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Manipur's soft power attributes and Manipuri Meitei diasporas of the 21st century

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Abstract

Manipuri Meiteis' soft power attributes such as traditional attires (varieties of 'phi' and 'fanek'), indigenous cuisines, ornaments, dance forms, martial arts, folk songs, language (Meiteilon), festivals and celebrations, sports, etc., can play a pivotal role in attracting and influencing people across the globe. Manipur's classical dance form such as 'Ras Leela', martial art form like 'Thang Ta', traditional attires, and cuisines are so popular in the world. Manipuri diasporas are often seen utilising such unique soft power attributes of Manipur to preserve their unique cultural identity. In doing so, they somehow promote the unique culture and traditions of Manipur in their host countries.

In today's interconnected global village, YouTube content creators are somehow playing a crucial role in imparting and influencing peoples' choices and aspirations using soft power attributes. Manipuri diasporas are also doing their part here. There are many Manipuri diasporas who are YouTube content creators. There are dedicated Manipuri diasporas' programme of All India Radio Imphal (AIR Imphal) (namely 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi') and Doordarshan (DD) Manipur TV programme (namely 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora') where the host interviews different Manipuri diasporas. These programmes are quite interesting and the interviewees/diasporas share lots of information, knowledge and experiences about themselves in their host countries. This paper seeks to study Manipuri diasporas of the 21st century in association with Manipur's soft power attributes using the above mentioned radio and TV programmes of the Manipuri diasporas as well as contents of YouTube channels created by the Manipuri diasporas.

Keywords: Soft power, Ningol Chakouba, Brain Drain, Mukbang, Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi (AIR Imphal Programme), Identity building

Introduction

Soft power, according to Joseph S. Nye Jr., is a form of power using which someone is able to persuade others to want what he/she wants and achieve preferred outcomes by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion and payments (Nye Jr., 2004) ^[1]. The ability to get others to want what you want, according to him, tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions (Nye Jr., 2004) ^[1]. In other words, soft power is a model of cultural and ideological diplomacy. It can change and shape someone's thinking, opinion and ideas; and is the opposite of hard power (i.e. military power, muscle power, payment and coercion). Joseph S Nye Jr. himself coined the term 'soft power' in the late 1980s. Soft power is very effective in shaping and changing the mindset of people although its end results may not be achieved instantly. It is a form of power, a means of getting desired results and wants, although it may take years to get the desired results. Examples include a country's cultural influence, its educational programmes, or promotion of democratic values, etc. Often, a country uses its cinema, food habits, dress and fashion, songs, educational universities, etc. to target worldwide audiences and influence these global audience. For instance, the US usually utilises its soft power attributes such as Hollywood movies, music video songs, McDonalds, Coca Cola, Nike products, Jeans, Harvard University, MIT, Stanford University and Princeton University, etc. to attract and influence global audience towards the American way of life (Nye Jr., 2004) ^[1].

Manipur's Soft Power

Manipur's soft power attributes include Manipuri traditional attires, indigenous dishes/cuisines, ornaments, dance forms, martial arts, folk songs, language, Manipuri

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cinema, Manipuri album songs, festivals and celebrations, sports, etc. In other words, Manipur's indigenous cultural forms and practices such as varieties of '*phi*' and '*fanek*', Ras Leela, Khamba-Thoibi Jagoi, Meiteilon, Thang-Ta, Kang, Sagol Kangjei, Uti Thongba, Singju, Eromba, Lai Haraoba, Thabal Chongba, Cheiraoba, Ningol Chakouba, etc, come under Manipur's soft power attributes. Such indigenous cultural forms and practices of Manipur are unique and they have the potential to awe-struck, attract and influence people. It can be observed that Manipuri diasporas (although they have been initially attracted and influenced by the soft power attributes of their host countries) are trying to build and preserve their indigenous cultures and practices wherever they are residing. It is their identity that they are trying to build and preserve in their host countries and pass-on this identity to their children. It can be often seen that they form clubs or organisations such as EMA (European Manipuri Association), KMA (Korea Manipuri Association), etc and usually hold meetings. [DD Manipur's programme namely 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora', Interview Episode 9 of Nahakpam Bidhanchandra Singh where he talks about KMA (Korea Manipur Association) and Interview Episode 10 of Dr. Bishwajeet Elangbam where he talks about EMA (European Manipuri Association)].

