

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE 83RD AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE MANIPURI SAHITYA PARISHAD ON 24TH JUNE, 2018 AT THE MAHARAJA CHANDRAKIRTI AUDITORIUM, PALACE COMPOUND, IMPHAL

Shri L. Jayantakumar Singh, Hon'ble Minister (Art & Culture),

Shri Th. Satyabrata Singh, Hon'ble MLA,

Prof. Ibohal Singh, President, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad,

All the distinguished Award Winners,

Distinguished Invitees,

Friends from Print and Electronic Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be with you all, especially with the distinguished personalities in the fields of art, culture and literature, who are gathered here this afternoon on the occasion of 83rd Award Presentation Ceremony of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad. At the very outset, let me heartily congratulate all the Award Winners.

The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad is an organization of iconic stature, devoted to the development of Manipuri language, literature and culture. It has come a long way from its humble beginning in the year 1935 when the idea of establishing the organization was born. Since then, it has led a chequered life working tirelessly to promote and propagate Manipuri language and literature. The Parishad played a key role in the movement for inclusion of Manipuri Language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India and also in gaining a place in the list of Indian languages recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. The nationwide recognition thus attained by Manipuri Language was due to its richness and also due to continuous efforts made by the people of Manipur and especially of the lovers of Manipuri language and literature and organizations like the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad devoted to the development of Manipuri language.

Literature is a form of expression, but all written books cannot be classified as literature. There is something special about literary writing, which sets it apart. They can be informative, technical, scholarly or journalistic. Literary forms and writings are more like pieces of art. Literature is the symbol of any society, reflecting its socio-cultural mores. In fact, the study of any literature in chronological order can give us ample insight and sufficient clues to the progress of the society through the ages and the various phases of history it has gone through. Literature reflects the level of civilization the human society attains and constitutes an eloquent index to gauge the march of human progress intellectually and materially. Language is the vehicle through which the thought finds expression and a rich language is an essentiality for a quality literature.

Throughout the world, great writers have shown how literature can become an integral part of the history, culture and life of a nation, giving it an unending vitality. Manipur's writers are no exception to this. With the growth of modern education after the British conquest of Manipur in 1891, Manipur has been blessed with an unbroken lineage of outstanding writers and poets. The end of the 19th century was an important chapter in the history of Manipur. Many creative writers were born one after another. Poets - Anganghal, Chaoba and Dr. Kamal, the triumvirate of renaissance in literature and arts, among others, were the major stars in the constellation who led the out-burst in Manipuri literature. There were also other poets and writers who contributed much in ushering in a renaissance movement in Manipuri literature and arts.

Manipur is known for its rich culture which finds reflection in the Manipuri literature. One can gain a fair knowledge of the rich Manipuri culture by going through its literature. One rich aspect of Manipuri culture is the Nata Sankirtana. It has been recognized as Intangible Heritage under UNESCO in the year 2013. I am making efforts to promote and propagate

Manipuri Nata Sankirtana through the Manipuri University of Culture of which I am the Chancellor. Experts in this field have been engaged to conduct lectures and seminars on this art form. I am also planning to launch a research project to go beyond the borders and reconnect with the South East Asian countries where there is a strong presence of the vaisnavite culture. There is a strong need for proper documentation of the various aspects of our rich culture and here, the Parishad's role can be enormous.

I am very glad to join all of you today in honouring the distinguished personalities in the fields of art, culture and literature for their invaluable contributions in enriching the literary and cultural heritage of Manipur. The promotional activities of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, a premier literary and cultural organisation of Manipur, such as distribution of medals, cash awards and certificates in honour of distinguished personalities in the fields of art, culture and literature, will go a long way in the preservation, propagation and enrichment of the cultural heritage and literature of the State of Manipur.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function and wish the members of the Parishad and lovers of art, culture and literature every success in their future endeavours.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.