Two Icons and Two States: Democracy and Human Rights Movements in India and Myanmar

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India and Myanmar are two neighbors sharing over 1600 km. of international border along India’s northeastern and Myanmar’s northwestern regions. (Ministry of External Affairs, India-Myanmar Relation) The deep rooted and multidimensional relationship between India and Myanmar started in historical period along with the spread of Buddhism. Until 1937, Burma was a part of British India. After independence, both India and Burma followed the path of non-alignment. The deep rooted relationship between the two countries started experiencing frequent ups and downs following Myanmar’s internal political changes in the late 1980s. In Myanmar’s history, the year 1989 saw the emergence of a great contemporary national hero, DawAungSanSuuKyi. Several authors agreed on the point that the military dominated country greeted and obeyed SuuKyi as a daughter of their war hero, AungSaan, and welcomed her because she returned the country after a long period of time at her early 40s. (Garry 1992, Derek 2007, Hlaing 2007) SuuKyi, with her charismatic capability of mass mobilization made them to rally against the army rulers of the country. (Garry 1992, Derek 2007, Hlaing 2007) At another corner, not too far from Yangon, eleven years after 1989, a remote Imphal in India watched a
very normal and common girl called IromSharmilaChanu in her late 20s, starting a fast unto death demanding repeal of the state imposed Armed Forces Special Powers Act (1958) (hereafter AFSPA) from her state, Manipur. The moment SuuKyi decided to enter the politics there were many to support her and accept her as their leader. SuuKyi, because of her family background received popularity very quickly. Her struggle had been a political one against the Junta rule and all she wanted is the return of democracy in the country. SuuKyi completed her formal education in first in India and then in UK and studied Political Science among other subjects. IromSharmila who even did not complete her college education was a common person without any politically affluent family background. Her love for her nation had its origin in the strong community bond encompassing her entire childhood and she started her very non-violent struggle against AFSPA in a small place in Manipur without any large scale mass involvement. (Mehrotra2009) A few of her fellow minded people from some human rights organizations were there to bid support for her. IromSharmila’s struggle, has been, therefore more of an apolitical one. In brief, one can say that in Myanmar, SuuKyi is a leader of a movement and IromSharmila is considered only as a part of a greater fight against derogation of human rights of the citizens in Northeast India. The purpose of this paper is to study different dimensions of struggles led by SuuKyi and IromSharmila in their respective places and how their states have responded to them. As a student of Area Studies, my interests for writing such an article onSuuKyi and IromSharmila came from the fact they are the two women who represent two great movements in India and Myanmar, one very popular and another one is comparatively lesser known. It would not be a comparative study between the two ladies, rather, a little effort to acknowledge what they have been doing for their country and society.
SuuKyi, Democracy and the State of Myanmar:

After Ne Win’s Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) collapsed in 1988 in the wake of 8888 student uprising the army staged a coup and formed State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to govern the country. (SuuKyi 1990) Very soon, the SLORC announced that it had no intention to keep power in their hand and they made an election commission to conduct a nation-wide election to form the government. (Derek 2007) The election was due for May 1990 and apart from SuuKyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD) around 95 political parties were preparing for the election. (Hlaing 2007) But in April 1990, Major General KhinNyunt said that transfer of power to the winning party would not be an automatic process following the election. The SLORC made it clear that the winning members would have to work first to draft a constitution for the nation and the people of the country would have to accept that constitution. (Derek 2007) SLORC Chairman General Saw Maung made it clear that SLORC was the only responsible machinery that was running the nation and it was SLORC that paved the way for a constitution and government for the country. (Derek 2007) According to one scholar, there were only two persons in those days in Burma who could understand the possible implications of SLORC’s statements and speeches and they were U Nu and SuuKyi, unfortunately both were under house arrest at that time. (Derek 2007) SuuKyi was detained for the first time in 1989 and placed under house arrest and denied rights to communicate with her family, political followers and supporters, though no formal charges were recorded and no trial was held. (Silverstein 1996) In an interview, SuuKyi said that adoption of constitution through a referendum or any similar process may take more than one month time and it was quite clear that before that the SLORC would not transfer the power. (Derek 2007) In the election, despite the regime’s all restrictions on publicity and campaigning, NLD secured a victory with huge majority. Within next two days
after the election result was announced, General Saw Maung declared that SLORC would not transfer the power until and unless a legitimate government under the laws and regulations agreed by a constitution was being formed. (Derek 2007) This was followed by NLD’s repeated call to the SLORC to convene a parliament and declare the formation of a new government according to the result of the election. But SLORC was not ready for this change. Instead, most of the young leaders of NLD were arrested. (Hlaing 2007) Some leaders of the NLD decided to form a government-in-exile in the name of National Coalition Government of Union of Burma (NCGUB) and to sustain the fight for democracy while staying far away from the country. SLORC continued to run the government in the country and overlooked all democratic values and rights of the citizens. Apart from promoting regular arrest and detention of the pro-democracy leaders and their supporters, the Junta has also tried to capture the social and economic life of the people. In 1993 the Junta established a government funded organization called Union Solidarity and Development Organization (USDA). Than Shwe and his fellows have used this organization to raise support for the government to the maximum possible extent. In fact, all senior students of the country were required to accept its membership and encouraged to spy on the fellow students. (Kudo 2011) In 2010, the USDA was renamed as Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and participated in the national election. In the meantime, in 1993, the SLORC declared a national convention to be held up for preparing a constitution. The SLORC organized a national convention, but only a very few members were selected from the winning NLD. (Silverstein 1996) As a result, SuuKyi denied to accept the convention.