The interesting part is, in building identity in their host countries, they are re-learning and promoting soft power attributes of Manipur, i.e. they are searching, re-learning and promoting their indigenous cultural practices. It has been observed that many of the Manipuri diasporas often give traditional Manipuri names to their children such as Ahenba, Ngamba, Athouba, Thoibi, Lajalembi, etc. They make sure that their children are fluent in Meiteilon (indigenous language of Manipur) besides the lingua franca of their host countries. Besides, they are often seen celebrating Cheiraoba, Ningol Chakouba, organising Thabal Chongba, or promoting Manipuri dance forms like Khamba-Thoibi Jagoi, Ras Leela, and martial arts like Thang-Ta. In doing so, Manipuri diasporas are utilizing as well as promoting soft power attributes of Manipur and it is working quite well.

21st Century's Manipuri Diasporas:

Manipur's diasporas are everywhere across the globe. Historically speaking, Manipuris have been living in Bangladesh and Myanmar, as well as in the neighbouring states of Manipur, long before the formation of India, even before the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891 (Arunkumar, 2010) ^[4]. In 1819, Manipuri kingdom faced a severe attack from the Burmese causing the infamous Seven Years Devastation/Chahi Taret Khundakpa (1819-1826). The survivors of this seven years devastation migrated to the then kingdoms of Cachar, Assam, Tripura, and (East Bengal) Bangladesh (Arunkumar, 2010) ^[4]. While the Manipuris settled in Myanmar are believed to be the descendants of Manipuris who were made prisoners of war or taken by enemy Burmese kings as war captives (Arunkumar, 2010) ^[4]. There is another set of Manipuri diasporas, the products of globalisation, the ones who were born and brought up in Manipur, who went abroad to different countries in search of job opportunities and for educational purposes, and are now settled in their host countries in the 21st century. This paper focuses on the latter set of Manipuri diasporas of the 21st century.

Manipuri diasporas of the 21st century are hardworking and successful. Many of them are working professionals in key/top positions, while many are pursuing their higher education (Research scholars and Post-Doctoral Researchers). Although this amounts to brain drain for Manipur, they are doing quite well in their life.

AIR Imphal programme on Manipuri diasporas-Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi

While going through Youtube interview episodes of All India Radio Imphal (AIR Imphal) programme namely 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi', most of the Manipuri diasporas often reiterate that they were born and brought up in Manipur and that they are the first generation from their families to live/settle abroad. 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi' is an All India Radio Imphal (AIR Imphal) programme where a host interviews Manipuri diasporas living abroad in different parts of the world. These diasporas from Manipur are considered as successful and elite. In their conversations they often talked about how they struggled, work hard and reached where they are now.

After listening to around 26 interview episodes of this radio programme on different Manipuri diasporas, the following information have been observed:

- Some of them are working in key positions such as CEO and General Manager of their companies, Assistant Professors and Associate Professors in different Universities, Doctors, Software Engineers, Software Consultants, Chief Engineers, Finance Managers, Senior Research Scientists, and so on. Most of them are married, often their partners are also working and they have started building a family with their children.
- Not all of the diasporas are working professionals, many are pursuing their higher education. There are Research Scholars and Post-Doctoral Researchers doing their respective research in different renowned Universities.
- They are often the first generation from their families to live/settle abroad. Most of them were born in Manipur, did their schooling in Manipur, then moved to other states of India such as Delhi, Bangalore, Pune, etc. for graduation and post-graduation, or vocational courses. Only then they left India for higher studies and for work opportunities in their host countries. In other words, they have been attracted and influenced by the softpower attributes of their host countries.
- Most of them talked about high civic sense among the people of their host countries.
- Manipuri diasporas have been trying to build and preserve their identity by promoting their indigenous culture and traditions. For instance, Manipuri diasporas living in the US formed an organisation named North American Manipuri Association (NAMA); while diasporas living in the UK formed a group called European Manipuri Association (EMA). These bodies organise Manipuri festivals annually such as *Cheiraoba* and *Ningol Chakouba*, and also organise cultural programmes where traditional dance forms like *Khamba-Thoibi Jagoi*, *Ras Leela*, and martial arts like *Thang-Ta* are showcased. They make sure that their children are fluent in Meiteilon besides the lingua franca of their host countries.
- They still love to eat indigenous Manipuri cuisines.

