



Ref. No.

Date.....

doCip
ARCHIVES

Economic and Social Council
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
3rd Session, 10-21st May 2004
United Nations Head Quarter
New York

Substantive Theme : Indigenous Women
Agenda 4
Mandated Area

a. Economic & Social Development

Madam/Sir Chairperson, distinguished members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues and respective representatives.

I come from Manipur, a tiny state in the north eastern part of the Indian sub-continent. Following the forced merger of our state into the Indian Union in 1949, we lost our history of independence and sovereignty. Today, we have a history of colonisation, suppression, exploitation, abuse and violation of all sorts of human rights. We, the native people of our own land have been degraded into indigenous people suffering the onslaught of the mainland economy and culture.

The women of Manipur, throughout her history, have taken very active and indispensable part in the socio-economic structure and progress of the land. Keep aside the equality of right between man and woman, our women are still the financial heads in the families, traditional and cultural volunteers in the society. While their male counterparts have allowed themselves to be swept away by the glitters of the foreign culture, they still prefer to stick to the tradition and heritage of the land. They are even more sensitive and more organised. One and only women's market in the world called "Mothers' Market" is at the capital of the state. It is a market of centuries standing as a witness to the active participation of our women in the economic texture of the land.

Today, under the colonial rule, our state is just a captive market and the indigenous people there are mere consumers. As a result, our women who have been the back bone of our economy are adversely affected. Our handloom and cottage industries are almost erased from our soil. The neo-colonial marketisation of the state has gradually dried up all our human and natural resources.

Contact : **Leltanthen Umakanta Meitei (Meithei)**

Gen. Secretary, TIPS, Manipur
Porompat Thawanthaba Leikai, Imphal (E)-10, Manipur, India, Tele. # + 0091-385-2228850
umakantameitei@yahoo.com, leltanthenmeitei@yahoo.com
Website : www.tipsmanipur.com