In 2003, a Seven Point Road Map was publicized by the government as a tool of Myanmar’s transition to democracy. The year 2003, surprisingly also witnessed re-arrest of SuuKyi after some months of her release in 2002. In 2003, a crowd, allegedly being sponsored by the junta
attacked SuuKyi’s motorcade and fired on it. Followed, SuuKyi was taken into house arrest once again in the name of protective custody and released only in late 2010. She was under house arrest between 1989 and 1995 and then after five years, she was once again detained between 2000 and 2002. Her house arrest in 2003 was ended only in late 2010.

The Myanmar government conducted a national level election in 2010 as a fifth step towards transition to democracy according to their Seven Point Road Map. In the meanwhile, in 2007 the national convention was finally held and in May, 2008 the constitutional referendum was done. (Kudo 2011) The Myanmar people got only one month time to study the draft constitution before the referendum. Though the number of participating voters were significantly low in the Cyclone affected areas, the SPDC(State Peace and Development Council, SLORC’s new form) announced by the end of May that nation-wide almost 98 percent people took part in the referendum and out of that, 92.48 per cent gave ‘yes’ vote to the draft constitution. (Holliday 2008) Adoption of the new constitution through national referendum was the fourth step towards democracy. The fifth step was to conduct a national level election for the legislative bodies (national, regional and local) and the sixth step was to convene the Hluttaws or the Parliaments.

The 2010 election was based on the new constitution that was accepted in 2008. The democratic and human rights activists have raised questions over the transparency of this election and refused to accept the election blaming it as neither free nor fair. SuuKyi and her party could not participate in the election as it barred many of the NLD leaders from participating in the election for a several excuses. According to the new constitution and the electoral principles, anyone who is in marriage or had married to any foreign nationals could not participate in the election. Anyone who had faced imprisonment could not participate in the election. The religious and rebel groups also could not take part in the election. (Hariharan 2011) Many small and local
parties could not participate in the election as it was mandatory for each party to nominate candidates in at least three constituencies. Such criteria could not be fulfilled by some political parties. (Kudo 2011) Apart from the government sponsored USDP, other parties could manage to nominate very few and insignificant contestants in the election. (Kudo 2011) The Myanmar government did not accept any international observers in the election, media coverage was insignificant, and certain restrictions were imposed on movement of the candidates and party members except the USDP members. (Kudo 2011) When the result of the election came out, the world saw the USDP winning the election with 883 of the total 1154 parliamentary seats, that is, 76.5 per cent. The USDP, led by Prime Minister TheinSein, won 79.6 per cent seats in the House of Representatives; 76.7 per cent in the House of Nationalities; and 74.8 per cent in regional and state parliaments. (GyiThar 2010)

In the midst of these predicated developments, fortunately, since taking office in March 2011, the new President, U TheinSein has taken several steps towards democratization. His government has freed a number of political prisoners, taken several steps to liberalize the state controlled economy. AungSaanSuuKyi and her party could return to the politics of the country and participated in a by-election recently. SuuKyi won a seat in the parliament with her party secured majority in almost everywhere they participated.