Therefore, they often carry *Ngari* and dried *Hawaijar* from Manipur when they return to their respective host countries after a visit to their native home in Manipur. Their family members also parcel these indigenous food items to their address.

Materials and Methods

The above observations have been made after listening and analysing the All India Radio (AIR) Imphal programme on Manipuri diasporas named 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi'. This radio interview programme is conducted by AIR Imphal Programme Executives namely Nongthombam Roma, Sagolsem Roma and Sapam Dorendro.

While the following Manipuri diasporas are the interviewees: 1. Dr. Soniya Devi Yambem (Faculty Member, Queensland University of Technology, Australia), 2. Nivedita Salam (Chief Operating Officer, SAP Labs, Singapore), 3. Dr. Ngangbam Shantikumar Meetei (English Professor, Taiwan), 4. Jeny Rajkumari (IT Service & Operations Manager in AXA Insurance, Hong Kong), 5. Oinam Romesh Meitei (Post-Doctoral Associate in MIT, USA), 6. Mingkee Achom (Research Fellow in Department of Medical Oncology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA), 7. Dr. Khuraijam Gourashyam (Doctor, United Kingdom), 8. Dr. Gunamani Singh Oinam (Senior Research Scientist, Canada), 9. Dr. Nongmaithem Robindro Singh (Associate Professor, College of Business & Economics, Debre Bebre University, Ethiopia), 10. Daisy Maibam (Mobile Quality Assurance Engineer, Frankfurt Germany), 11. Dr. Amom Ruhikanta Meetei (Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati, Department of Pediatrics, Ohio, USA), 12. Kebola Wahengbam (Research Assistant, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre, USA), 13. Albert Rajkumar (Chief Executive Officer, Precursor Gaming Inc. Houston, Texas, USA), 14. Brahmacharimayum Max Sandella (Finance Manager, UK), 15. Monika Chanu Chongtham (PhD Scholar, Germany), 16. Irena Rajkumari (Chief Engineer, Mitsubishi Electric Engineering, Nagoya, Japan), 17. Heisnam Leisemba (Senior System Verification Officer, Northern Ireland), 18. Angom Chandrakala Devi (Technical Delivery Manager, Autonomo Technologies, Dubai), 19. Lenin Khaidem (Software Consultant, Sports City, Dubai), 20. Daimiota Takhellambam (Post-Doctoral Researcher, University of Rome, Italy), 21. Ronaldo Laishram (PhD Scholar, Tohoku University, Japan), 22. Konthoujam Shanta (General Manager, Canada), 23. Dr. Yaiphabi Kumam (Post-Doctoral Research Associate, University of Florida, USA), 24. Shamurailatpam Shreedarshanee Devi (Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Department of Neurology, Washington University, USA), 25. Dr. Ashang Luwang Laiva (Royal College of Surgeons, Senior Post-Doctoral Researcher, Ireland, UK), and 26. Phougeishangbam Rolish Singh (Research Scholar, Ghent University, Belgium).

This All India Radio Imphal programme on Manipuri diasporas namely 'Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi' is available on AIR Imphal's YouTube channel.

DD Manipur's TV programme on Manipuri diasporas-Chinglon Mapal Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora

There is a TV programme of DD Manipur (Doordarshan Manipur) on Manipuri diasporas namely 'Chinglon Mapal

Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora'. This programme is available on DD Manipur's YouTube channel. Unlike AIR Imphal's programme where the interviewees have to come to the radio station to record the interview episodes; in DD Manipur's TV programme, the host named Priyalakshmi Langpoklakpam conducts an online audio-visual interview or conversation with different Manipuri diasporas. The interviewees are interviewed digitally using internet and state of the art technology. So far, she has conducted around 11 interview episodes and all of these 11 episodes are quite engaging and interesting.

