

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE 9TH STATE LEVEL CHILDREN'S CULTURAL MEET, 2018 ON 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2018 AT TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CHINGMEIRONG, IMPHAL

Shri L. Jayantakumar ji, Hon'ble Minister (Health), Manipur,
Shri S. Saratkumar Sharma, Adviser, Manipur Alliance for Child Rights,
All the participants especially the Children,
Members of the Electronic and Print Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here amongst you all especially the young talented children in the 9th Annual State Level Children's Cultural Meet, 2018, organized by the Manipur Alliance for Child Rights. It is indeed an opportunity for the young children to show their talents and innate potential in different fields of art and culture.

The theme of this year's cultural meet – 'Break the Silence, End Child Sexual Abuse, Let us Make a Child Friendly Manipur' is of great contemporary relevance and I must congratulate the Manipur Alliance for Child Rights for putting such an important issue into context. Manipur Alliance and Child Rights has already launched a campaign on the theme from the month of August this year, covering 32 Educational Institutions and more than ten thousand students taking the pledge to stop sexual violence against children. Child abuse is not new to this world but what has been most disturbing is the sudden escalation of the number of cases of sexual abuse on children. We heard of such crimes happening in the West where family bonds are presumably less tenacious but quite alien to the Indian society and more so to the well knit culturally rich society of Manipur. Most unfortunately, such rabid

social aberrations have started occurring in Manipur also, completely unheard of in the past. It underscores the need of realizing our collective responsibilities of each and every stakeholder, schools, colleges, parents and students to ensure a safe and secured environment, where basic rights of the children are well protected and promoted.

There are other grievous challenges confronting the children, which if not engaged appropriately can destroy the whole generation. The menace of drugs and substances among the school going children is on the rise. A comprehensive approach for containing this enemy of the youths is imperative. ‘Digital Addiction’ leading to Cyber Crime is another dimension of the challenges faced by the young generation. I am sure with their sincere and focused efforts, Manipur Alliance and Child Rights will be able to contribute substantially in the fight against these evils. I am very pleased to learn that Manipur Alliance and Child Rights has already submitted a draft ‘State Child Policy’ to the Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights and I am fully confident that the Government will consider implementation of such a policy earnestly in the interest of our young generation.

I congratulate the Child Rights Awardees – S/Shri Kabib K, IPS, SP, Churachandpur, M. Pradip Singh, IPS, SP, Senapati for their outstanding work in the protection of Child Rights and N. Sanajaoba Meitei, Reporter, ISTV for his commendable media report and stories on Child Rights.

The Manipur Alliance for Child Rights has been working in the field of child rights for more than a decade. I am told that a large number of children from both valley and hills will be participating in this Cultural Meet and presenting various interesting items during the

meet. The rich cultural heritage of Manipur can very well be seen from the performances of our young artistes. The efforts of the Manipur Alliance for Child Rights such as organizing the State Level Children's Cultural Meet envision to bring all the children from different districts, different ethnic communities to a single forum to showcase their cultural talents. It also endeavours to help in achieving communal harmony, emotional integrity amongst the indigenous peoples, tribes of hills and valley of Manipur.

With these few words, I heartily greet the organizers and participants on this occasion and also extend my thanks to the organizers for inviting me to this Children's Cultural Meet.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.