**SuuKyi and her Ideologies:**

On 25th March 1989, SuuKyi said,

“What our League has said is that right now we should be aiming neither for an interim government nor for the elections, but should be seeking the attainment of basic human rights as soon as possible. If these basic rights are achieved, one of the rights — free and fair elections — will materialise.” (Derek 2007)
SuuKyi’s belief in human rights and democracy has its origin in her learning of Buddhism. She argued that Buddhism believes in man and his potential to obtain the supreme state of Buddhahood. She further argued, under military dictatorship, unlike Buddhism, man has no face and no value. Therefore, she argued that political and social system must allow man the freedom to realize his potentials and only a democratic society can ensure that. (Derek 2007) She also believed that economic development is not only about gaining financial independence; rather it is associated with a feeling of empowerment and fulfillment. That’s why she repeatedly requested the foreign investors not to invest in the country until and unless the people enjoy the same empowerment as enjoyed by a government or army officials. (Derek 2007) She very rightly argued that people should be empowered to participate in governance and have a dialogue with the government in the decisions taken for the country. In this line, she called for democracy friendly development growth during her speech at the 101th International Labour Conference, held in 2012 in Geneva. In the same forum, she said that aid and investment should come for strengthening of the

“democratization by promoting social and economic progress that is beneficial to political reform……Strong democratic institutions that will guarantee basic human rights are necessary to ensure good governance based on transparency, accountability and enhancement of integrity”. (ILO 2012)

Though SuuKyi herself admitted that the democratization efforts taken under the leadership of TheinSein are most welcome by the people of her country as well as by the international community, she argued that foreign investment should maintain a rule that their investment would create job opportunities for the young generation. Adoption of technologies that create
sustainable development, tourism, efficient civil services, greater access to modern transportation and communication are amongst other priority areas focused by SuuKyi. (ILO 2012) In 1990, in her famous Freedom from Fear speech, in her support to human rights and democratic values, SuuKyi said that a closer relationship between politics and ethics is necessary to protect the basic rights of human being. In the same speech, she said, neither changes in the official policies and institutions in order to make improvements in material conditions will be a long-lasting solution, nor, only a call for freedom, democracy and human rights will serve the purpose, what the people of the country need is a determination to fight against corrupting influences, ill will, ignorance and fear in a continuing manner. (SuuKyi 1990) She said, in absence of democracy, fear comes- fear of imprisonment, fear of torture, fear of death, fear of losing friends, family, property or means of livelihood, fear of isolation, fear of failure- and this is not an ideal situation for a progressing society.

IromSharmilaChanu, AFSPA and the state of Manipur:

Manipur, a tiny state of India with a population of 2.7 million is connected to Myanmar and has no direct physical link with mainland India. Assam is the only northeastern state that is connected to mainland India through a silver line often called as chicken neck, passing through Siliguri, West Bengal. The mongoloid origin of the Manipuris makes them look alike Chinese or Koreans and not like average Indians. Ethnically, linguistically and culturally they are different. Insurgency wrapped, dangerous, isolated, marginalized, backwards- these are the adjectives that are used with Manipur and other Northeastern states and all these words are negative in sense. However it is not our objective to find out why Northeast India and her people are always considered outsiders for mainland Indians in this essay, this brief background was necessary to understand IromSarmila’s struggle and its dimensions.
Violence and counter violence have become two familiar words in the entire northeast India with more than hundred separatist groups agitating against the alleged step motherly behavior of government of India and demand for separation on the one hand and on the other government recruited armed forces are attempting to ‘free’ the region from the insurgents. In the course of its action against the insurgents, the government of India has imposed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958 in parts of northeast India including Manipur. IromSharmila is protesting against the draconian law of AFSPA that allows the army to use force, shoot, or arrest anyone without warrant, on the mere suspicion that someone has committed or was about to commit a cognizable offence. According to one news agency, AFSPA has sparked insurgency in the northeast, instead of curbing it-when it was imposed there were four insurgent groups in Manipur, now the number has grown up to twenty five. (Chaudhury) According to one nongovernmental organization, the provisions of AFSPA violate international human rights laws and lead to wide scale human rights abuses as well as destabilizes the economic, social and governance infrastructures of the states. (NAPM)

