



---

**Navigating the Social Landscape: Challenges Faced by Artists in Manipur**

- Dr Gurumayum Bijoykumar Sharma  
Assistant Profesor, Dept. of  
Modern Indian Languages and  
Literary Studies, University of Delhi  
Email: [gurumayum.bijoykumar@gmail.com](mailto:gurumayum.bijoykumar@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

If there be a society, it has its own rules and regulations. The rules and regulations control the people living in the society as peg in wooden structure. However, if some liberties are not given to the artists, they won't be able to be successful artists. They need enough time to indulge and to craze in their desired lines or subject. In other words, there must be time in which they can indulged or craze. When his or her indulgence disturbs the social norms, one must know his or her behaviour very well. It is not an easy task to do art. When they endeavour forgetting- eating, drinking and sleeping, they must be praised and encouraged instead of thinking then as mad or duty less. Fearing the norms of society, sometimes some artists devoted their lives to art, happen to remain unmarried throughout their lives. Artists are human beings. They have hearts and souls. Because of devotion to arts, artists sometimes have their loved ones- parents or friends; however, keeping life and death behind the screen, they spread the glory of this land in India and outside India. We need ponder this. This article aims at showing the shortcomings and disadvantages met by artists by observing internally and externally, starting from the schooling system. Again, main object of this article is to produce the measure to lesser the shortcomings, by analysing them one by one.

**Introduction:**

The pursuit of living as a worthy individual, immersed in honourable acts, is an ideal often cherished. However, the path of performing arts, while enchanting, is fraught with challenges deeply intertwined with social dynamics. In Manipur, where the rich tapestry of music, dance, and theatre thrives, artists encounter a myriad of obstacles that hinder their pursuit of artistic excellence and societal acceptance.

**Social Challenges in the Realm of Performing Arts:**

In the realm of performing arts, societal challenges loom large, casting shadows on the aspirations of artists. The dazzling allure of performance often captivates audiences, yet



the journey to perfection is beset with hurdles. Artists often find solace in small circles of like-minded individuals, leading to misconceptions and social isolation when their behaviour deviates from societal norms.

#### Education and Recognition Disparities:

Despite the cultural significance of performing arts, vocational education in this domain receives scant attention, relegating talented artists to the margins of societal recognition. The disparity in incentives and opportunities between mainstream education and performing arts perpetuates a cycle of neglect, leaving aspiring artists to seek informal education from private mentors.

#### Infrastructural and Institutional Challenges:

Manipur lacks dedicated universities and infrastructure to nurture the future generation of artists, leaving aspiring talents to fend for themselves in makeshift learning environments. Private initiatives, while commendable, struggle to fill the void, hindered by limited resources and societal indifference towards the unique aspects of dance, music, and theatre.

#### The Need for Collective Support and Recognition:

To uplift the artistic community, concerted efforts from governmental and non-governmental organizations are imperative. Regular seminars, workshops, and support initiatives are essential to foster creativity and provide avenues for artistic expression. Additionally, the establishment of prestigious awards and scholarships for artists can serve as a beacon of recognition and encouragement.

#### Upholding Artistic Integrity Amidst Social Pressures:

The commodification of performing arts, compounded by societal expectations and economic constraints, threatens the integrity and well-being of artists. The proliferation of dance shows and mimicry of mainstream styles perpetuates a culture of superficiality, overshadowing the true essence of artistic expression.

#### Research Methodology:

The research methodology of the article to be primarily qualitative, drawing upon observations, experiences, and insights gathered from the cultural context of Manipur. The article seems to rely on qualitative data obtained through observations, personal experiences, and interactions within the cultural milieu of Manipur. It reflects the author's understanding of the challenges faced by artists based on their immersion in the local artistic community. While not explicitly mentioned, there are indications of a literature review embedded within



the narrative. References to government policies (such as the National Education Policy-2020) and initiatives by cultural organizations (like the Ministry of Culture, Sangeet Natak Akademi) suggest a background understanding of broader contextual factors shaping the challenges faced by artists. The qualitative data collected through various means is likely subjected to thematic analysis. The article identifies recurring themes such as educational disparities, infrastructural challenges, societal perceptions, and the need for collective support, organizing the narrative around these central themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The article adopts an interpretive framework to analyze and interpret the qualitative data in the context of broader social, cultural, and institutional dynamics. It seeks to make sense of the challenges faced by artists in Manipur and proposes recommendations for addressing these issues based on nuanced interpretation of the data. The qualitative research methodology employed in the article exhibits characteristics of an ethnographic approach, focusing on understanding the lived experiences, cultural practices, and social structures shaping the lives of artists in Manipur.

