

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE ONE-DAY CONCLAVE OF LOCAL CRAFT ENTREPRENEURS, TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMEN AND MSMEs ON 'PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HARNESSING UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS OF MANIPUR' ON 10TH OCTOBER, 2019 AT HOTEL CLASSIC GRANDE, IMPHAL

Shri Th. Biswajit Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister, Textiles, Commerce & Industries & Chairman, MEETAC,

Other dignitaries on the dais,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be associated with this One-Day Conclave of Local Craft Entrepreneurs, Traditional Craftsmen and MSMEs on 'Promoting Entrepreneurship and Harnessing Untapped Potential of Geographical Indications of Manipur'. I must compliment MEETAC, a Government of Manipur initiative and PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industries, the National Apex Chamber for their efforts and commitment to organize such an important Conclave for upliftment of local craft entrepreneurs, traditional artisans and craftsmen in the State. I understand that the Conclave would deliberate on Startup India, Standup India, Government E-market place and Geographical Indications. These are, no doubt, very important subjects for the budding entrepreneurs and also for ensuring a better value to the artisans for their products.

As you are aware, traditional artisans in the handicraft industry in the State have long struggled due to lack of patronage. However, the charm of hand-woven fabric handicraft has never faded and now there is more awareness among people about such products. To introduce these artisans to newer markets and to the shift in customer preference for sustainable products, Government of Manipur has initiated the Mission for Economic

Empowerment of Traditional Artisans & Craftsmen (MEETAC) in 2018. The aim of the initiative is to revive the lives of Artisans by developing entrepreneurial competencies in them. The project would concentrate on product development to capture the needs of the young generation, larger and high-end markets with a special focus on exports. New articles, collections and clothing line through product diversification, in collaboration with well-known institutions like National Institute of Design, Central India Regional Council (CIRC), Indian Institute of Packaging etc. are being introduced. Today's Conclave is very relevant to meet the mandate of the MEETAC.

I am immensely pleased to note that PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industries (PHDCCI), which is the National Apex Chamber, has also joined hands with MEETAC to promote entrepreneurship in the State. I understand that PHD Chamber is a proactive National Apex Chamber working at the grass-root level and with strong national and international linkages. The Chamber acts as a catalyst in the promotion of industry, trade and entrepreneurship. It is well known that PHD Chamber, through its research-based policy advocacy role, positively impacts the economic growth and development of the nation. Looking at the capacity of the Chamber, I am sure MEETAC with PHDCCI would be in position to make a long lasting impact on the economy of the State, the craft sector in particular.

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister has a long cherished dream of making India, an economic power. Brand names like 'Make-in-India' have been coined by him. To realize the concept of Make-in-India, our Prime Minister launched programmes like Startup and Standup India. Startups are important for economic growth of a nation. One of the main advantages of Startups is that it creates new jobs. It can implement innovations and technologies to improve the living of people. There are many Startups who are working for rural areas to develop the community. It is necessary to develop an entrepreneurship culture in our State also for more Startups. But every Startup needs to deliver quality to their consumers in order to sustain their

business. Then only these Startups will grow and succeed. On similar lines, the Standup India scheme ensures that women entrepreneurs, an important cog in the craft sector of Manipur, have a fair chance for setting up their own business.

I would also like to note here that providing Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has been another significant step of the present State Government for promotion of the entrepreneurs. Through this medium, handicrafts sector has gained ample and equal opportunity to show its product strength from the rural as well as urban areas. Artisans and their Self Help Groups or Federations with legal identity can aggregate Women artisans and Micro-entrepreneurs to register themselves as "Seller" on Government e-Marketplace (GeM). GeM is a one-stop Government e-Marketplace (GeM) to facilitate on line procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments, Organizations and PSUs. GeM provides local entrepreneurs a one-stop shop for marketing with minimal efforts.

Manipur is a land of treasure, endowed with rich natural resources and other goods of high economic value. Rural folks in various parts of the State possess unique skill and expertise to produce hand crafted products like handicrafts, jewellerys, textiles other related products and these skills have been passed down through several generations. Often connected with traditions, practices and culture, Geographical Indications (GI) are tightly interwoven into rural lives which employ traditional methods, practices and know-how to produce these goods. With the protection assured by GI registration, pirates and counterfeiters cannot encroach on the markets and the consumers are guaranteed of the genuineness of the product and quality assurance. It also helps in brand building and adds the commercial value to it.

I hope this Conclave would catalyze the local entrepreneurs and artisans to take advantage of Government schemes in developing their products and market for them. I also hope that steps would be taken up for geographical indications of more crafts. I wish the Conclave a grand success.

Thank you,
Jai Hind.