

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF INNOVATIVE CRAFT SOUVENIRS OF MANIPUR, CRAFT MAP OF MANIPUR AND MEETAC WEBSITE ON 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 AT DARBAR HALL, RAJ BHAWAN, IMPHAL

Shri Th. Biswajit Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister (Commerce & Industry) & Chairman, MEETAC,

Dr. Bindoo Ranjan, Project Head, NID & Project Co-ordinator, MEETAC,

Shri Anurag Bajpai, CEO, MEETAC,

Distinguished Invitees,

Friends from electronic and print Media,

All the participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I am very happy to join you at the launching of the 'Innovative Craft Souvenirs of Manipur', Craft Map of Manipur and Mission for Economic Empowerment of Traditional Artisans & Craftsmen (MEETAC) Website. I would like to congratulate the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and the local Artisans and Craftsmen who have collaborated in producing the designs and I thank the State Government as well as MEETAC for organizing this important event. MEETAC has been making sustained efforts since its inception on 1st September, 2018 to provide a comprehensive access to the Traditional Artisans of Hills and Valley of Manipur for design development of their crafts or arts as per global standards, training and entrepreneurship development in order to increase the market demand of their products and achieve better economic valuation.

Manipur is matchless in richness of its arts and culture. It is home to some very exquisite handicrafts and handlooms. Each piece is at its zenith of craftsmanship but yet to get its due recognition globally. They have set a bench mark of quality and excellence that is quintessentially Indian. The skills of our artisans are living symbols of self-reliance. They exemplify our

heritage of creativity, aesthetics and craftsmanship. As a highly decentralized activity, the handicrafts and handloom industry of the State is a shining example of using local resources and skills.

It is worth mentioning that the handicraft and handloom sector in the State is un-organized. So far, the market potential of the State's crafts has not been tapped properly, particularly outside the State. In spite of its importance to the economy, this industry has been facing numerous problems in terms of lack of proper organization, inadequate finance, unreliable sources of raw materials from outside the State, exploitation by middlemen in importing raw materials and also marketing of finished products. Besides this, owing to lack of quality control, it cannot withstand competition from outside products. Therefore, the MEETAC has been mandated with standardization of Crafts and Design Development with the help of Knowledge Partners and the development of a supply chain from Producers to the Consumers with active branding of Traditional Craft Products. I am happy that MEETAC along with its Knowledge Partners has been working with Artisans at the village and cluster level in order to bring diversified and trendy designs which are more acceptable in other States and countries and also by the young generation.

I am told that National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad has been closely working with MEETAC as Knowledge Partner for the last one year in clusters of all the Districts of Manipur. As a result, MEETAC with NID has developed a new chain of Craft Souvenirs of Manipur. It is understood that about 150 new Souvenir designs for 7 (seven) Traditional Crafts have been developed by the Artisans from various Districts namely Imphal, Senapati, Kamjong,

Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Noney, Tengnoupal and Ukhrul under the expert guidance of NID, Ahmedabad. Today, it is a matter of great pride and honour for me to launch the new Souvenir design chain developed by the craft persons of my State. This would help our artisans and craftsmen to expand their existing range of products by utilizing local resources and skills. It would be instrumental in creating a brand for Manipur and in turn for MEETAC, under whose name these Souvenirs would be marketed.

MEETAC and NID, Ahmedabad after extensive survey of various Districts of the State have developed the Craft Map of Manipur for the first time in the history of Manipur. It is a very important step in the direction of preserving our crafts and cultural heritage. MEETAC has also taken an important step by developing its Website. A Website is a very essential factor to link the crafts of the State with the national and international markets. It will be a platform for the local artisans to get up-to-date knowledge about the new market trends and new initiatives of MEETAC for their development. I am told that MEETAC with NID Ahmedabad has also documented all the traditional crafts of Manipur for the first time after survey of all the Districts.

I, once again, congratulate all the Artisans of the State, Minister (Textiles, Commerce & Industries) & Chairman (MEETAC), CEO (MEETAC) and NID Team for their endeavour to boost craft sector of Manipur and wish them all success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.