and sovereign kingdom. Monarchism prevailed from the beginning of the history of Manipur and it is belief that all the monarchs were benevolent in character and mercifulness in the characteristics. The scenario of Manipur changed with the coming of the British Empire and after that Manipur is never the same. The residue of struggles and the bitter feeling and the atrocity has carried leading to internal conflict and clash between the indigenous people. We are plague by gun violence and bomb culture the worse of the modern creation.

Khwairamband Bazaar, also known as the Ema Bazaar, or Nupi Keithel, literally means Mother's Market. The Ema Bazaar is one of the largest markets run by women in the country. Almost everything is found here. Things like earthen pots, knives, shawls, puppets and all kinds of dried fish, fruits, vegetables items for traditional marriage, ceremonial of various items can also found in this market. It is one of the oldest markets with its rich tradition. Khwairamband Keithel was borne out of a desperate will to survive more than a well planned economical set up. The market has given many hopes to down trodden family and it's a pride of Manipur. The role of women hence emerged as central and plays a bigger role in the family. The trend of a bazaar run by women had continued even to this day. The story is about an ordinary day in Manipur and about a village woman struggling to survive in this harsh world. Bomb culture has come as an asset from Government of India, when Manipur was merged with the independent India in 1949. Ever since the state exists as one of the independent state of India, it as witness several bomb blasts, gunning by army personal as well the insurgencies bodies, or the conflict between the army personnel or the militant groups but the ultimate is the civil bodies who suffers. The worse was the implementation of AFSPA, 1958 which somehow gave a license to kill the innocent people in Manipur. The Supreme Court has recently accepted 1,528 'fake encounters' in the past 20 years in Manipur is the latest updates in July 11, 2017 in The Indian Express newspaper. It must be more than that but 1528 figure was documented so it has surfaced. The armies personnel strike a bomb against the insurgency and in counter to that the insurgency people answered by throwing another bomb to armies. Thus, the receiver of this hatred is the civilian.

The whole story is based on 48 hours of a woman's life. How things have changed in that 48 hours. Ketuki suddenly heard, "A loud sound with a 'Bang!' (32). The story begins in a hospital room. Ketuki was admitted in hospital by her fellow mates from the market. She is struggling to gain back her consciousness and trying to recall back what had happened to her. The story is the flashed back of a previous incident in the heart of Imphal city in khwairamband (name of a market in Imphal) market. Ketuki is struggling to remember and she could hear people speaking to her and:

She wants to open her eyes completely, but cannot do it. Where is she lying and who are those staying near her; and why are they staying here? Ketuki cannot understand anything, as she cannot open her eyes properly" (32)

She tries to move her hand and legs but she is not able to do. She was tensed thinking what kind of a sickness she is having. She realized that she is in hospital with bottles hanging and could see things around. But she is not able to move.

She recollects that people were running here and there and one woman and non Manipuri died in the blast. "... perhaps a male voice, says, "What are these young men doing! Throwing bombs in the crowded place where general men doing! What benefit do they get when innocent people are left wounded and dead? (33-34). How can they be so mean minded trying to hurt the civilian and throwing the bomb in a crowded place? Their target is to kill maximum people. Throwing a bomb in the public

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place is not new in Manipur. The target of the police personal as well the insurgency people is the public place especially in festive mood of the people. "Being the day of Kang (Rathajatra Festival) she had gone to the market for buying fruits and other items: generally people would assemble in the morning" (34). Ketuki have also thought that she will be able to earn more money and was very happy, "Today might be a fruitful day, God is always there," she thought. "Day after tomorrow was the last day for the admission of her daughter in the college" (35). In this happy mood she never knew what was stored her. She was making plan with the small earning about her daughter's future.

Suddenly, "The earth trembled, it seemed that the explosion was quite near. "It is a bomb, a bomb," people started shouting. Then a number of rattling sounds of gunfire. There had been no end to these sounds."(35). Everyone was running, banging each other and trying to save their lives. She was also running and she, "... tripped on a stone suddenly near the small drain adjoining the road, and it was a serious fall" (36).