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act is based on a colonial law used against Mahatma Gandhi when he started satyagraha against the British government. AFSPA got the status of an act in 1958 and it was initially imposed in the Naga areas of Assam and later in Mizoram and Manipur. It is now prevalent in parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Since 1991, AFSPA has also been in force in Jammu and Kashmir. AFSPA has caused heavy militarization leading to gross civil and political rights violations including enforced disappearances, extra-judicial execution, torture, inhuman and degrading
treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, arbitrary arrest and detention. (NAPM)

A young IromSharmila was disturbed by these developments in her state. Her struggle started in 2000 in retaliation of a violent incident happened in Malom, a few kilometers away from Imphal. It was a normal day in November 2000 until some men from the Assam Rifles killed ten innocent people waiting for bus in the bus depot in Malom. This action was taken under the draconian law off AFSPA. This ‘lawful’ action prompted IromSharmila, an ordinary girl of Manipur to instantly declare fast unto death till this law is abolished. (Mehrotra 2009)

Sharmila’s childhood is important to study to understand the origin of inner strength of Sharmila for her decade old fast. Sharmila’s early days of life gave her a sense of collectiveness and selflessness. Sharmila’s grandmother who had participated in the second Nupilan or Women’s War of 1939 in Manipur against the British strongly influenced the children of the families. The lack of employment, rampant corruption in the society and the state, the fight of the NishaBandhis and the MeiraPaibis to safeguard the young population of Manipur from alcoholism and random arrests by the Indian army, the chronic poverty of the common people—all these had a deep impact on the young and innocent mind of Sharmila. In the beginning of her adulthood, she started questioning the existing state and economic system. Not surprisingly, then Sharmila took up a voluntary job in local human rights organization, called Human Rights Alert (HRA). IromSharmila’s association with HRA and her participation in an Independent Members Inquiry Commission into the impact of AFSPA in Manipur helped her getting a clear understanding of what is AFSPA and why it should be removed. During her internship at HRA, IromSharmila read extensively about AFSPA and the countless atrocities in the name of law including rapes, abductions and killings. Sharmila was disturbed by the fact that for years, the
lives of the common people have been controlled by the army on one hand and the insurgents on the other hand. The Malom massacre finally broke her silence and encouraged her to take some firm steps for her people. For Sharmila, it’s her ‘bounden duty’. (Mehrotra, 2009) Sharmila is charged with ‘Attempt to Suicide’, for which a person can be sentenced up to one year of imprisonment, under Section 309 of the Indian penal Code (IPC). (Mehrotra 2009) Throughout the following years, Sharmila was arrested and released only to be re-arrested by the police. She is being force feed throughout the years. Mehrotra (2009) explains, Sharmila agreed to this process as she did not want to leave her life without achieving what she has dreamt- removal of AFSPA from Manipur. All these years, Sharmila was kept in the security wing of Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in solitary confinement with rare visitors. Sharmila expects that her demand for withdrawal of AFSPA would mean that politicians and policy makers would address the real life problems of the common people and Manipur would overcome its dependency syndrome to become a self-sufficient state. Another important point to note about Sharmila’s struggle, according to Mehrotra (2009), is that it is an integral part of fights led by Manipuri women against state sponsored violence.

Despite all efforts Sharmila’s fight in the remote corner of the state often goes unnoticed. In 2006-07, Sharmila drew substantial amount of attention from the national and international media during her fast in Delhi. An international figure, Nobble Laureate, ShirinEbadi’s visit to Sharmila in Delhi’s hospital and her open support for Sharmila’scause has also helped drawn attention to her fast unto death. Otherwise, for Sharmila, it has always become very difficult to get attention from the national media as geographic distance between Manipur and Delhi itself acts as a barrier in gaining popularity. In 2007, Sharmila came back to Imphal and immediately
the police took her to the JL Nehru Hospital’s Security Wing. Here re-started her journey of confinement.