The following Manipuri diasporas are the interviewees: 1. Soubam Priyananda (Art Museum Professional, Marketing Communications & Visitor Services, Maryland, USA), 2. Dr. Amuchou Soraisham (Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Cumming School of Medicine, Calgary, Canada), 3. Ramil Sagolsem (Technical Manager, Netcracker Technology, Sao Paulo, Brazil), 4. Md. Noor Rahman Sheikh, IFS (Ambassador of India to Lebanon), 5. Devrani Laimujam (Supply Chain Specialist, Boeing Amsterdam, Netherlands), 6. Michael Ngangom (Senior Technology Specialist, Booking.com, Amsterdam, Netherlands), 7. Chongtham Jayanta Meetei (Artistic Director, Ex-Theatre Asia, Taiwan), 8. Lakreichon Ningshen (Key Accounts Executive, Gargash Enterprises Dubai, UAE), 9. Nahakpam Bidhanchandra Singh (Assistant Professor, Tongmyong University, Busan, South Korea), 10. Dr. Bishwajeet Elangbam (Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital, Birmingham, UK), and 11. Priyarama Khangembam (Teacher, Sararas Witead Banphaew School, Samut Sakhon, Thailand).

Observations on DD Manipur's TV programme-Chinglon Mapal Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora

A thorough study and analysis of all the 11 interview episodes reveal observations similar to the observations made after studying the AIR Imphal programme on diasporas, besides new ones. Similar observations include the fact that these Manipuri diasporas are the first generation in their families to live/settle abroad. They were born and did schooling in Manipur then moved to other states of India for graduation and post-graduation, or vocational courses, then they left India for higher studies and for work opportunities to different parts of the globe. Other similar observations include the diasporas talking about high civic sense among the people of their host countries. They also talked about building and preserving their indigenous identity by promoting their indigenous culture and traditions. The love for eating indigenous Manipuri cuisines have been observed again. Organisations such as North American Manipuri Association (NAMA), European Manipuri Association (EMA) and Korea Manipuri Association (KMA), etc. organising Manipuri festivals annually such as *Cheiraoba* and *Ningol Chakouba* as well as organising cultural programmes have been reiterated.

Many new observations have also surfaced. Dr. Bishwajeet Elangbam points out that in the last 15 years, Manipuri diasporas living in Europe have started giving indigenous Manipuri names to their new born babies. His own daughter is called Laijalembi while his son is named Chinglemba. This according to him is an effort to build their identity and promoting their indigenous culture and traditions. Michael

Ngangom talks about a facebook page titled 'Manipuris in Europe' which is created to help and guide people from Manipur who wants to seek information and assistance to study or search for job opportunities in Europe. Likewise Nahakpam Bidhanchandra Singh points out that there a facebook page called 'Korea Manipuri Association' which provides guidance and assistance to newbie Manipuris who wants to study or seek job opportunities in South Korea. Most of the Manipuri diasporas are on work permit visas or student visas, and most of them have not sought the citizenship of their host countries. Even Chongtham Jayanta Meetei whose spouse is a local Taiwanese is on work permit visa and plans to return back home after retirement.

Influence of AIR Imphal programme and DD Manipur programme of the Manipuri Diasporas

Listeners of All India Radio (AIR) Imphal and viewers of DD Manipur are fairly acquainted with these programmes on Manipur diasporas (namely Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi and Chinglon Mapal Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri Diaspora). These programmes somehow encourage as well as influence their listeners and viewers to have a dream of going abroad for pursuing their higher studies and working at different parts of the world. In other words, these programmes are influencing as well as encouraging its audiences to follow the footsteps of these successful interviewees/Manipuri diasporas.

Manipuri diasporas' love for their native place (Manipur)

The interesting thing is that it is the soft power attributes of the host countries that have attracted the Manipuri diasporas at the first place, however, the Manipuri diasporas after reaching their host countries have tried to build their indigenous identity, incorporate their indigenous culture and traditions along with the new culture and traditions of their host countries. It is like blending into the new identity and culture of their host countries but not forgetting the roots or their origin as well as trying to reconnect with their indigenous culture and traditions.

