

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE COMMUNITY RADIO AWARENESS WORKSHOP ON 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT CLASSIC GRANDE, CHINGMEIRONG, IMPHAL EAST.

Archana Kapoor ji, Founder of SMART,

Shri P.D. Sharmaji, Deputy Director, Information & Broadcasting Ministry,

Shri Amit Dwivedi, Acting Director of the Project Management Unit,

All the participants,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in this Community Radio Awareness Workshop, organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India in partnership with Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation (SMART). The purpose of the Workshop is to sensitize interested Organizations about the concept of Community Radio, its application process, its operation including technology and content and its unique aspects like community ownership.

SMART has been hosting these Workshops for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the last four years for promotion and popularization of Community Radio as it has become one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India. The role played by SMART for the welfare of the country since its establishment in 1997 is commendable and community radio has gained importance the world over as an important tool for enabling people's participation in public life, especially people belonging to the marginalized communities.

Even in this age of internet connectivity and information explosion, a large percentage of the population remains outside it, their

voices unheard and their concerns unaddressed. Therefore, I am fully confident that community radio will surely open up a new world of creating expression. It adds a new dimension to music and entertainment. As a medium of mass communication, radio finds a congenial climate in India's vast geography and varied cultural terrain and is nurtured on a sustained basis. Its role in bringing India together is fully appreciated and it is before all to realize what all it has accomplished in the socio-political and cultural spheres of the country. I strongly believe that community radio will continue to play a significant role.

Community radio is a medium of mass communication that gives voice to the voiceless, a true representative of democracy, helps spread information, gives an identity and represents an inclusive tool for development and governance. More importantly, community radio serves as a powerful tool for community empowerment and social development, especially in regions that are hard to reach, have low levels of development and far low on all social parameters. In such a scenario, community radio works as a low cost medium, employing a simple technology to provide a voice to the voiceless. Another special feature of the medium is to hold conversations in people's language, in their own dialects. It also provides a unique platform to promote and preserve local culture and encourage local talent like no other mass media can. Community radio informs, educates and entertains in a participatory manner engaging the community in all its functions. I encourage it.

It is gratifying to note that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has taken a number of steps to encourage, facilitate and promote the overall growth of the sector. Awareness workshops are being organized in different parts of the country every year. I have also

seen the comprehensive and creative workshop agenda of the three days designed to provide information about policy guidelines, licensing procedures, various operational aspects of running a station by sector experts as well as an opportunity to interact with existing radio stations in the region.

I am very happy to know that till date, there are 217 operating Community Radios. However, in Manipur, there is only one, three in Assam. Since this is a less expensive mass medium for information dissemination and is best suited for remote areas, North Eastern Region needs them the most. I am sure the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will increase the number of Community Radio in Manipur in the near future.

The Workshop, organized by MoIB has aims and objectives such as building an understanding of the difference between community radio and the other broadcasters and building the capacity of organizations that have a deep community engagement about the potential of this medium. It will also create awareness on CR policy and share best practices. The CR is certainly a powerful and less expensive tool for empowering marginalized communities.

I strongly believe that SMART, in due course of time, will certainly be able to accomplish their targets, mainly for the development and welfare of the needy people of the country. With these few words, I have great pleasure to inaugurate the Workshop which is for the general benefit of the people of the state.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.