

Intervention on agenda item no. 3
RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Joint presentation by:
JHARKHAND INDIGENOUS YOUTH FOR ACTION &
KURUKH LITERARY SOCIETY OF INDIA

Presented by: Mr. Abhay Sagar Minz

Mr. Chaiman,
Distinguished members &
Fellow participants

Johar !

I bring heartiest salutation from the indigenous land of Jharkhand. There is an age old saying in our mother tongue.

' Ekaam khondhan peeta gey, hurmin ti mund nu, khondhan ta bhakan peeta '

This means that if you wish to enslave or devastate any society, the first thing one should do is to attack the native language. Language is an important carrier of Culture of any society. Once the language is destroyed or is extinct, the culture of the society is spontaneously endangered.

India did include the right to education under article 21 A as a fundamental right which guarantees education for children but there is no specific rights for the indigenous peoples per se. We strongly propose the preliminary education to be in indigenous language. The meaning and sense of any language is effectively carried only when we find relevance in the regional culture and environment. Native language has strong sense of emotions and spirituality in it. A common native language is a very vital factor for integrity. Education in indigenous language should be strictly followed in all of educational policies.

Endeavour for the recognition of indigenous language in the curriculum has been a constant process in our region. The tribal and regional language department at the University of Ranchi was set up in early 1980s in our region. Surprisingly, despite its establishment three decades back there has not been any permanent appointment for the same. The Jharkhand education board sidelined the indigenous literature in its curriculum. The great indigenous freedom fighters who lay down their lives did not find a place in the books, thereby keeping the young indigenous youths ignorant about their glorious past. The amalgamation of the main stream culture and the indigenous culture has diluted the proper concept of indigenous way of life, religion, customs, values, culture, indigenous knowledge systems among the youths of our region.

Indigenous youths are being largely drawn into the main stream society and its life style which is greatly hampering the indigenous language and culture. In near future it is likely that the distinct language and culture will disappear and the identity of these indigenous populations itself will be challenged. The present education system hangs our indigenous youth in between and they are ashamed of their cultural practices and heritage. This is largely because they are unaware about the rich

heritage and culture. The knowledge about indigenous legends, freedom fighters, and intellectual dignitaries has never been a part of the curriculum. The exact exposure of the indigenous way of life, practice of *addi dharma* (religion), mythologies, customs, have never found their way in the education system. It is only when they understand the true value of education; they will take pride in their glorious past.

Indigenous language of the Oraons is at the verge of extinction. The Oraons of our region are putting an effort to rejuvenate the dying language and this has been largely put fourth by Kurukh literary society of India. Large number of literary articles have been published in past since its establishment five years back. We also conduct annual conferences in various regions on a rotational basis throughout India. We are making an immense effort for its inclusion in the VIII schedule of the Indian constitution so that the native language is protected. The success story of the Santhals of our region is a great inspiration.

It is hereby strongly emphasized that indigenous language be protected at all costs and that the education system and the curriculum includes the indigenous traditions and values. The curriculum same has to be largely designed by the indigenous experts and to be incorporated for the better survival of indigenous culture of our region.

Thank you for the kind attention.