

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY UNDER THE "BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO SCHEME" ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2020 AT CITY CONVENTION CENTRE, IMPHAL

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Shri L. Jayantakumar Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister of Health,

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

Dr. J. Suresh Babu, Chief Secretary, Manipur,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a great privilege for me to be with you all today in a Mega Event of the National Girl Child Day, 2020 under the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme", organized by the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Manipur.

This observation is important in providing more opportunity for girls and increasing awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide. The inequality includes areas such as access to education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, and protection from discrimination, violence against women and forced child marriage.

There are also certain negative gender stereotypes related to girls' education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics which begin as early as primary school. They need to be countered as they have the devastating effect of making them doubt their own potential.

We need to equip girls with transferable and lifelong skills such as critical thinking, creativity and digital awareness. Having role models will also be critical, especially in the sciences and other fields where the presence of women is sparse. On this National Girl Child Day, let us recommit to support every girl to develop her skills, enter the workforce on equal terms and reach her full potential.

As you all are well aware that many of the commitments made to girls are left unfulfilled. Since 2012, 11 October has been marked as the International Day of the Girl, the day aims to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls' face, while promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights. Today, these movements have expanded. They are being organized by and for adolescent girls, and they have tackled various issues like child marriage, education inequality, gender-based violence, climate change, self-esteem and girls' rights to enter places of worship or public spaces during menstruation etc.

It is heartening to know that the State Government launched the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme only in Senapati District in 2014-15 which is now expanded to seven more Districts, viz, Tamenglong, Chandel, Ukhrul, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Churachandpur and Imphal West District has been selected under Media Advocacy and Media Plan during 2017-18. I strongly believe that the State Government will further launch to cover the remaining Districts also in a very short period. The efforts made by the State Government to take up various schemes and programmes to achieve the target under the scheme deserve appreciation.

I am fully confident that apart from concerned Government Agencies, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations and all general public should be united in solving the problems faced by the girl child in the society collectively. Further, the efforts made by the Social Welfare Department to disseminate awareness among the general public pertaining to gender inequality are quite commendable and praiseworthy.

I wish the celebration a grand success and look forward to meeting you again very soon.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.