

North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati

Annual Report
April 2011 to March 2012

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BRIEF HISTORY

Begun on March 1, 2001, the North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) plays a dynamic role in addressing the challenges faced by society in North East India. It combines research and documentation with support to action by civil society groups working for human rights and social transformation using non-violent means. It advocates for the powerless by means of research, networking with civil society groups, publications and conferences. With its publications, it strives to examine areas of social distress with serious intellectual rigor. The Centre also organizes seminars on vital social concerns and issues.

The NESRC is one of the main institutions in the whole of India doing or facilitating systematic study in most of the states of India on development-induced-displacement. The studies are meant to bring together persons and groups active in the field of social change in order to assist them in their search for creative and innovative solutions from below rather than accept impositions from above that too often favour the rich and the powerful.

Another area of expertise of NESRC is the Tribal Customary Law. Because many indigenous communities have begun to recover their customary law either to strengthen their identity or to carve out a new identity, NESRC publications do a critical study of the functioning of traditional institutions emanating from the customary law. Some of the studies analyse the interface of customary law with modernity and its impact on the status of women.

In recent years peace initiatives seeking to overcome ethnic conflicts have attained critical importance in the Northeast. The NESRC provides a platform for various parties to the conflict to dialogue and articulate positions across the table. It has published books on various peace initiatives, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, a manual on peace building and human rights.

Given below is the summary of the seminars organized, books published, and papers presented, and conferences attended by the faculty of North Eastern Social Research Centre during 2011-12. While submitting this for your perusal, we would like to assure you that we remain committed to a vision of working for an inclusive society where everyone feels counted, included, and wanted, and with a voice in their own destiny.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2011-12

Change of Guard at NESRC: After singularly steering the boat at NESRC for 12 years, Dr Walter Fernandes passed the baton on to Dr Melvil Pereira on January 2, 2012. During Dr Fernandes' 12 years of leadership, the NESRC has scaled great heights and has become a well-known social research centre in North East India. Walter's contribution in founding, giving direction and consolidating the work of NESRC has been immense. He continues to be the guiding force of the NESRC and functions as a Senior Research Fellow, vitally involved and guiding more studies now than before!

Thank You Gita: Dr Gita Bharali left for the US to join her spouse and continue her scholarly work. Gita was on the faculty of the NESRC for nearly 9 years. She has authored many books and was a dynamic presence at NESRC. She is known for her displacement studies.

Farewell to Dr Athparia, Arabinda, Sujata and Afruza: The NESRC had the honour of having Dr R P Athparia (former superintending Anthropologist, Anthropological Survey of India, Shillong) as faculty for over a year. We are grateful for his services. Arabinda Rabha, Sujata Hati Baruah and Afruza Nasrin too worked during the year and gave their services. Thanks to all of them for their contribution to the NESRC.

Welcome to New Research Faculty and Staff: Garima Thakhuria, Jyotishman Taye, Kezhangunuo Kelio and Sunumi Changmi joined the faculty of the NESRC at various times during the year. In November 2011, Ashpriya joined the staff as accountant cum secretary. We welcome them and wish them happy and fruitful stay/work at the NESRC.

New Additions to Library: The NESRC library is richer with the addition of over 225 books, mostly on classics in Anthropology, gifted by Dr Raymond Bucko, Chair, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Creighton University, Omaha. Dr R P Athparia gifted around 25 books. This apart, the Missionsprokur, Nurnberg, has gifted 57 foreign titles. We place on record our thanks to Dr Bucko, Dr Athparia and Missionsprokur, Nurnberg, for their goodwill.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

A. COMPLETED STUDIES

1. **Walter Fernandes and six others:** Development-Induced Displacement in Nagaland 1947-2007 and Sikkim 1975-2007. This study is intrinsic to the effort to create an All India database on all planned displacement and rehabilitation. The study has been completed in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura but Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh remain to be completed in the Northeast. They will be done and the completed studies will be revised and published during 2012-2013.

2. **Walter Fernandes and Garima Thakuria.** *Land Eviction in Guwahati and Imphal.* This is a follow up of the people's struggles in these two cities against eviction from what the state calls encroachment and the people consider their right to housing. The effort is to understand the social and legal status.

3. **Melvil Pereira and Afruza Nasrin:** *Climate Change and Food Security: A Case of Brahmaputra Basin of Assam.* This study is part of an initiative in a multi-stakeholder dialogue process to promote insights into trans-boundary issues across the three major river systems: Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna. It is an IUCN study aimed at promoting trans-boundary collaboration in the context of escalating tension between countries on water sharing.