Most of the Manipuri diasporas seem to love their native place i.e. Manipur (India), as they are building their identity in their host countries by celebrating indigenous festivals of Manipur, by wearing traditional attires at functions and celebrations, by giving indigenous names to their new born babies, by eating indigenous cuisines and delicacies, by forming organisations like NAMA (North American Manipuri Association), EMA (European Manipuri Association), KMA (Korea Manipuri Association), by teaching Meiteilon (indigenous Meitei language) to their children, etc. However, blend of two different cultures and traditions that of a host country and Manipur (India) can be observed. This blending of cultures is expected when a Manipuri diaspora is working and living among the local population of the host country.

Ajailiu Nuimai has rightly pointed out that Manipur's ethnic communities in the US are passionate to preserve their own ethnic identities since they carry a little baggage of their ethnic consciousness from their homeland. This seems to be true for the first generation emigrants from Manipur, since they were born and brought up in Manipur itself. Besides, Manipur's rich culture and heritage should be given its due importance. It is because of having such rich culture and

heritage that Manipuris living abroad cannot be subdued by the new cultures/traditions of their host countries.

YouTube channels of Manipuri diasporas

There are many Manipuri diasporas who are trying to reconnect with the indigenous people of Manipur by creating YouTube channels and narrating their stories to their Manipuri audiences over the internet. Examples include: Kebola gi Manipuri Chakhum (Cincinnati, Ohio, USA), Neena Mapao (California, USA), RajBobo Vlog (Japan), Bralol Meetei (Russia), Gitanjali Laishram (California, USA), and Dr Cam (USA), etc.

Kebola gi Manipuri Chakhum-YouTube channel

It is a YouTube channel of Kebola Wahengbam, a Manipuri lady who was born and brought up in Manipur and currently living in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA along with her family. She works as a Research Assistant at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre. Her husband namely Dr. Amom Ruhikanta Meetei was also born and brought up in Manipur and he is currently working as an Associate Professor at Department of Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati. They have two daughters. In her YouTube channel's description, she writes 'Celebrating Manipuri cuisines in North America!'. Her YouTube channel focuses specially on 'Mukbang' i.e. cooking and eating dishes/cuisines in front of her audience, she usually cooks and eats Manipuri traditional cuisines. Her YouTube channel also contains videos on family gatherings, celebrating festivals, etc. She has been active as a YouTube content creator since 16th December 2017 and she has many subscribers/followers.

After studying her YouTube videos, the following observations have been made: She usually wears traditional Manipuri attires (phi & fanek) in her mukbang videos and starts with a signature wish/slogan saying 'Khurumjari eikhoi Kangleipak!'. She says that she loves Manipuri indigenous cuisines, prepares such cuisines at her current home at Cincinnati, Ohio and passionately eats them in front of her YouTube viewers. She even prepares 'Tharoi-thongba' as well as 'Yongchak eromba' which are indigenous delicacies of Manipur. She has a kitchen garden as well as garage garden where indigenous plants and vegetables from Manipur are grown carefully. In one of her kitchen gardening video, it has been observed that she has grown plants and vegetables including U-morok, Laiwa, Hangam Yela, Chantruk, Nongmang kha, Leipungkhang, Fadigom, Hawaihrak, Yelang, Pakhon, Kobi, Mairan, Sebot, Khongdrum, Tengnonganbi, Khamen, Yendem, etc. Her husband, Dr. Ruhikanta Meetei is seen singing old Manipuri songs in the YouTube videos. They celebrate festivals like Sajibu Cheiraoba, Ningol Chakouba, Imoinu, Yaoshang, Mera Houchongba/Wayungba, Irabot Day, Durga puja/Panthoibi eratpa, Shivaratri, Krishna Janmashthami, Diwali, etc as well as Halloween. This reflects the fact that they are celebrating festivals of both Manipur (India) as well as festivals of their host country i.e. the US. In her Ningol chakouba video which was uploaded on 28th October, 2019 it can be observed that the traditional Manipuri food items are served on banana leaves; while the ningols or ladies wear traditional Manipuri attires, the ningols are also seen receiving gifts and blessings from their brothers who also wear traditional Manipuri khudei. A video uploaded on 8th July 2024 shows a cultural dance-show performed by Kebola Wahengbam and her party at the 33rd

NAMA Convention at Washington DC.

