

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF A CONFERENCE ON 'STARTUP AND MSME'S IN FOOD PROCESSING' ON 28TH NOVEMBER, 2018 AT HOTEL CLASSIC, IMPHAL

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Shri Y. Joykumar Singh,
Shri Chetan Vij, Assistant Director, ASSOCHAM, New Delhi,
Other Dignitaries on the Dais,
Members from the Media,
All the participants,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you all this morning to inaugurate the Conference on 'Startup and MSMEs in Food Processing'. The proactive role of ASSOCHAM to meet the aspirations of corporate India in the new world of business is praiseworthy.

Potential for setting up of agro-based micro and small enterprises in the country is huge given the fact that India is predominantly an agri-based economy as well as the fact that this potential has not been fully exploited. In order to have a balanced and holistic development of the economy, it is essential that the micro, small or medium industries should co-exist with the big ones. Further, the micro and small industries particularly need to be nurtured with Government support in the form of financial assistance for Term loan, working capital, machinery and technology upgradation, quality and efficiency improvement, Intellectual Property Rights registration and credit rating.

The SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) cater as ancillary to several big industries and amongst them, the food processing industry dominates the Indian economy to a greater extent. In Manipur also, food processing industry has emerged as one of the important segments in terms of its contribution to

the State's economy and is one of the major employment intensive industries. It serves as a vital link between the agriculture and industrial segments of the economy. The availability of raw materials, changing lifestyles and appropriate policies in Manipur have given ample scopes to Startups and MSMEs in Food Processing sector. Gifted with suitable agro-climatic conditions, Manipur is home to various types of fruits, vegetables and other agro-products and you will agree with me that there are immense opportunities present in food processing in the State including ample scope for export. Fruits and vegetables like banana, pineapple, orange, papaya, lemon, potato, sweet potato, tapioca chillies, turmeric, onion, ginger, bamboo shoot and jack fruit have good marketing value if properly harvested, processed and packaged. I have been encouraging sun-dried pineapple for domestic use and export as it will have longer shelf life without much investment. It will also have value addition in terms of nutrition.

For successful implementation of food processing enterprises, there is a need of creating facilities for primary and secondary processing in the region by infusion of proper technology. Proper marketing links between farmers and manufacturers have to be established, so also technological support. Agro-based economy has failed to flourish as it should due to limited utilization of technological and innovation. Therefore, sensitising the budding and prospective entrepreneurs about Government Schemes and Markets is a welcome move. I share the view that at the moment it is necessary to diagnose the problems in the State for providing an improved production and marketing environment and value-added economic benefits to the farmers through appropriate science and technological policies for various post-harvest functions in food processing industries. Here, the efforts of the ASSOCHAM is laudable. I have been given to understand that ASSOCHAM has also been supporting budding entrepreneurs through several incentives

and schemes for the development of food processing industry in various parts of the country, especially in the North East.

I am happy to know that many resource persons from different Ministries and Organizations are participating in this Conference and they will share their knowledge and experience with the farmers and entrepreneurs. Some of the objectives of the Conference are to create awareness about Government supported schemes and programmes for the small, budding and tiny food processing entrepreneurs, discuss key issues and challenges faced by the existing food manufacturers in the State, strengthen the Indian Food Processing Sector at State level so as to strengthen the competitiveness of small-holders in the State. It is also aimed at encouraging farmers-to-business and business-to-business interaction, which has the potential for commercial opportunities benefitting small farmers and highlight the key role of banks in developing and strengthening the agro-food processing industry particularly for small farmers.

I am fully confident that fruitful decisions will be taken in the Conference for the welfare of people of Manipur through development of food processing industry, which will go a long way in the economic upliftment of the people.

I, once again, thank the organizers for inviting me to this important function.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.