

Governor pitches for promotion of startups in food processing sector in Sikkim

Gangtok, Oct 11

Startups in food processing sector should be promoted in Sikkim, said Gangaj Prasad, Governor for Sikkim during one day conference on "Startups and MSMEs in Food Processing" organized by ASSOCHAM in collaboration with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India. NABARD and Sikkim University Gangaj Prasad, Governor for Sikkim, praised ASSOCHAM for bringing this important agenda into notice by organizing this Conference. There are immense opportunities present in food processing in the state. He highlighted, that opportunities for exports of specialized products have increased many a times with the opening of Pakyong airport in Sikkim. He also said that to double farmer's income, food processing is the way forward and must be promoted aggressively. His focus was also on educated unemployed youth of the state, by saying that they are an important asset of the state and their knowledge and energy should be channelized by strengthening the startup ecosystem of the state. He also advised that ASSOCHAM can help analyze market demand of the agri produce and help state government's departments to take necessary steps to ensure transfer of benefits to the



farmers at the bottom of the pyramid. He said increasing price of farm produce is not the only way to increase farmer's income, quality and improvement in productivity also add money in the pockets of the farmers. He also emphasized that new technology will be game changer for farmers, as it will help them make better decisions for farm produce, increase their productivity and explore new markets. At the end he congratulated ASSOCHAM to organize this conference on such

a critical and forward looking topic, which will surely bring a wave of fresh ideas in the state of Sikkim. Shri Uday Kumar Varma, Secretary General, ASSOCHAM extended a warm welcome to Honorable Governor and other dignitaries on the dais, delegates, press and media. He told about objectives of this conference to create awareness about support schemes to start up and food entrepreneurs. He highlighted growth of the agriculture and processed food sector in the

North-East region while comparing it with the overall growth of the economy of Sikkim. He said that focus for development should be on food processing which is one of the major sector which holds unexplored scope to strengthen the economy of the state of Sikkim. He said, as Sikkim, which is an extremely progressive Organic state, its growth and future is rightly tied with agriculture and in turn food processing sector. Harvest loss which is a perennial problem, has

its solution in the growth of food processing sector. And at the end he concluded by saying that out of box ideas along with conventional ways will surely take Sikkim miles ahead of its peer states.

In his special address, Dr. Ethonna Chandu, Principal Secretary, Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of Sikkim said that there is a huge scope and opportunity for food processing industry in Sikkim, since it is deeply entrenched in the tradition of the state since ages in one way or the other. Adding to that, he said that modernization of cottage and small scale industries is very critical to take them to the next level. He informed the audience about the new scheme launched in 2017 called 'Chief Minister's Startup Scheme, which has successfully sanctioned more than 500 loans to start ups in last one year.

Under this scheme, he told that any bankable project in MSME sector of upto Rs.20 lakhs, in which 35% promoter's contribution is grant in aid and rest 65% will be a loan from bank. He also said that many schemes of deparatenent of Horticulture can be merged with this scheme and farmers and budding entrepreneurs can take almost 85% subsidy. He said that share of food processing units in the state must be increased from current lev-

els, as Sikkim government is making right moves to help this sector flourish, like setting up of incubation centre, in quality control and technology usage.

Smt. R. Shering, General Manager, NABARD welcomed Honorable Governor and other dignitaries on the dais, delegates, press and media. She said that there is huge opportunity for food processing in Sikkim and talked about various support schemes of NABARD for start up and food entrepreneurs. She said that as far as the banking perspective of start ups and MSMEs is concerned, Government of India in giving lot of emphasis, as this sector can vastly contribute to "doubling farmer's income" and reduce wastage. Food processing links farmers with markets, hence state of Sikkim needs strong and dynamic policy on it.

Dr. Basant Kumar Singh, Senior Professor, Department of Process & Food Engineering, College of Agricultural Engineering & Post Harvest Technology, Central Agricultural University, Sikkim extended a warm vote of Thanks to all the dignitaries on and off the dais and especially thanked Hon. the Governor for sparing his valuable time in inaugurating and addressing the Conference. The conference was addressed by several other key speakers across the sections and sub-sections.

Promote food processing startups, Governor advises

Daylong conference held on Startups and MSMEs in Food Processing

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 OCT:

"STARTUPS IN FOOD processing sector should be promoted in Sikkim," said Governor Ganga Prasad during a daylong conference on "Startups and MSMEs in Food Processing" in Gangtok today.

The conference was organized by Associated Chambers of Commerce of India [ASSOCHAM] in collaboration with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, National Bank for Agriculture and



Rural Development [NABARD] and Sikkim University, a press release informs.

The Governor praised ASSOCHAM for bringing this important agenda into notice by organizing the conference. He added that opportunities for exports of specialized products have increased many times over with the opening of the Pakyong Green-

field Airport in the State.

"To double farmers' income, food processing is the way forward and must be promoted aggressively," said the Governor.

Stressing on educated unemployed youth of the State, the Governor stated that they are an important asset of the State and their knowledge and energy should be channelized by strengthening

the startup ecosystem of the State. He also advised

the ASSOCHAM to help analyze market demand of agri produce and help State Government departments to take necessary steps to ensure transfer of benefits to the farmers at the bottom of the pyramid.

"Increasing price of farm produce is not the only way to increase

farmers' income. Quality and improvement in productivity also add money in the pockets of the farmers," the Governor stated.

He congratulated ASSOCHAM for organizing the conference on such a critical and forward looking topic in the capital and expressed hope that it will bring a wave of fresh ideas in the State of Sikkim.

Secretary General, ASSOCHAM, Uday Kumar Varma, while extending warm welcome to the Governor, dignitaries on the dais, delegates, press and media, informed that the main agenda of the conference was to create awareness about support schemes for start up and food entrepreneurs. He highlighted

growth of the agriculture and processed food sector in the North-east region while comparing it with the overall growth of the economy of Sikkim. He said that focus for development should be on food processing which is one of the major sector which holds unexplored scope to strengthen the economy of the State of Sikkim.

"Sikkim, which is an extremely progressive organic State, its growth and future is rightly tied with agriculture and in turn food processing sector. Harvest loss which is a perennial problem has its solution in the growth of food processing sector," said Mr Varma.

In his special address, Principal Secretary, De-

partment of Commerce & Industry, Government of Sikkim, Dr Thomas Chandu, said that there is a huge scope and opportunity for food processing industry in Sikkim since it is deeply entrenched in the tradition of the State since ages in one way or the other.

He added that modernization of cottage and small scale industries is very critical to take them to the next level. He informed the audience about the new scheme launched in 2017 called Chief Minister's Startup Scheme which has successfully sanctioned more than 500 loans to start ups in last one year. "Under this scheme, any bankable project in

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MSME sector of up to Rs 20 lakhs, in which 35% promoter's contribution is grant in aid and rest 65% will be a loan from bank. Many schemes of Department of Horticulture can be merged with this scheme and farmers and budding entrepreneurs can take almost 85% subsidy. Share of food processing units in the State must be increased from current levels as Sikkim government is making right moves to help this sector flourish like setting up of incubation centre, in quality control and technology usage," stated Dr Chandy.

General Manager, NABARD, R Tshering, spoke on various support schemes of NABARD for start up and food entrepreneurs.

"As far as the banking perspective of start-ups and MSMEs is concerned, Government of India is giving lot of emphasis as this sector can vastly contribute to 'doubling farmers' income' and reduce wastage. Food processing links farmers with markets, hence State of Sikkim needs strong and dynamic policy on it," said Ms Tshering.