### All her dreams and aspiration just went off with one bang sound:

The CRPF vehicle was parking at the site of the row of shops of vegetable vendors at Nagamapal. Some youths, suddenly threw a bomb on it and it exploded. At that moment, it could not be estimated... Then the CRPF personnel started firing at random. Other CRPF personnel who were on duty at different places of the bazaar also joined in the shootout... The Khwairamband market was completely devastated and all shops were closed. Nobody could be seen in the streets except the army personnel. (37)

Gun violence and bomb- culture has engulfs the peaceful state Manipur. Sometime the armies impulsively reacted against the without thinking about the common people. In rage to take revenge they sometimes instead of protecting the civilian they becomes the means of misery for the common people. One finds a large variety of conflict dynamics in the Northeast ranging from insurgency for secession to insurgency for independence, from sponsored terrorism to ethnic clashes the famous is the clash between Nagas and Meiteis, to problems of continuous inflow of migrants and the fight over limited resources. Northeast India especially Manipur is home to a variety of chaos and social disorder. Socio-political instability and economic backwardness, isolation and inaccessibility to the mainland and poor connectivity compound the problem further. In spite of all these problems the people of Manipur is trying to survive and make it a better place. The State is going through a dark phase waiting for a new morning. Ketuki's daughter was worried when her mother was getting ready to go to the market the next day,

" A lot of money was lost; seeing that, the eldest daughter said, "Mother, don't go to the market today, in such bad times, it is unpredictable" (38). The uncertainty of the situation in Manipur is depicted here. But life has to go on. People have to manage to adjust somehow. When went to the market she was not allowed to sell anything, "Today there can be no women vendors. Market Bund" (39). She was drag to join protest. The series of blast in Manipur :

- ✦ *Five people, including two women, were injured in a bomb explosion this evening in the heart of the Imphal city, hours after the final phase of the Assembly poll in Manipur concluded. March 08, 2017*
- ✦ *Miscreants exploded a high intensity Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in the busy commercial locality. July 17, 2017*
- ✦ *Over 30 Blasts in Just 80 Days. March 13, 2015*

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- ✦ 3 Bomb Explosions Hit Imphal, 1 Killed, India News | Press Trust of India | Sunday November 20, 2016
- ✦ 5 Injured In Bomb Blasts, Shutdown On Independence Day In Manipur, India News | Indo-Asian News Service | Monday August 15, 2016
- ✦ Three Killed, 23 Injured in Imphal Blast, Wednesday March 11, 2015
- ✦ There were 66 blasts across Manipur, which killed 15 and injured 76. 2014
- ✦ Nine injured in Ukhrul district blast in Manipur, Tuesday November 19, 2013

The above figure was taken from NDTV, (<http://www.ndtv.com/topic/manipur-bomb-blast>) which gave the detail of the series of bomb culture that was practice in Manipur. It has brought acute destruction and wastage of public properties and disturbances in day to day activities. This shows that in India's northeast, series of bomb blast is taken as a normal day today happening. There was a very disturbed phase during the early 70s and 80s in Manipur. Manipur has seen many of her people sacrificed and has claimed many innocent lives because of the fight that happened between the insurgency and army personnel. The tussle between has always brought many miseries to the people especially women folks and daily vendors. Women have always played a major role in many social movements. Concepts of solidarity amongst women's groups are very strong in the region. This is often illustrated in the existence of self-help groups, traditional cooperative systems, women's markets and other forms of cooperative village action. Women's contribution in the economic sphere is great and women have always come out in the street to safeguard Manipuri society. There are many Ketuki who looks after the household expenses by selling things in the market. Market for them is their livelihood and way of life. The tragic end of Ketuki is pathetic. The blast has changed her course of life. It will never be the same for her. It is indeed a pathetic end for her, "Oh, I undergo a lot of sufferings!" She does not know from where this sound of agonizing pain has come, whether it is from herself, she could not know! (40). The world will carry on but the world of Ketku will come to a standstill. But who literally cares. The blast will carry on harming more family in future. The end of gun –violence and bomb culture leads only to destruction. The great two World Wars are the greatest prove of destruction.

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