

Ignorance is bliss for the new age media

Description

A reality check on how main stream media covers North & East India and its related issues

Northeast India is a rich abode of natural beauty and bounty encircled by the seven sister states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and the adjoining hilly state of Sikkim. However, one wonders the fact that such a vast territory of the country remains poorly represented in the national consciousness. Even as India is celebrating 65 years of Independence with great pomp and show, the Indian Government has not taken adequate measures to bring the Northeast into the mainstream in all aspects.

People of the region still feel estranged and cannot interact with other people living in other regions. They do share their patriotic feeling towards the country and its people. They celebrate when Dhoni sends the ball flying over the ropes and brought 20-20 Cricket World Cup from South Africa in 2011 or when he won the World Cup with his trademark smack. But what happened during the North East Exodus issue? Do they really feel safe when they are away from home in search of a better future?

As India is moving towards globalization, more attention needs to be given from cross sections of society in order to co-opt this region into the mainstream. Apart from the initiatives from the government, NGOs and other corporate, media need to play an active role in nation building giving importance to the Northeast India. But the fact of the matter is that national media or mainstream media become spirited only to portray that people here are violent. They give attention only when insurgency related issues crop up in the region. It is rather that they are obsessed with news of violence and insurgency. Then what about the AFSPA when government imposed this draconian rule in the region and take away or infringe upon civil rights and liberties in the name of national security? Do you really think that Anna Hazare's crusade is closer to humanity than Irom Sharmila? Irom Sharmila actually has been demanding for human rights for the last 12 years. Mainstream media really need to wake up from all this ignorance and one-sided attitude and be the torch bearer for a better humanity. Are you listening?

Does it mean that there are no positive activities happening in this region? Media coverage of the region, at least, tries to create such an illusion. Of course, there are many day-to-day activities and achievements, which even can become the leading story in print and electronic mainstream media. But, when such news reports are killed, people from other regions know the Northeast region as a vitriolic place. No doubt that the national media itself has quite a few luminaries who belong to the region but they are puppets in the hands of the media moghuls. Ironically local media too become a puppet of political honchos.

However, it is time one thought about ignoring mainstream media and focused on local and indigenized media. In fact, facebook serves as a better platform to exchange information on a wide range of issues which mainstream media are ignorant about. A state's destiny and its image cannot be built, never should it be allowed to be built, by the market mongers who think only about crude strategies to boost sales. Social responsibility is not that of media's mandate but of everyone in the society. Let us take the mantle of spreading information about the Northeast and other available channels thereby defeat the money-guzzling mainstream media's designs to cover up issues in the NE region. Blogs, forums, wikis, facebook, twitter and other channels can be the best modes to establish the Northeast identity. Should we boycott the mainstream media? Well, that would be immature but let us expose their machinations. On that positive note, I would like to

convey that digital literacy of being able to launch a website or a blog and reaching out the masses is the need of the hour.

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Category

1. Think Tank

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