

Second Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
May 2003



Item f EDUCATION

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Our people in Jharkhand in India face similar problems regarding their education as do other indigenous peoples from other parts of the world. Hence resolutions of these problems may also be similar.

In our country the state attitude towards cultures and languages of indigenous peoples, indicated as Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution has been relatively better than as say the attitude adopted towards political or self governance rights , or lands and territorial rights .Education through indigenous languages should therefore be possible and state funded.

It is imperative to explore / study whether a similar attitude is taken by other Constitutions and laws in other countries.

If such is the situation then, then cultural and particularly language educational rights or education through and in their own languages may be more easily enforced through implementation of already existing laws. The recommendation or pursuance to implement already existing laws pertaining to education in their own languages may be easier and simpler, when there is now reluctance by many states to address rights when couched in the language of indigenous rights.

Therefore, our recommendation is that members of the Permanent Forum, explore the possibilities or avenues of already existing laws on education through indigenous languages, and press and urge upon states through the UN and/or its agencies the proper and effective implementation of already existing relevant laws on education pertaining to indigenous peoples.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ratnaker Bhengra", written over a horizontal line.

Ratnaker Bhengra

Jharkhandis Organization for Human Rights, Jharkhand , INDIA.