



INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
HIS EXCELLENCY GEN JJ SINGH,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD),
GOVERNOR OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

ON THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF
ONE DAY SEMINAR & TECHNICAL SESSIONS
ON THE THEME
'A LONG WAY TO GO FOR EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE OF
ARUNACHAL PRADESH, ECONOMICALLY FOR ITS
SUSTAINED GROWTH'

ORGANISED BY
INDIAN COUNCIL OF SMALL INDUSTRIES (ICSI), KOLKATA
AT
CONFERENCE HALL, NERIST, NIRJULI
ON
SATURDAY, 19 DEC, 2009

Today, it gives me immense pleasure to participate in an initiative which has always been very close to my heart, that is, empowerment of my people. I am very happy that Indian Council of Small Industries, in association with Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh and North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and technology, Nirjuli are organizing this seminar, which is being sponsored by the Planning Commission, Government of India. I am pleased that you are making an exercise to find out the ways and means of empowering the people of Arunachal Pradesh economically for its sustained growth. I congratulate and appreciate all of you for the concerted efforts in shouldering this noble venture. I trust this effort of yours will have a far-reaching impact on the pace of development of the State and more importantly, its people, their livelihood issues and standard of living.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the theme of today's deliberation is 'A long way to go for empowering the people of Arunachal Pradesh, economically for its sustained growth'. If I break down the theme proper, I find that it comprises of three important elements:

- a) Empowering the people of Arunachal Pradesh economically;
- b) Empowering the economy by empowering the people economically for its sustained growth; and
- c) Evolving ideas for ensuring sustainable growth

I am, indeed, happy that you are contemplating to empower the people of Arunachal Pradesh economically and I am sure, you will bring out a blue print rather 'action plan' to develop and expedite the process of empowering.

I would wait and watch how this Council endeavours to execute its plan and needless to say, the Government of the State of Arunachal Pradesh will extend all assistance for execution of such a plan for people's development.

Friends, I am really impressed by the subject topics chosen for the technical session - Ways and means for developing the economy of Arunachal Pradesh, meeting the credit need of the small entrepreneurs, availability of credit from banks and financial institution for micro and small enterprise, rural economy with bias on forestry, rural employment generation, promotion of self employment and developing entrepreneurship etc. You have carefully and rightly chosen issues which touch the daily lives of many of our under-privileged brothers and sisters. I would like to request the organizers to provide copies of deliberations to the policy makers, especially the Members of Legislative Assembly, so that they can speak on these subjects in every public meeting they address. Papers on role of NABARD, District Industries Centers and State Khadi and Village Industries board should not only be made available to the MLAs but also to Panchayati Raj Institution members as well as Goan Burahs along with copies to all Administrative offices

in the State. I am sure, it will bear result and help take the message of this conference far and wide.

Ladies and gentlemen, the key ingredients for empowerment, I believe, are motivation, awareness, training, resource mobilization, self management and linkages building. Under motivation, poor households should be encouraged and motivated to form groups which are the principal institutional mechanism for organizing and pursuing community development activities in the village. These households would then begin to understand the value of association or organization and routine interaction and the power they can have through asserting themselves as citizens and members of the society. The groups should be encouraged to engage in income-generating activities using their own resources and capabilities.

Awareness-raising in several areas, such as immunization, sanitation and primary education should be pursued. Similarly, vocational skills should be imparted through participatory methods, where local knowledge, mainly based on experience, can be combined with outside knowledge. Such training can assist the rural poor to set up their own self-employment activities or go outside for seasonal employment.

Resources mobilization by the method of pooling individual resources through regular savings and voluntary

contributions to create social capital must be encouraged. The idea of pooling the members' own resources is based on the realization that everybody owns some resources, which, if combined, could improve their individual situation substantially. Careful consideration should be given to developing a proper system of resource generation, allocation and utilization, so that all members have equal opportunities. This would ensure ownership and sustainability.

The Groups should then be encouraged to elect their own leaders and manage their own activities, such as the conduct of meetings, record-keeping, savings and credit operations, conflict resolution and community property management. In the initial stages, an outside agent can assist them in developing a system. Later the groups can be given full autonomy over the system.

Linkage building is vital for any such organization. Organizing self-help groups at the grass roots is a method of activating the "demand side" of decentralized policies by enhancing the capability of the rural poor to access the resources, opportunities and organizations of the state that are working for their development. As such, it is crucial for the rural poor to have linkages with decentralized institutions in order to gain access to opportunities and resources.

