

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE PROGRAMME ON 'CELEBRATING SANKIRTANA OF MANIPUR: INDIA'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY' ON 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2019 AT 1<sup>ST</sup> BN. MANIPUR RIFLES, IMPHAL.

Shri L. Jayantakumar Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister (Art and Culture),  
Dr. Ch. Chandramani Singh, Convener, Manipur Citizen Forum,  
Distinguished Nata Sankirtana Gurus and Artistes,  
Friends from Electronic and Print Media,  
Distinguished Invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity of addressing you at the celebration of Sankirtana of Manipur today. As you all are well aware, Sankirtana Music was inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the sitting of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee in December, 2013. Since then, State Level Committee of Nata Sankirtana has been observing Sankirtana Day in the State on this auspicious day.

As you are all well aware that Kirtan Palas are such an integral part of Sradh ceremonies that in 1947 May, Maharaja Budhachandra of Manipur went to Tripura to participate in the Sradh ceremony of Maharaja of Tripura with three famous Kirtan Palas from Manipur.

Manipur Sankirtana is hymn in glory of Lord Krishna in classical ragas synthesizing various indigenous rhythms. The Sankirtana follows an extremely strict code in its performance with rhythms pattern as well as costumes determined by specific rules and regulations. The Sankirtana is performed to mark important occasions during a person's life from birth to death.

I feel proud of the rich cultural heritage of Manipur as even the UNESCO has recognized our culture. Now, Manipuri culture is in the international arena of culture. Therefore, we have no doubt that Manipur is today best introduced to the world through her rich performing arts and culture and not through her geographical position and size. It is through the Manipuri culture that the world knows the existence of such a tiny State in this far-flung North Eastern part of the country. I know very well that artistes from this State have already performed thousand shows in our country and several countries overseas and brought commendation and recognition from various foreign countries. The grace and power of attracting viewers' mind is superb in the elegant Manipuri dance which is a delicately sensitive type of classical dance including Nata Sankirtana music. I would like to reiterate that Manipuri dance is not the art of Manipur alone, it is also an art of this country as a whole. Therefore, it is our bounden duty to preserve, nurture and enrich Manipuri culture so that it may continue to enrich the Indian culture.

I hope that State Level Committee for Celebration of Sankirtana Day will continue its commendable good works for sustaining, propagating and enriching the Manipuri Nata Sankirtana and with these few words, it gives me immense pleasure to inaugurate the celebration of Sankirtana of Manipur. I, once again, wish the celebration a grand success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.