B. ONGOING STUDIES

1. **Walter Fernandes and Garima Thakuria.** *Development-Induced Displacement in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur 1947-2007.*
2. **Melvil Pereira, Kezhanguo Kelio and Sunumi Changmi.** *The Impact of the Customary Tribal Law and Its Modernisation on Women in North Eastern India: A Comparative study of Fourteen Tribes in Seven States.*
3. **Walter Fernandes and Tribeni Gogoi.** *The Share of Children in the Assam Budget.*
4. **Alphonsus D'Souza and Sujata Hati Baruah.** *A Comparative Study of Conflict-Induced Displacement in Mizoram-Tripura and Karbi Anglong.*
5. **Melvil Pereira and Tribeni Gogoi:** *Financial Tracking and Implementation Status of the Schemes under Juvenile Justice and Integrated Child Protection Scheme*
6. **Alphonsus D'Souza and Jyotishman Teye with four others:** *Approach to Conflicts and Peace in the Social Studies Text Books of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura.*
7. **Walter Fernandes and Jyotishman Teye:** *Reasons and Impact of Tribal Youth Migration to Agartala.*

PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

1. **Walter Fernandes, Shanti Chhetri, Satyen Lama and Sherry Joseph. 2012.** *Progress: at Whose Cost? Development-Induced Displacement in West Bengal 1947-2000.* The study completed in 2006 showed that around seven million persons have been displaced in West Bengal 1947-2000 in the name of national development. The study was updated and published as NESRC Displacement Studies No. 2. Pp. 600. Price paperback Rs 300, \$ 20.00, Euro 15.00. Hard cover Rs 700.00, \$ 40.00. Euro 35.00.
2. **Farhana Yasmin and Alin Mahanta. 2011.** *Assam Sorkaror Bhumi aru Bonanchal Neeti* . . This booklet summarises the main laws around forests and land and is meant to be a resource booklet for persons who are struggling against possible eviction. It has chapters on the Forest Rights Act 2006, the Land Acquisition Act 1894, the Assam Land Reforms Act and the Assam Land Policy. Pp. 59. Price Rs 50.
3. **Yangkahao Vashum, Peter Haokip and Melvil Pereira. 2012.** *Search for a New Society: Tribal Theology for North East India.* This book contains papers presented during the seminar "Tribal Theology for North East India" organized from 27-29 April, 2010. The seminar was an inter-disciplinary and inter-denominational effort at responding to emerging challenges faced by North East India. Pp. 347. Price Rs 250, \$ 20.00, Euro 15.00.
4. **Alphonsus D'Souza (ed). 2012. (translation in Assamese by Sujata Hati Baruah):** *Uttar Pub Bharator Tinikhon Janajatiyo Samajor Sangharsho Niramoyor Paramporagoto Paddhati* (Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution in Three Tribal Societies of North Eastern India). Pp. 92. Price Rs 50.00

WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

1. **Peace and Conflicts in North East India. Guwahati: July 5-6, 2011:** Around 40 activists and peace workers from Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Tripura gathered at North Eastern Diocesan Social Forum for two days to take stock of the efforts at peace initiatives in different parts of North East India.
2. **The Land Acquisition Bill 2011: The Assam Context. Guwahati: August 25, 2011:** This was a one day consultation organised at Shahid Bhavan, Uzan Bazar, Guwahati, to reflect and deliberate on *The Land Acquisition Bill 2001*. The purpose of the consultation was to assess the impact of the Bill on the tribal communities of Assam.
3. **The Land Acquisition Bill 2011: The Arunachal Context. Itanagar: August 27, 2011:** A one day consultation was organized to study the impact of *The Land Acquisition Bill 2011* on the inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh. The report of this consultation was sent to the Ministry of Rural Affairs.
4. **The Land Acquisition Bill 2011 and Manipur. Imphal: Manipur University, September 22, 2011:** The impact of *The Land Acquisition Bill 2011* on the people of Manipur was organized in Imphal on September 22, 2011.
5. **Peace and Conflicts in Manipur and Karbi Anglong. Guwahati: November 14-15, 2011:** Over 40 peace activists and some academicians gathered at Bosco Reach Out, Guwahati, for a two days Workshop to evaluate the peace building strategies in Manipur and Assam.

PROFESSIONAL PAPERS PUBLISHED

Walter Fernandes

2011. "The Indian Church and the Challenge of Globalisation," in Gregory Karotemprel, Jacob Marangattu and Paul Vithayathil (ed). *Church in India Tomorrow: A Roadmap for her Mission and Ministry in the Third Millennium*. Rajkot: Deepti Publications, pp. 271-292.