All these facts reveal that Kebola Wahengbam and her family have not forgotten their identity or origin, even though their workplace led them to Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, they are still eating indigenous cuisines of Manipur, celebrating each and every festivals of Manipur along with festivals of their host country, they participate in NAMA (North American Manipuri Association) Conventions and even perform in cultural programmes of the Convention. In short, they love Manipur, its cuisines, attires, culture and traditions. They have not let America's soft power attributes to dominate over Manipur's (India's) soft power attributes. On the contrary, an American man probably a spouse of a Manipuri lady is seen wearing traditional Manipuri khudei in a Ningol Chakouba video uploaded on 28th October, 2019.

Neena Mapao-YouTube channel, and observations on the contents of the channel

There is another YouTube channel named 'Neena Mapao' created on 29th April, 2020 by Neena Takhellambam, a Manipuri lady living in California, USA along with her husband, Surjeet Nameirakpam (a Software Engineer) and their two children namely Ahenba and Athouba. In her YouTube channel description, she writes 'Vlog capturing normal daily life of our family and experience we encounter here in California. Also expecting to educate my two boys on public speaking, Manipuri culture and not go through identity crisis which is very much prevalent among the first generation family here in America. Hoping this will be a precious memory down the lane as the kids grow up and something to reflect upon too'.

After analysing some of her YouTube videos, it has been observed that this family also loves Manipur and its indigenous culture and traditions. Their children's name (Ahenba & Athouba) reflects their love for the native place. Besides, Neena in one of her YouTube videos says she loves wearing traditional Manipuri phi and fanek. She is seen wearing traditional Manipuri attires during Cheiraoba and Ningol Chakouba celebrations in her YouTube videos.

Conclusion

Manipur's soft power attributes cannot be compared with soft power attributes of Manipuri diasporas' host countries, for instance, America. America's soft power is bigger and has expanded at global level. American culture such as Hollywood movies, music videos, songs, fashion, food habit, education system are highly influential. American Universities (Harvard University, MIT, etc.) are sought after by students across the globe.

A thorough analysis of all the primary data and information collected from studying YouTube channels of 1) AIR Imphal programme on Manipuri diasporas namely Chinglon Mapalgi Wangmadagi, 2) DD Manipur programme on Manipuri diasporas namely Chinglon Mapal Wangmadagi, Reconnecting the Global Manipuri diaspora, and 3) YouTube channels of two Manipuri women diasporas living in the US namely Kebola Wahengbam and Neena Takhellambam, it can be safely assert that America's soft power attributes (American culture, Hollywood movies, music video songs, food habits, dress, institutions, etc) have not entirely dominated or overpowered Manipur's (India's) soft power attributes. Most of the Manipuri diasporas seem to love their native place, Manipur (India). They are

building their indigenous identity in their host country by celebrating indigenous festivals of Manipur, by wearing traditional attires, by giving indigenous names to their new born babies, by eating indigenous cuisines and delicacies, by forming organisations like NAMA (North American Manipuri Association), and by teaching Meiteilon to their children, etc. However, blending of two different cultures and traditions, that of America and Manipur (India) can be observed. This blending of cultures is expected when you are working and living among the Americans in the US. Manipuri diasporas can be observed celebrating both American festivals like Halloween as well as Manipuri festivals like Cheiraoba.

In fact, it was initially America's soft power attributes that had attracted Manipuri diasporas to the US. People migrate to the US because they perceived it as the land of opportunity, abundance and freedom. But the Manipuri diasporas have not forgotten their roots or origins. Manipuri diasporas in the US are keen to preserve their own ethnic identities since they carry a little baggage of their ethnic consciousness from their homeland. This seems to be true for the first generation emigrants from Manipur, since they were born and brought up in Manipur itself. They have a deep connection with Manipur and its culture and traditions. Besides, Manipur's rich culture and heritage should be given its due importance. It is because of having such rich culture and heritage that Manipuris living abroad in the US cannot be entirely subdued and swayed by the American culture and traditions. America's soft power has much wider reach compared to Manipur's soft power. The latter is mostly restricted to achieving admiration for its unique culture while rarely getting adopted by global audience.

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