

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE ONE-DAY SEMINAR ON 'SKILLING THE YOUTH IN THE WAKE OF INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY – FROM NORTH-EAST PERSPECTIVE' ON 13TH OCTOBER, 2018 AT MANIPUR STATE ASSEMBLY AUDITORIUM, IMPHAL

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly,
Executive Members, Integrated Talent Development Mission,
All the participants,
Members of the Print and Electronic Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be associated with this seminar on such an important and topical subject as “Skilling the Youth in the Wake of India’s Act East Policy, from North-East Perspective”. No subject could be more appropriate for the discourse as the State and the region are poised on the threshold of an exciting phase of economic activities under the Act East Policy of the Central Government. I must congratulate the Integrated Talent Development Mission for organizing this programme.

India is heading towards becoming the World’s fastest growing economy with 7.7 percent by 2019-20. To leverage it further, India is expected to become the youngest country by 2020 with 64% of its population in the working age group. The Government of India has ambitious plans to transform India into a competitive, high-growth, high productivity middle-income country by using this young workforce. The economy is now diversifying from being largely agro-based to a manufacturing and service-based economy. These ambitious plans to transform the Indian economy are highly dependent on the availability of jobs and the quality of the labour force. This has resulted in an increased demand for skilled labour over the past few years. The Government’s skill gap analysis concludes that by 2022, another 109 million or so skilled workers will be needed in the 24 keys

sectors of the economy as against only 2.3 percent of India's workforce having received some formal skill training at present. To address the issue and bridge the gap, skill development has emerged as a priority sector.

As you are aware, the North-East region has the prospects to grow into India's economic power-house considering its lively source of energy, oil, natural gas, coal and limestone, besides being gifted with its prime perennial water system of rivers and their tributaries. The region's boundless tourism prospects, typical performing arts and varied cuisine and handicrafts gives it the perfect position for its development as a centre for dealing in trade and commerce with India's eastern neighbours while augmenting scope of entrepreneurship. Growth of the North-East region will not only enhance the Indian economy but also will cultivate two-sided assimilation amongst the East and South East Asian neighbours. An important factor which will add a great fillip to India's 'Act East Policy' is Skill Development. The North-East region expects a massive boost in trade and commerce under the Policy, which will make North-East India the next big economic corridor connecting India to ASEAN countries and China. In the light of this development, North-East States need to develop an ambitious yet meaningful Skill Development and employment plan for its youth.

North-East region urgently needs to take up initiatives for skill training in the fields of Railways, Highways, Logistics and Warehousing, Cold Storage, renewable energy sector, Business Management and Banking & Finance, with quality training of international standards, state-of-the-art infrastructure in the form of 'Multi-Skill Training'. Skill development especially in service industries like Tourism & Hospitality, Retail and IT & IT-enabled services can be the thrust areas. Nature has gifted rich flora and fauna to the North-East region and the region could become a hub for developing agriculture, horticulture, floriculture and food processing. There is a huge potential to create local enterprises and local employment around

these sectors. As the trade and commerce is booming in the region due to connectivity with ASEAN and China, youth of the region need to get skill development training in relevant trades to support the cross-border trade and business. The Multi-Skill Training centres need to have 'Language Labs' to deliver training on Burmese, Mandarin and other oriental languages which will be of immense help in penetrating business and maintaining diplomatic relations with Myanmar and China.

The Government of India has already taken up schemes for the benefit of the youth of our country such as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, a skill development initiative for recognition and standardization of skills, Skill India which is to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022 and Standup India which is a scheme to support entrepreneurship among women and people who belong to scheduled tribe and caste. We should all make effective use of these Government schemes for the benefit of the youths of this State and region. I have also initiated the Mission for Economic Empowerment of Traditional Artisans and Craftsmen (MEETAC) for promotion of the traditional art and crafts of Manipur as well as economic upliftment of our traditional artisans and craftsmen.

I strongly believe that all the academics, researchers, practitioners, scholars and industry experts who are participating in this seminar will have ample opportunity to exchange and share their views for skill development of the youths in the wake of India's Act East Policy. I wish you all a very fruitful seminar and I am sure at the end of it, recommendations will be coming forth for a way forward for skilling the youths of the region appropriately.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.