

SPEECH OF SHRI LA. GANESAN, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARD DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY OF THE MANIPUR STATE AWARD FOR LITERATURE, 2020 ON 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2021 AT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MANIPUR DANCE ACADEMY, IMPHAL.

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Manipur,  
Shri S. Rajen Singh ji, Hon'ble Education Minister, Manipur,  
Friends from Print and Electronic Media,  
Distinguished Invitees,  
Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to be here with you all on the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Award Distribution Ceremony of the Manipur State Award for Literature, 2020. First of all, I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the awardee **Shri Beril Thanga** for his book entitled "**Ei Amadi Adungeigi Ethat**" (I and the then island). I also convey my deep appreciation to the Directorate of Language Planning & Implementation, Manipur for the initiative taken to recognize outstanding writers for their contribution towards the enrichment of Manipuri literature and I hope that this initiative will encourage creative writers.

Manipuri language, one of the 22 scheduled languages under the Constitution of India, with its own script is regarded as the most advanced of the Tibeto-Burmese languages spoken in India. Though, some scholars contested the classification of Manipuri language as Tibeto-Burmese, most accepted the classification made in the Linguistic Survey of India conducted under the leadership of

George Abraham Grierson of the ICS from 1894 to 1928. Incidentally, the LSI describes 364 languages and dialects, while the 1991 Census recorded 1576 mother tongues with separate grammatical structures.

In the fast changing global environment, with English becoming the international language, languages with lesser number of speakers are being wiped out and languages with more speakers are pushing out the smaller ones. It has been assessed that one language or dialect is becoming extinct every two weeks in the world. Hence, for a language with limited number of people speaking it, Manipuri and its sister dialects face tremendous challenges for its survival for posterity.

The richness of the Indian literature is mainly contributed by the works in the different Indian languages, many of which await translation to either English or other languages. Hence, this richness is left unknown to those who do not know the particular native language. This is true for Manipuri literature also. During the last few decades, Manipuri literature has grown tremendously, with books on different genre available. However, this is almost unknown to the outside world. While appreciating the Department for its initiative in recognizing outstanding creative talent, I would venture to request that efforts need to be made for translating Manipuri works into English and other languages. This will enhance the popularity of the work and I believe, if this is done, many of our creative writers will become household names in both

inside and outside India. This will also help in getting publishers for our creative writers who ultimately publish their own work as there is serious dearth of publishers. Manipuri literature as everyone of you is aware is very small, especially with the influence of TV which has taken the younger generation away from reading. Even though our creative writers are second to none, I am sad to mention that the number of creative writers who had got Padma Awards in literature and education from Manipur is still very less. This is mainly due to the fact that the richness of Manipuri literature is largely unknown to the outside world, though every year there is a Sahitya Akademi Award.

I am confident that conferring the Manipur State Award for Literature will no doubt encourage our creative writers but more needs to be done and I hope and wish that more support and patronage will come from the State Government. The State can provide the needed patronage in a systematic manner for the growth of any language.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function and I once again congratulate the awardee. I wish all success to the Manipuri writers and to the agencies which are trying to promote the language.

Thank You,

Jai Hind.