#### Discussion:

It is a good idea to think that one must live as a worthy person honourably. But when one starts to perform his acts, then there one must get the challenges. Whatever the performing arts are, challenges are always there in the line of performing arts. Social challenges and performing arts are always co-related. Sometimes performing arts become dazzling. Common people like it. But it is impossible for them to be a perfect performance. To be a perfect performer, one needs to have inborn-quality. Sometimes artists stay aloof from the society and they feel pleasing in mixing with mere small groups of same interest. If people don't understand their behaviour, they are considered proud or mad and they are taunted.

In our state, most of the people take less care in performing arts. They don't comprehend it thoroughly. Even it is mistaken by them. However, performing art is a thing that we can feel proud of most people neglects it. Yet, there are artists, and Scholars who absorb soulfully their minds in arts. But, more researchers and more analytical outlooks are in dire need.

Now-a-days, NEP (National Education Policy-2020) gives a great place to Vocational Education. Even though it has future prospect, it is still becoming a considerable one as it is not implemented practically. What it means is that those who are extra-ordinary in dance, music, theatre is not given a great place in society as is given a great place in society as is given to doctor, engineer, Technical or General Education, there is a loud cry, for them there is plenty of Scholarships and fellowships. But for performing arts, the incentive is a mere thing. Its certificate is considered a piece of extra-curricular activities. For the class of



General Education there is no question of place. However, for the learning place of dance and music, there is a big question. Talented child artists get confused in this matter. They have to go to the respected particular teacher's house to study or learn about music or dance or theatre like informal education. In doing so, they are found in society as weak student in academic line.

In this state, it can be said that there is no proper University (now in unsatisfied condition) for performing arts which has proper infrastructures. There are no particulars designated place which opens many departments of performing arts to nourish the future generation. Here and there, some persons who take interest in arts start opening some schools or organizations privately in their home, to rear up the arts. However, this is also in the starting point or stage. Most people lack to know the unique aspects and characteristics of dance, music and theatre. If the fees are somewhat high, then there is problem of scarcity of student. So, arts remain name sake for those who take interest in arts.

It will be good to organise Seminar, Conference, Symposium and Workshop very often for the artists. It is merely happened. It will be better to have practices, to experiment, to analyse the piece of art before production. It requires a great help from the side of Govt. it needs a great support from the NGOs and National Academy. In different fields, respective awards should be given. The steps taken up by the Ministry of Culture, Sangeet Natak Akademi are good examples. However, this is a need to increase the incentive awards, because artists have to live. So, advantages should be given to re-start their lives.

Manipur is a land of Music, Dance, Theatre and rich culture. But the small children are produced in dance show, imitating the Hollywood and Bollywood styles and dolling up extremely only to produce excitement. They enact the acts of mature lad and lass. Spectators do clap and offer money. Parents and elders take interest in this festive mood. It brings a question that what shall be the future condition of the children who are addicted to the acting of love song and money offered by the spectators. Dance and Music are dazzling things. Those artists who are very popular in their growing stage, due to over-dose-feeling of self-possessiveness, get lost their artists lives by getting into couple life very early in age. So, since childhood, they have to be streamlined, they have to be awakened; however, it is a big challenge.

Each and every person can study the book, but every person can't sing, dance and paint aesthetically. Most people don't understand it that it requires the inborn quality, without it, dancing, singing, painting is impossible most parents think that painting, singing, dancing disturb the study. To support and to encourage the talent of child artist is a very rare in Manipur. However, if there is room of getting money then dancing, singing, painting are permitted to continue.



Dance, Music, Theatre- are all team work. From the root, from the starting point, like-minded people need to gather together. It is already mentioned above that there is no prospect of success if there is no inborn quality. When the production is produced by a like-minded people, a rarely found group in a harmonious way, then the production will be watchable and pleasing. For example, if a song is very popular, then the beauty of the lyric, the creation of the tune and the music orchestra, all are insuperable. More above, production unit to present the song to the public is required. So, in producing such thing, each person involved in the production always requires to gather together. However, it will be a challenge. They will find many a social challenge. Time is very important one, whether late or not, when trying to get the desired target, artists are looked upon so dirty characters. The work needs commitment, yet the artist can't cope with the household chore, then it brings mistrust among the artists. It breaks the strength of the unity. This is also a gift of social system.

In rendering service to the people, the grave challenges faced by the devoted artists are unemployment, discrimination, transgender behaviours problem etc. above this lot of challenges; the jealousy and the back-biting among themselves are also major issues. Even they insult one another. Rumour and suppression are also occurred. There is no respect for the other gurus. Even the gurus behave partially towards the students. Those students, who are going to be leading figures, are transformed into timid and fading characters. Enmity arises out of groupism. Affluent family's son beave fruits and sons coming from the simple and powerless family can't raise their heads and can't come out with flying colours. These burning problems are still happening. Those who are out of corruption don't get anything but only depression. Electronic media is so much developed and advanced. In this time, the artists, just simply studying, will be depressing in future. So, they need to have the conscience to aware the situation. They may be expert in particular field, but as they remain unhonourable. This is happening how in this society. So, the concerned authority needs to give required guidelines. It is a must.