In the meanwhile, in 2004, in the wake of huge level of criticism for incidents of Manorama Devi’s rape during her detention by the Assam Rifles and IromSharmila’s continued fast, the government of India had recommended a commission headed by Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy. The Jeevan Reddy Commission recommended that AFSPA should be included in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, applicable to entire India and that way the Northeast’s indictment of being deliberately discriminated against mainland India be removed.

IromSharmila is easily understood from these two simple statements that she passed in 2009. Her passion for non-violence is known to all- be it her family, her supporters or the governments.

Yet, she, for the Government of India, is a criminal being pushed to the security wing of JN Hospital, Imphal. What IromSharmilawants is just to protect her brothers and sisters from the cyclic tragedy of violence and counter-violence. Unlike, SuuKyi who wants to change her society through active politics, Sharmila does not want to be in power- instead, when she started her fast, she knew that being an ordinary citizen of India she has no political backing or
influential family background to be followed by the masses. Yet, she did not hesitate to stand for her cause. (Mehrotra 2009)

“When will we get the human rights? The government says why we are making a hue and cry over the death of one or few. But we need to ponder how the deaths occurred- by a disease or by the pangs of separation of beloved. We need to think.

Is our government who claims to be our protector going to still cover the deaths as natural?
Are we to just simply educated ourselves, get a good job and end our life?
We need to ask a question why we are born.” IromSharmila, Imphal: 2009

When it comes to deaths of people due to insurgency and counter-insurgency, according to one Delhi based research organization, total fatalities in the northeast stood at 322 in 2010, 853 in 2009 and 1051 in 2008. (SATP) For IromSharmila, justice and love for humanity is more important than any material development. A fearless and dedicated woman like IromSharmila wrote in one of her poems,

“Wake up brothers and sisters
The savior of the nation
We have come out all the way
Knowing we all will die
Why the fear is
So shaky in the heart?”… IromSharmilaChanu, Wake Up, as cited in E Pao,
The States and the Icons:

After a long gap of 25 years Myanmar received an Indian Prime Minister in 2012. It was 1987 when Rajiv Gandhi visited Burma. The subsequent internal political changes marked remarkable changes in Indo-Myanmar relations too and though India played host to visiting Myanmarese Heads of the State and other high ranking army cum government signatories for several times, no Indian Prime Minister since then had visited the country. One writer has beautifully expressed why no Indian Prime Minister has not visited Myanmar after Rajiv Gandhi. He said,

“For 25 years, India walked a tightrope in Myanmar between the need to build relations with an important neighbour that was also a strategic gateway to South-east and East Asia, and its conscience. Aung San SuuKyi was the discomfiting reminder of that conscience. In the struggle to keep a balance between the two, New Delhi could neither go full steam ahead with the military regime that had kept Ms SuuKyi under arrest, nor go all out to support the pro-democracy movement she led.” (The Hindu 2012)

Dr. Manmohan Singh’s recent visit to Myanmar thereby implies a significant step towards India’s conciliatory approach towards the country. In addition, Manmohan Singh’s visit to Myanmar is remarkable because Myanmar signed record number of MOUs with India and with no other country Myanmar had signed so many MOUs and agreements in its recent past. For many historical, geographical, strategic and security reasons a good and trustworthy relation is important for both India and Myanmar. The objective and scope of this paper may not allow us to read in details about Indo-Myanmar relations, for better understanding of the subject we should highlight some of the noticeable points in India’s relations with Myanmar. The first two
Prime Ministers of India and Burma used to share a good relations with each other which had a reflection on their foreign politics too. The Burmese nationalist leaders like AungSaan had close affinities with Nehru family and U Nu, the first Burmese Prime Minister along with Jawaharlal Nehru started following the policy of nonalignment in post independent period. During the era of Ne Win, Burma gradually started following an isolationist foreign policy and corollary to it, not only with India, but with rest of the world too, Burma maintained no closeness at all. After the break down of 8-8-88 uprising and the crash of democratic rights and values in post 1990 election, the Government of India decided to cut its relations with the country. The Democracy icon, SuuKyi and other NLD leaders were highly praised by the Indian Government. In the meanwhile, in the wake of growing regionalism across the world India had launched Look East Policy in order to revive her relations with the South-eastern neighbours. Myanmar became a vital part of it because of cross border insurgency along India’s North-eastern region. Both countries launched operation Golden Bird to eliminate the insurgents along the border until the operation was suddenly stopped by the Burmese Generals as soon as AungSaan was awarded with the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding by India. Soon this set back was abolished when both India and Myanmar joined a regional grouping called BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multilateral Technical and Economic Cooperation) in 1997, the same year when Myanmar joined ASEAN. So for India, Myanmar serves as a land based gateway to Southeast Asia. Apart from the insurgency connection between the armed groups of Northeast India and Myanmar the country is important because of its richness in natural resources, particularly energy. Myanmar is believed to be the tenth largest natural gas reservoir in the world. (Thant Myint U) This untapped energy potential of Myanmar would be able to cater to the electricity demand of the North-eastern states easily if a pipeline could be installed. So far,
India’s approach towards the Government of Myanmar has been of engagement just like the ASEAN leaders. And now, when the western governments have started to suspend sanctions over Myanmar and the country is opening up, India does not want to be a late runner in the race. (The Hindu 2012)

