

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF TWO DAY NORTH EAST LADY ADVOCATES' CONFERENCE ON MARCH 24, 2018 AT RAJ BHAVAN, IMPHAL

Smt. Nemcha Kipgen ji, Hon'ble Minister, Social Welfare, Manipur,
Shri I. Jugeshwar Singh ji, President, Adhivakta Parishad, Manipur,
All the distinguished Lady Advocates from the North Eastern States,
All the participants,
Members of the Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to address this inaugural function of the 2-Day Conference of North East Lady Advocates organised by Adhivakta Parishad, Manipur in collaboration with Legal Cell, Manipur University. I extend a very warm greeting to you all and welcome to Raj Bhavan, Imphal. It is heartening to see such a vibrant group of lady advocates and I am full of hope for the future.

We all know that the edifice of Democracy in the country rests on three pillars – Legislature, Judiciary and Executive. True democracy thrives where these three pillars are well-balanced. Their roles are well-defined, complementary to each other, under the sacrosanct guidelines of the Indian Constitution. The fathers of our Constitution in the Constituent Assembly had the vision and wisdom for a vibrant democracy in the country with the three pillars in complete harmony. The democratic system in the country is likely to be hobbled if the three pillars act discordantly. It is an established fact that a robust judicial system is a prerequisite for democracy to flourish and the Advocates constitute an important cog in such a system. The judiciary is recognised as the guardian of law and it is the Advocates who enable effective delivery of justice. The world today is well-informed and the citizens are very conscious of their rights and duties under the law. Further, it

is an age where accessibility to justice is of prime consideration and ‘justice at your doorstep’ is the tagline. The responsibility of the lawyer fraternity in such a scenario has multiplied manifold. They have to remain ever ready for dispensation of justice in a truthful and efficient manner and should remain ever vigilant to prevent any miscarriage of justice. The lady advocates have a special responsibility while dealing with women related issues. I would urge them to empathise more with those women seeking justice in our man dominated society.

It is understood that the Akhil Adhivakta Parishad is an all India organisation of lawyers working for national renaissance. This umbrella organisation was formed and established in 1992 to unite all nationalist lawyer organisations in the country to work for resurrecting national and patriotic spirit among the Advocates, to make them conscious of the social problems and involve them in providing solutions to the same. It is a lofty endeavour indeed. The organisation makes the right interventions within justice delivery systems and contributes to law making process for the welfare of people and rejuvenation of institutions vital for the nation. The Parishad is also training young advocates to be good lawyers with social commitment so that justice delivery system is strengthened at all levels, free from pressures and corruption. The present conference is one such initiative of the organisation to better equip the lady advocates in the North East to meet the gender related challenges and human rights violations.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to know that during the two-day Conference, there will be extensive deliberations on topics of much contemporary relevance such as Gender Equalities & Women Empowerment, Domestic Violence, Women & Child Trafficking, Ecology & Environment and Human Rights. Distinguished Lawyers and Experts from within and outside the state will have ample scope on this platform to exchange their views and experiences on the topics and explore ways and means to contain

the related problems in our society. Though the women in the North Eastern states generally enjoy a more liberal space in the society than their counterparts in other parts of the country, they do have their share of domestic and societal woes. There have been numerous complaints also of human rights violation caused by state and non-state actors in this region. In the context of Manipur, I have been holding informal meetings with the representatives of Women's Associations and Organisations apart from authorities of Manipur State Women's Commission to explore ways and means to check atrocities against women and children in the state. Fortunately, I have been receiving reports from various sources that due to the relentless efforts and cooperation from civil society organisations and general public, incidents of atrocities against women have declined considerably. The lawyers have a significant role to play in delivering justice to these hapless people. I am hopeful that the same positive transformation will happen in all other North Eastern states also.

Violence against women is quite reprehensible as it deprives them of their human rights and prevents them opportunities to achieve social, political, economic and legal equality in the society. We have legal provisions for prevention of oppression of women and protection of their rights. However, despite these provisions, equality between men and women continues to be an elusive goal not only in our country but all over the world. In our country, the gap is wide between the ideal and practice. Therefore, at this juncture, the pro-active role of Lady Advocates will be impactful. I am sure this Conference will be a step forward in the right direction.

With these words, I, once again, express my happiness to participate in this Conference and wish it all success.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.