

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF FACILITY FOR MASS PRODUCTION OF ORCHIDS AND FARMERS' TRAINING HOSTEL AT NATIONAL BIORESOURCE PARK, HARAOROU, IMPHAL EAST ON 16TH AUGUST, 2018.

Prof. Dinabandhu Sahoo, Director, IBSD,

All the participating farmers,

Friends from Print and Electronic Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you all today at the inaugural function of facility for mass production of Orchids and Farmers' Training Hostel, organized by the Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development, a National Institute of Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. At the outset, I convey my heartiest congratulations to the Institute for opening this facility.

Today, I have come here not just to inaugurate the facility for mass production of orchids and Farmers' Training Hostel but to encourage you all to be a part of it so that the production of orchids in the State can be increased optimally for improving the economic condition of the people.

Orchids constitute one of the most important flora on earth. About 1,400 species have been reported in India mainly in the 4 orchid distribution areas of Eastern Himalayas, North West Himalayas, Peninsular India and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The richest area is the Eastern Himalayan region where about 1,000 species have been reported. Manipur has reportedly more than 300 species. The diversity of orchids in the region are mainly due to the topography and climatic conditions such as large scale forest cover, high rainfall, high humidity, diverse climatic conditions ranging from tropical to alpine and high seismic activity. As all of you are aware, most of the

orchids are epiphytic, while some are terrestrial, but one thing common to all is that they are shade loving plants. Hence, in the wild they need forest cover for its survival.

Mankind has been using orchids for medicinal purposes, especially Indian and Chinese systems of medicine. In addition, in several cultures, orchids play an important part in many rituals. Besides, for floriculture purposes, orchids are in huge demand, so much so that the market has now been driven by hybrids, of which nearly two lakhs have been registered. It is, indeed, heartening to know that IBSD is making efforts for mass production of orchids. In case, mass production of orchids is really succeeded, orchid business will be able to earn huge amount of income every year. For example, the cut orchid industry is now a multi-million dollar business, even though India's share is rather small. North East India has all the requirements to become a hub for this business, if efforts are made. People in our country are importing orchids mostly from the South East Asian countries. This North East region has the potential to compete with Holland, Thailand, Singapore and other countries. I am fully confident that the efforts made by IBSD will pave a way for the facility for mass production of orchids in the State.

Due to the growing population, the jhum cycle has been reduced to a few years while the area under jhum also continues to increase. This impacts the natural habitat of orchids in the region and as a result many species of orchids are now either, endangered or rare. In addition, a large quantity of some species of orchids are smuggled across the border for use in Chinese medicine. With such large scale smuggling, it is no wonder that these species are becoming rarer and rarer with every passing year.

Since Eastern Himalayas is the richest region of orchids in India, it would be appropriate that a systematic approach for the entire north-east region is worked out. I feel that the NEC and DoNER can also play an important role in this matter, either through developing models or in funding.

As preservation and conservation of orchids, especially in situ requires large scale fund and efforts, tapping of corporate funding could also be explored. The State Government can also contribute by declaring some of the orchid rich forest as orchid sanctuary, where felling of trees can be completely stopped.

I am very happy to learn that Farmers' Training Hostel will also run at this National Bioresource Park. Because of this facility, the trainees will not face the hardships due to non-availability of sufficient hostel facilities. It is, indeed, a matter of great satisfaction that IBSD has constructed this Farmers' Training Hostel for the trainees. This will really be a great contribution from the IBSD authorities. I would like to make an appeal to all the trainees to take advantage of this hostel that IBSD has provided – working hand in hand with IBSD to seize the opportunities that have been given to you. If you make yourselves competent to produce orchids en masse, this State will be able to become a popular State as orchid producer.

With these few words, it gives me immense pleasure to inaugurate the newly constructed Farmers' Training Hostel for mass production of orchids. Once again, I thank the IBSD authorities for inviting me to this memorable function.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.