



**ADDRESS
OF
HIS EXCELLENCY**

**LT GENERAL NIRBHAY SHARMA,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD),**

**GOVERNOR
OF
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ON THE OCCASION OF
CELEBRATION OF
INDIGENOUS FAITH DAY
AT
INDIRA GANDHI PARK,
ITANAGAR**

**ON
01 DECEMBER, 2013**

I am indeed extremely happy to be here with you and would like to convey my appreciation to IFCSAP for organizing this event.

I am pleased to learn, that since its inception, IFCSAP has been working on preservation of different indigenous faiths and beliefs of the State. It has been organizing Youth Festivals, workshops for protection, preservation, and promotion of the traditional art and culture of the state. As the umbrella organization unifying all sister organizations such as Donyo Polo Ganging, Meder Nello, Kargu Gamgi, Dani Piilo Society, Rangfra Faith Promotion Society, Buddhist Cultural Preservation Society, and other such indigenous societies of Tai Khamti, Tangsa, Mishmi, the society has been working tirelessly in preserving the cultural identity of every indigenous faith. **I congratulate every member of the organisation for the excellent effort.**

On this special occasion, I join all of you in paying our tribute to Golgi Bote Late Talom Rukbo, founder of the indigenous movement. Seeing the enthusiastic participation, I am sanguine that the endeavour started by him and his learned colleagues will further strengthen this movement day by day.

Arunachal Pradesh is a cultural mosaic of different indigenous faiths, practices followers of Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity and other religions. The State is home to 26 tribes, more than 100 sub-tribes, different faiths and is truly a Mini India. Celebrations like this provide opportunity for better understanding of different faiths of the State and motivate all, for honest and positive engagement between people from different faiths and belief. **It will also reinforce our distinctive Indian cultural characteristic of 'Unity in Diversity'.**

Culture is a set of ideas, customs, and social behaviour, beliefs, of particular people or society. It is very essential to preserve our own culture, it gives to an individual the identity of its own, unique to the individual. Language is the critical factor in preserving the culture. I am happy to note that efforts for documentation and codification of indigenous language of our State are going on. **Preservation of our language in the world of globalisation is a major challenge in promoting and maintaining our own cultural identity.**

When a child is born, he is introduced to her culture through **Mother tongue**, it is the first vehicle of transmission of indigenous culture, we need to encourage use of indigenous language. It has a very powerful impact in the formation of the individual. A child's psychological and personality development will depend upon what has been conveyed through the mother tongue. I would like to appeal to the parents to speak with their children in the mother tongue. We should develop books, Lullabys, folk tales and multimedia for the children in our own language and devise reward system to make learning mother language competitive amongst children. **One of the best ways would be listening to songs in the mother tongue.**

Another important part of indigenous faith and culture is the institution of **priest**, or the 'Nyibu' or the Lamas, Bhikkhus, Dondais (of Galos) etc who play important role in teaching, professing, propagating the essence of each faiths to the followers. **We need to streamline the institution of priests amongst the indigenous faiths group and ensure that access to these institution and the remedies offered by them are rational, scientific and affordable.**

Festivals form an essential aspect of Socio-Cultural life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. As a matter of fact, festivals are the mirrors of people's culture. Every society of Arunachal Pradesh celebrates number of festivals- agricultural, religious and socio-cultural. It is very essential that our youth follow these not just ritualistically, but by truly understanding their relevance and significance.

Youth are the future of the country and they are the one, who have the responsibility to carry forward the rich cultural heritage.

We need to channelize their energy and dynamism in preserving our treasured indigenous cultural heritage. Our youth have to be convinced that their identity lies in the strength of the cultural uniqueness and distinctiveness. Let me remember Marcus Garvey, who said and I quote, **"People without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."** Unquote.

The Tribal communities have to create consciousness and awareness about the religious practices, reasoning and linkages to other indigenous faiths. The indigenous people of the world possess an immense knowledge of their environments, based on centuries of living close to nature. Living in and from the richness and variety of complex ecosystems, they have an understanding of the properties of plants and animals, the functioning of ecosystems and the techniques for using and managing them that is particular and often detailed. This traditional knowledge is based on teachings and experiences passed on from generation to generation. It is holistic and cannot be compartmentalized and cannot be separated from the people who hold it. It is a way of life. This traditional wisdom of our elders, in every sphere, agriculture, craftsmanship, synchrony with mother earth should be documented and preserved. **I hope this forum will take on their shoulders this challenge of documentation and codification of this immense treasure of our traditional wisdom.**

However, I would like to caution you, as Mahatma Gandhi said, 'No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive', we should embrace development and inculcate scientific spirit. Effort must be there to create a pan humanistic approach and outlook for indigenous faiths.

Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.

-Cesar Chavez

As I conclude, I join all my Arunachali brethren in offering prayer to Almighty for His choicest blessings. I hope that this celebration of the Indigenous Faith Day will go long way in preserving our identity.

JAI HIND