It is evident from the above paragraph that realistically India needs a more than cordial relation with Myanmar. Therefore, the question arises what approach is taken by India towards AungSanSuuKyi and what implications it could have on IromSharmilaChanu’s movement. In the wake of India’s Look East Policy and India’s renewed relation with Myanmar, SuuKyi and the pro-democratic movement in Myanmar could hardly get any active support from the end of the Government of India. It was only after some changes in Myanmar internal politics that allowed the country towards a transition to democracy and SuuKyi participated in the national level by-election in 2012 that India again showed moral support for the lady. During his visit to Myanmar and to SuuKyi, Dr. Manmohan Singh described her life and struggle as ‘inspiration’ and described the hope that she would play a ‘defining’ role in the national reconciliation process in the country. (Subramanian 2012) So, it is clear that for international strategic reasons and a peaceful border in the Northeastern region, India will continue engage with the Government of Myanmar and SuuKyi will also get moral and verbal attention as an opposition party leader in the country who also leads the most popular democratic movement of this age. It is SuuKyi’s international recognition which will not allow the Government of India to ignore her issues completely. So, for IromSharmila, the struggle becomes a little harder as her fast-onto-death has not really shaken any country’s politics- neither the Government of India nor the Myanmar government seem to be empathetic towards Sharmila’s agenda and her fight. Only a handful of international organizations who are well aware of IromSharmila’s struggle have repeatedly
pushed the Government for withdrawal of AFSPA from the region. But what she lacks is a vast and world-wide recognition from the international forums and a large support from the mass at home.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Non violent actions and methods have been used for attaining civil and democratic rights for centuries. Theorist Gene Sharp identifies three basic categories of nonviolent action. This first is nonviolent protest and persuasion. With these actions, we identify what is wrong and try to help others understand. This category includes tactics as petitioning, picketing, demonstrating and lobbying. The second category is nonviolent non-cooperation. With these actions we refuse to participate in what is wrong. This category includes tactics such as boycotts, strikes and tax resistance. The third category is nonviolent intervention. With these actions, we interfere and try to block what is wrong. This category includes tactics as physical obstruction, blockades, civil disobedience and sit-ins. (McAllister, Pam 1999) If these categories of non-violent actions are taken into account, Sharmila’s struggle is a simple demonstration of what is wrong and involves a few sit ins and petitioning by her supporters. On the other hand, SuuKyi’s struggle has involved a more number of tools covered under Sharp’s categories of nonviolent actions, such as demonstration, petitioning, boycott, civil disobedience and sit-ins. Recently, insurgency is decreasing in Northeast India and the Government in Myanmar itself is trying for transition towards democracy. SuuKyi in Myanmar now sits in the Parliament as an opposition leader, but things have not changed for IromSharmila yet. Despite differences and limitations, we cannot ignore the greatest contribution made by these two women in their respective areas. The teaching of nonviolence has been reinforced by their movements and undoubtedly, their association with
nonviolence comes from a deep commitment for opposition against coercive means. (Costain, Anne N 2000) Both of them remind us of another greatest follower of nonviolence of contemporary period and he is none other than Mahatma Gandhi. If Gandhi’s lessons are to be remembered then we must not forget Suu Kyi and Irom Sharmila and make their fights stronger.

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