

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE SESSION OF TWO-DAY POLICE TRAINING ON GENDER SENSITIVE BEST PRACTICES, IMPLEMENTATIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF POLICE OFFICIALS ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT MANIPUR POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE, PANGEI, IMPHAL.

Dr. K. Sobita Devi ji, Chairperson, Manipur State Commission for Women,
Shri S. Saratkumar Sharma, Chairperson, Manipur State Protection of Child Rights,

Ms. Priyanka Londhe, Project Coordinator, Centre for Social Research,

Mrs. Juthika Banerjee, Head of Gender Training Institute,

All the eminent participants,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you all here today during this second day session of two-day Police training on 'Gender Sensitive Best Practices, Implementations and Capacity Building of Police Officials'. The subject matter is of great contemporary relevance and gender issues have always been close to my heart. I have always been advocating the cause of women at national and international fora and I really miss the inaugural session yesterday as I was kept away at Delhi with the affairs of the state.

This training programme gives us an opportunity to address the critical issues of gender that are confronting our society today. Such initiatives are essential for building the intellectual foundation and espousing the cause of gender justice. To build a healthy society, we need to remove age-old gender biases and women must be recognized and accepted as an independent social actor.

The Human Development Report enlists seven Freedoms vital for any human development strategy. They are (1) Freedom from Discrimination – by gender, ethnicity, nationality or religion, (2) Freedom from Want – to enjoy decent standard of living, (3) Freedom to realize one's own human

potential, (4) Freedom from Fear – of personal security from unlawful violence and arrests, (5) Freedom from Injustice and violation of Rule of Law, (6) Freedom of thought and speech and to participate in decision-making, (7) Freedom for decent work without exploitation. On these seven criteria, women are indeed a marginalized class. In all the societies, they have suffered multiple drawbacks. Still there are about 100 million ‘Missing Women’ in the world. History has been unkind to women. Religions and traditions have been manipulated to subvert the society by excluding women.

Violence against women has emerged as a major concern for law enforcement agencies all over the world. The level of violence that women encounter in our societies today is unfathomable. Rape and sexual offences need special attention from the police as a woman would come to them only as a last resort, when all other options were exhausted. Inequality prevails in our society as to how women face oppression and inequality from womb to tomb. The Justice Department, Police and Civil Society Organizations have been busy in combating violence against women. Police personnel need to be empathetic towards such women victims. Police are often criticized for their insensitive approach towards the victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Police personnel would be better placed if taught on gender sensitization. Gender sensitizing programmes have been held by the Government with an objective of training to sensitize the participants on gender issues and encourage them to address issues and complaints with a gender sensitive perspective.

Any gender sensitization training is essentially an effort to show how gender shapes the roles of women and men in society, including their role in development, and how it affects relations between them. It is given to those who have very little gender awareness or none at all. For people in Government to appreciate and eventually become its advocate, they first have to heighten their awareness of gender concerns and be willing to respond to

gender issues. It is common place that sexism exists in women as well as in men; it has no respect for individual aspirations, potential or abilities. In obvious and subtle ways, it influences the outcomes of a myriad of life situations the world over. The concept of gender sensitivity has been developed as a way to reduce barriers to personal and economic development created by sexism. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex. Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men.

Manipur is a state of rich tradition and culture. Women hold a high position in the society and crime against women used to be a rarity. Of late, however, I have been receiving shocking reports of rape, molestation, sexual assaults of women for the last several months. This spurt in crime against women is an unhealthy trend and every right thinking citizen should contribute in the effort to arrest this downslide. The law enforcing agencies, the public prosecutor, civil society organizations and the social activists, all have a role to play in deterring and eliminating such crimes. I am fully confident that in due course, the Police Organization in particular will be able to bring under control the crime perpetrated against women in the state.

I encourage organizing such trainings and the deliberations during these sessions will definitely better equip the stakeholders in fighting against the social evil of crime against women. I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.