Friends, the solution for empowering our people begins with improving literacy and education levels that will allow

everyone to fully participate in the overall economy of the State. As Her Excellency the President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, said, I quote, 'Education is the most important tool for empowering the people of a country', unquote. In our endeavour, the Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh along with its affiliated institutions and the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and technology, Nirjuli are playing an important role. The State Government led by Chief Minister Shri Dorjee Khandu and education department is in the process of revamping the education system of the state. I am sure we are going to see positive results very soon. As people acquire knowledge, they become better aware of their rights and duties and become active participants of the growth process rather than being mere passive beneficiaries.

Another very important tool for empowering the local populace is through cottage and small-scale industries. The reason being that people having no farm or agricultural land can involve in such industries and find their livelihood in an easy manner provided the authorities take care of the supply of raw materials and the marketing of finished products. These industries do not require large capitals to start and the maintenance costs of such systems are also low. The manual skills of elder generations can be utilized there by reducing the idle man-hours of the society. General self sufficiency of the micro-societies can be guaranteed, especially for

community based on village life. The self pride of the village people is raised thereby increasing their role in the empowerment of the whole nation. Many economies, developed and developing have come to realize the value of small businesses. They are seen to be characterized by dynamism, witty innovations, efficiency, and their small size allows for faster decision-making process. Cottage and Small industries contribute to the economy in terms of output of goods and services, creation of jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast growing service sector and provide a vehicle for reducing income disparities. These institutions develop a pool of skilled and semi-skilled workers as a basis for the future industrial expansion and improve forward and backward linkages between economically, socially and geographically diverse sectors of the economy. While providing opportunities for developing and adapting appropriate technological approaches, they also offer an excellent breeding ground for entrepreneurial and managerial talent, the critical shortage of which is often a great handicap to economic development. We need to maximize the distinctive capabilities of each individual, and we need individuals working in communities surrounded by deep pools of other talented people, especially the tribal artisans.

A Chinese Proverb says, 'I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.' Therefore, to show them

the way and understand, Raj Bhawan has undertaken the initiative of setting up of a bamboo processing unit at Poma, not very far from here. I expect this initiative to grow into a model concept of demonstrating what self-sustaining village economies should be like. Not only will the villagers earn sustainable income from local products, the entire area will be developed by dovetailing efforts of several Departments like rural tourism, education, health, bee-keeping etc. Such a model village in my mind is the ideal realization of the concept of sustainable growth by empowering the local people. I would like to see the mushrooming of many such projects all over the State and the efforts of the Indian Council of Small Industries in promoting such ventures will surely be welcomed and appreciated.

Ladies and gentlemen, rural people have little, if any, access to financial services. The high costs and low returns associated in addressing their savings, loans, transmission and insurance needs prevent commercial banks from serving this segment of the market. Many researchers emphasize the importance of utilizing a community's resources such as villagers' skills, imagination, initiatives and financial potential to establish self-help institutions that address the community's needs. The community by identifying their own potential has greater confidence in them and their capacity in meeting their economic demands. Therefore, more awareness needs to be created. Sell your policies and programmes. Go

to the people, especially our branch managers. Reach out to the people. At the end of the day, such an approach will not only benefit the Arunachalis but also your Organization.

The State Khadi and Village Industries Board, the NABARD, the District Industries Centre, the Banks and other financial institutes must act as a catalyst for stronger and sustainable growth.

I urge upon the Indian Council of Small Industries, Kolkata, to identify problems faced by the VSE sector and to come out with suggestions for remedial measure. Create awareness on self-employment amongst and uneducated youth and organize vocational and technical skill development amongst the youth and involve NGOs and other Associations in directing the misguided youth towards the main-stream of life by making arrangements for decent livelihood; and also play an institutional role in bridging the gap of implementation of various schemes for development of the economy of Arunachal Pradesh.

To conclude my address, I would quote Helen Keller who said – Quote 'The experience of the race shows that we get our most important education not through books but through our work. I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by

the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker. Unquote.

This is one important lesson that I have learnt during my long tenure in the Army. And this is the message that I pass on to all of you present here today – Simple but sustained efforts of our small but committed groups can go a long way in ensuring economic empowerment and sustainable livelihood for the people of our State. Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't – you shall be right both ways!

I convey my heartfelt gratitude to Indian Council of Small Industries for organizing this seminar, which is a very meaningful and purposeful one. I congratulate all the organizers and wish the seminar, a grand success.

Jai Arunachal! Jai Hind!