

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE 3RD STATE LEVEL YOUTH CONVENTION, 2019 ON 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 AT RAJ BHAVAN, IMPHAL.

Shri Karam Shyam ji, Hon'ble Minister, PDS & Consumer Affairs,

Friends from Media,

All the participants,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the very outset, let me extend a hearty welcome to all the young men and women who have assembled here from different parts of the State to attend the 3rd State Level Youth Convention, organized by Service Bridge Agency.

Manipur, as you all are well aware, is a beautiful State with different indigenous tribes living in harmony. The State is known for peaceful co-existence, tolerant attitude and unique hospitality of the Manipuri people. Hence, it is significant and appropriate that this Youth Convention is organized with an objective of youth empowerment, to encourage the young people and giving them information, guidance or resources they need in order to take charge of their own lives and make healthier decisions. I firmly believe that this Convention will surely take concrete decisions for the socio-economic development for the State.

Here, I just intend to remind you young men and women that at the turn of the century, morals started crumbling all around us in personal life as well as in other spheres. The signs of development were seen everywhere in our pursuit of healthcare, infrastructure science, education, energy and agriculture. As people and society prospered and as 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 youth, about 34% of the total population of the country. This 34% is enormous human resources and constitutes for the country's future. If we can harness this powerhouse of the nation in the right direction, then the country can reach the lofty heights. Youth today is a major resource for not only development of financial prosperity but for social changes as well. However, despite holding such importance, their energy is still not being channelized in the right direction.

My dear young friends, this 3rd State Level 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 in 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 youth and their pivotal role in socio-economic development of the State. Youth empowerment can catalyze major social developments like poverty eradication, good education standard, good governance and crime reduction. Making the youth skilled can help reduce the rate of poverty to a significant level. Similarly, empowerment can help youth to understand the importance of education that leads to social improvement of the country. With the inculcation of youth empowerment, the youth can reject the status quo and pave the path for better governance and also empowerment ensures that youth has the necessary skill to sustain a livelihood, preventing him to adopt the path of crime.

Further, I will just make a mention in a few lines about the effects of drugs among the youth. On several occasions, I have repeatedly mentioned about the effects of drugs on the youth and finally on the society. Drugs addiction is worrisome. The worst thing about being addicted to drugs is that it affects the youth miserably. We have seen the impact of drug use in

communities and the sheer desperation of parents to rescue their children from this scourge. Unfortunately, Manipur is one of the States substantially affected by drug trafficking and its concomitant issues. Ganja and poppy are widely cultivated and poverty is the key factor which drives unemployed locals to take to such cultivation. Seeing the gravity of this menace, I have taken an initiative for the State Government to co-host with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for South Asia a 2-day Regional International Conference-cum-Meeting on the theme, 'Comprehensive Approach to combating illicit trafficking of Afghan Opiates and Drug Situation in the North East' at Raj Bhavan, Imphal on 30 September – 01 October, 2019. Representatives from 6 South Asian countries and 7 States of the NE will congregate to hold brain storming deliberations on issues relating to drug trafficking and drug abuse. I would like our youth to stand up against the scourge of drug abuse, which is detrimental to the prospects of our young generation. I am confident that if my dear young friends abstain from all these bad habits, they will be able to surely shoulder the important responsibility for socio-economic development of the State and the country as a whole.

With these words, I again wish you all the very best in future and wish the 3rd State Level Youth Convention a grand success. My thanks to the organizers for inviting me to this important function.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.