

**Statement by Community Action and Research for Development (CARD)
6th Session of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Agenda Item 4(E) Culture

Presented by Ms.Sumshot Khular¹, President,CARD, Manipur, India

Greetings from Manipur, India.

Respected Madam Chairperson, Indigenous Sister and Brothers!

Indigenous people's culture is very much related to our living space, land, communal agriculture, fallow lands for shifting cultivation, burial sites, spirit and collection forests etc. Culture-the context of individual's lives in their communities can affect all aspects of human life from housing, food, the relationship with land and the natural environment health care, religion, education and arts. The rights and interests of indigenous peoples with regard to biodiversity, technical knowledge systems and cultural expressions conserved, maintained and practised by them, raise certain complex issues when it comes to intellectual property right. The relationship between intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (expressions of folklore) needed to be protected against misappropriation and misuse. Indigenous traditional knowledge not only sustains indigenous and local communities in our daily lives and also is a key element of our identity and self determination. Such knowledge reflects our holistic world view contributes to the world's cultural and biological diversity and is a source of cultural and economic wealth for the communities and for humanity as a whole.

For the Lamkang indigenous peoples in Manipur, a great threat today, is the process of assimilation to the majority language, if there is not check and if it keeps on this trend we are to soon lost all our culture and traditions and language.

The imposition of the dominant language (Manipuri –Meitei) language as a compulsory Paper I in the All India Civil Services Competitive Examinations for candidates of Manipur including the indigenous peoples has adverse impact on the success rates.

The latest imposition of Manipuri language on indigenous peoples in the Elementary School Leaving certificate in the class VIII level made no indigenous pupil pass.

¹ Ms.Sumshot Khular is a Lamkang indigenous person, President of Community Action for Research and Development(CARD) Initiatives of the Lamkang Indigenous peoples based in Thamlakhuren village, Manipur,India.

Recommendation:

- ☞ United Nations should implement urgent action plans to protect indigenous cultures and languages,
- ☞ UN should works towards the standard setting process of the draft provisions endorsed by IGC for the protection of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional CEs,
- ☞ States should recognise the rights of indigenous peoples to food and nutritional security and the sustainable production and consumption of healthy and nutritious foods by using certain mechanisms for promotion and protection of indigenous peoples whose populations are small(minority) as we are on the verge of extinction,

- ☞ Promote and support the utilisation of local indigenous languages and where no written language exists employ local indigenous peoples as translators/interpreters as well as advisers to assist.

Thank you, Chairperson, for your kind attention.