Because of the influence of the affluent party, sometimes, one can't get his/her rightful role. One does full rehearsal for a song. However, the producer gives the song to another singer. This is happening in Manipur. This kills the emerging artists. This is a burning problem. Some lucky artists may florist but some artists forfeit some others shining opportunity. Popular lucky artist always gets the silver spoon from others hand mouth.

Artist gets chance to go outside Manipur and outside India. Such outing may last one mouth or one year. If the artist happens to be a bread-earner of the family, then it invites jeering from the society. Devoting to the art, when he/she acts artistically, people consider them priceless. They are taken as those who live by selling their flesh.



Covid-19 has increased the states of the artists. They have got the chance of becoming popularity in the social media. But their living standard is decreasing day by day. Because, social media is taken easily, not prestigiously and wages for online class or performance are increased. The fate of artists who can't buy mobile phone, who can't recharge their phone, is not shining. Their fate is doomed. There is labour, then there is food. However, for them, their endeavour brings no gain. For a creative work, peaceful mind is a must. But for living, they have to hold the spade.

It is a great challenge to those who devote their lives to arts.

1. Government's eye or support is a must in this condition to cure the disadvantages faced by artists.
2. Unity and harmony among the artist fraternity is required. They must go in hand together. They must honour one another.
3. Wealthy persons must sacrifice their wealth for the art instead of seeing it stimulating their sensual pleasure. In such case, the arts and artist must prosper.
4. There must be good relationship between Govt. and artists to materialise their vision and mission of arts into reality.
5. Family's full support should be given. Beside honouring, society must render a great help to the artists.
6. Intellectuals and NGOs must give knowledge to the artist and lead to right path. Knowledge sharing is to be practiced.
7. Those artists, who get honoured in the state level, must be given the incentive awards, scholarship or fellowship and honorarium to make their living. MLAs or Ministers get pension throughout their lives though they don't get elected again. Likewise, pension must be given to the eminent artists.
8. In the competition, they must have impartiality in giving judgement. Selfishness is to be sacrificed.
9. According to the pace of time, award is to be bounded and is to be given honouring the respective fields of the arts.
10. We must respect and honour the artist earnestly who are hallowed by their inborn quality and blessed by GOD. This is a truth. When we know their truth, then the artist can live shining in this society.



**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the challenges faced by artists in Manipur underscore the urgent need for societal recognition, institutional support, and collective action. By addressing disparities in education, fostering a culture of appreciation, and upholding artistic integrity, we can cultivate an environment where artists thrive and their contributions are valued as an integral part of our cultural heritage. The intricate dance, music and other arts between societal norms and artistic freedom is a delicate balance that demands attention and understanding. Artists, the creative backbone of any society, require the freedom to explore and express themselves fully in their craft. Yet, often they find themselves constrained by the very rules meant to govern social order. This article has delved into the challenges faced by artists, from the constraints of the schooling system to the pressures of societal expectations. It has highlighted the sacrifices many artists make in their pursuit of their craft, sometimes at the cost of personal relationships or societal acceptance. However, it is imperative that we recognize and honour the invaluable contributions artists make to our culture and society. Rather than viewing their dedication as madness or irresponsibility, we must celebrate and support their endeavours. As we move forward, it is essential to find ways to provide artists with the time, space, and support they need to flourish creatively. By addressing the shortcomings and disadvantages they face, we can create a more nurturing environment for artistic expression. Let us remember that artists are not just creators of beauty; they are human beings with hearts and souls, enriching our lives with their passion and vision.

**Bibliography:**

1. Katyal, Anjum(ed.) Theatre in Manipur Today, Seagull Theatre Quaterly, Issued 14/15, 1997, Calcutta: Naveen Kishore.
2. Gangopadhyay, Avik. Literary essays on Types, Trends and Genres, 2007, Kolkata: Book Way.
3. Lodge, David and Wood, Nigel (ed.). Modern Criticism and Theory, Second Edition, 2011, India: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd.
4. Pandey, Kantichandra. Comparative Aesthetics, Vol.I, Indian Aesthetics, 1959, Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.
5. Prasad, B.K. Media and Social Life in India, 2005, Delhi: J.L. Kumar.
6. Premchand, Nongthombam. Rituals & Performances, 2005, Imphal: Cultural Resource Centre.
7. Shankar Rao, C.N. Sociology of Indian Society, 2006, Delhi: S. Chand.
8. Vatsayan, Kapila. Bharata The Natyasastra, 1996, Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
9. NEP-2020 (National Education Policy)