

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE ONE DAY STATE LEVEL YOUTH CONVENTION, 2018 ORGANIZED BY SERVICE BRIDGE AGENCY, IMPHAL ON 25<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2018 AT RAJ BHAVAN, IMPHAL.

Shri Yumnam Khemchand Singh ji, Hon'ble Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly,

My dear students and participants,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset extend a hearty welcome to all the young men and women who have assembled here from different parts of the State to attend the One-Day State Level Youth Convention.

Manipur, as you are well aware, is a beautiful State with different indigenous tribes living in harmony. The State is known for peaceful co-existence down the ages, tolerant attitude and a rich culture. Hence, it is significant and appropriate that this Youth Convention is organized to deliberate on contemporary issues pertaining to the youths and I firmly believe that this Convention will surely arrive at concrete recommendations and decisions for the welfare of the youth at large in this State.

We have seen morals crumbling all around us in our personal life as well as in public life. The signs of development were everywhere - healthcare, infrastructure science, education, energy and agricultural pursuits and as people and society prospered and materialism took centre stage, our values and morals came under severe onslaught from consumerism and globalization. We are at present living in a time where India is considered the youngest nation with the world's maximum number of people being in the age group of 25-30 years. This is enormous human resource base and

needs to be put on the right path to yield the best results while discarding the negative trends.

My dear young friends, this Youth Convention, organized by Service Bridge Agency has done a commendable job in uniting the youth of different parts of the State on a single platform. Such Convention should also be organized at different parts of the State spreading the right message and infusing the right spirit, the spirit of love, peace, compassion, hard work and commitment in the cause of youth.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to know that the State Government has already framed Manipur State Youth Policy from the year 2011 in which important objectives were highlighted such as to foster among the youth a spirit of national consciousness; to assist the youth in community development work through voluntary service, promote dignity of labour and moral and social responsibility, promote cultural awareness, creative activities and so on and so forth. In addition, thrust areas of the Policy are Youth Empowerment, Inter-sectoral approach and Information & Research Network. Manipur State Youth Policy elaborately highlights privileges of the youth as well as their responsibilities. More importantly, concern for key sectors of youth such as Education, Training and Employment Health, Environment, Sports and Recreation, Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, Civics and Citizenship is really commendable. I am also fully confident that the State Government will ensure to implement the priority target groups of the Policy.

Today, I would also like to mention a few lines about the effects of drugs among the youth. Drug addiction is worrisome. We have seen the impact of drug use in communities and the sheer desperation of parents to rescue their children from this scourge. Peer influence and depression are the major causes and before one knows it, one gets addicted, loses control of self and ultimately pushes own future into darkness. Life becomes directionless, without any hope for the future. Once the young people become drug addicts, they fall easy prey to HIV/AIDS. I would like our youth to stand up against

the scourge of drug abuse, which is detrimental to the prospects of our young generation. We should strive to save our fellow youth imprisoned by this vice of drug abuse and associated health hazards. The youth have to collectively stand up against it by appreciating the dangers inherent in abuse of drugs.

I am very happy that today's gathering includes many young men and women who are here to say enough-is-enough and are for building healthy communities without the abuse of drugs and illicit trafficking. Today's convention is the right forum to deliberate and find a way forward to secure a healthy future for the youths. I am fully confident that if my dear young friends abstain from all these bad habits, they will certainly be on target for becoming good citizens and be able to shoulder the important responsibility for socio-economic development of the State. One unhealthy development which has made me extremely sad is the growing report of crime against women. This is something alien to the rich culture of our State. We should all stand up as one to eradicate this social evil. Further, I would urge our youths to involve themselves wholeheartedly in saving the environment and planting more trees as the future of the world lies on such endeavour.

I would also like to urge upon youth present here today to seek out the many opportunities available to them in order to serve the community. You can come together in your co-curricular activities, college events and camps to realize your full potential. Continue to develop your own space, find new ways to get youth play their part and take the lead in showing the community what you stand for. In this way, you will be shaping the community that you live in, in a meaningful way.

With these words, I again wish you all the very best in future and wish the Convention a grand success. Once again, I thank the organizers for inviting me to this important function and look forward to meeting you again.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.