

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE 8TH FOUNDATION DAY OF MANIPUR COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS ON 12TH NOVEMBER, 2019 AT THE OLD HIGH COURT COMPLEX, IMPHAL

Smt. Nemcha Kipgen ji, Hon'ble Minister (Social Welfare),

Dr. R.K. Ranjan Singh ji, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha),

Smt. Sumatibala Ningthoujam, Chairperson, Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

Shri Ng. Uttam Singh, Director, Social Welfare, Manipur,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be with you on this 8th Foundation Day celebration of the Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights. I expect from the Commission solid sociological thinking and sound advice which will help all concerned in counteracting and eliminating the violence against children and protection of child rights forever in due course of time.

Children have the same rights as adults. As a vulnerable group, children have particular rights that recognize their special need for protection and also that help them develop their full potential. Children are not helpless objects of charity or a property of their parents. They are recognized as human beings and the subjects of their own rights. A child is an individual, a family and community member with rights and appropriate responsibilities for his or her age and development stage. Children should enjoy the basic qualities of life as rights rather than privileges accorded to them.

Every child whether a boy or girl irrespective of age is unique and has value importance as a person with a right for their human dignity to be respected. When we understand and respect children's dignity, we are able to create better protection mechanisms and the children themselves can act as

active agents in their own protection. This helps to develop and build recognition of children as independent bearers of rights with a sense of identity and a positive implication for their self esteem.

I have been given to understand that the Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights has been rendering yeomen services to oppressed needy children since its inception. The main activities of this Commission is to safeguard the interests of children and to prevent atrocities against children in the State. I hope the Commission will continue their selfless services for upholding the dignity of children in the coming years forever.

When I assumed the office of the Governor of Manipur in the month of August, 2016, I collected information pertaining to atrocities against children in the State. I was really shocked that during the last few years, atrocities against minor girls like molesting, gang-rape, sexual assault, etc have been alarmingly increasing in the State. In such a tiny and beautiful State coupled with rich cultural heritage, I never expected that these crimes will happen. However, I am so impressed to learn from different sources that the number of incidents of atrocities against children have been drastically diminishing during the past few months. I must say that the credit goes to different Associations/Organizations spearheaded by the Commission. I am fully confident that the same will be able to maintain due to the relentless efforts made by the Commission with invaluable supports from various Civil Society Organizations/Women's Associations/Organizations as well as liked minded general public.

Exemplary punishment should be awarded to any culprit of crime against children as per law. Here, I would like to make a request to the Commission to extend all possible assistance from their side to book any culprit so that they are chargesheeted in the court of law as soon as possible. I hope the Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights will certainly

make an endeavour to explore ways and means to prevent all crimes against children with the help of Law Enforcing Agencies of the State.

I am so impressed today to see six children who excelled in education from Child Care Institutions of Imphal West and East Districts. I am hopeful that in future also Child Care Institutions will be able to produce many talented children from this State.

I convey my best wishes to the organizers for success in their endeavours.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.