2011. "Conditions for Peace with Justice," in Joy Thomas, V. Z. Sagayam and Donald D'Souza (ed). *Promise of Indian Pluralism and Solidarity*. Pune: Ishvani Kendra, pp. 68-81.

2011. "Interface of Social Reality and Theological Reflection," in Tomy Palely and Thomas Manjaly (ed). *Theological Education for Transformative Ministry*. Shillong: Oriens Publications, pp. 109-122.

2012. "Tribal Customary-Formal Law Interface in the Northeast: Implications for Land Relations," in T. Haque (ed). *Land Policies for Inclusive Growth*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, pp. 422-438.

2012. "Environmental Degradation, Climate Change and Disasters in the Eastern Himalayas," in Sakarama Somayaji and Vimal Khawas (ed). *Environment, Development and Social change in the Himalayan Region*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, pp. 22-28.

Melvil Pereira

2011. "Customary Law as a Social Determinant of Health for the Northeast Indian Tribal Communities", in *Focus*, Spring.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Walter Fernandes

"Dam Breaks and Land Compensation," *The Assam Tribune*, September 6, 2011.

"Death Sentence," *The Assam Tribune*, September 10, 2011.

"Ecology and Jesuit Advocacy," *JIVAN* September 2011.

"Development-Induced Displacement and Human Rights" *Seven Sisters' Post*, Nov. 24, 2011

"Identity and Creation of New States," *Seven Sisters' Post*, January 21, 2012

"Shooting the Messenger," *The Assam Tribune*, March 5, 2012.

Melvil Pereira

"Indigenous People of North East India and the New Land Acquisition Bill", *The Nagaland Post*, September 1, 2011,

"Land Acquisition Bill 2011: Boon or Bane?", *The Assam Tribune*, September 3, 2011.

Tribeni Gogoi

"Children Need Attention" *Seven Sisters' Post*, March 6, 2012

RESOURCE PERSON

Walter Fernandes

Capacity Building Workshop on Indigenous Issues, Guwahati: NED Social Forum, May 8, 2012.

Workshop on Caritas in Veritate, Imphal: May 26-27, 2011.

Workshop on Reporting Research on Dam Issues. Guwahati: Panos South Asia, July 13-14, 2011.

Human Rights in the North East, Guwahati: Sarala Birla Vidyalaya, December 12, 2011.

Melvil Pereira

Climate Change: Implications for North East India, General Assembly of Catholic Association of North East India at NED Social Forum, Guwahati, September 16, 2011.

Challenges of Health Sector, Social Work Commission of Bethany Sisters, Gorchuk, Guwahati, February 23, 2012.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Walter Fernandes

“North Eastern Tribes and Identity,” *Seminar on Globalisation and Changing Tribal Identity in the North East*. Delhi: Naga Forum, May 16-17, 2011.

“Environmental Degradation, Climate Change and Disasters in the Eastern Himalayas” Keynote Address, *Seminar on Disasters and the Ecology of the Eastern Himalayas*. Shillong: North Eastern Institute for Social Science Research, June 3, 2011.

“Globalisation and North-South Relations: The Asian Context” Seminar on *Globalization and Conflicts*, Eichstaett, Germany: December 6-9, 2011.

“Development, Displacement and Ethnic Disparities,” *National Seminar on Ethnic Disparities*. Dibrugarh: Dibru College, January 18-19, 2012

“Land as Tribal Livelihood,” *International Seminar on Resources, Tribes and the State*. Itanagar: Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University, February 13-15, 2012.

“Customary Law and Women’s Status in Nagaland,” *National Seminar on Society, culture and Development: Emerging Issues in Nagaland*. Kohima: Kohima Science College, March 14-15, 2012.

“Tribal Livelihood and Resistance Movements in India” *National Seminar on Tribal Unrest, State Policy and Empowerment*. Bhopal: Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Sangrahalaya, March 22-23, 2012

“The Background of Conflicts and Peace in Northeast India,” *Workshop on Peace and Conflicts in Northeast India*. Guwahati: NED Social Forum, March 24-26, 2011.

Melvil Pereira

“Interface of Tribal Land Laws with State Laws: Implications for Tribal Forest Conservation,” *International Seminar on Resources, Tribes and the State*. Itanagar: Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University, February 13-15, 2012.

“Development and Displacement in Assam: Implications for the Small Tea Growers,” *Seminar on Poverty Reduction Strategies in North-East India*. Guwahati: Centre for Education & Communication (CEC), New Delhi, March 22, 2012.

Garima Thakuria

“Anthropological Research in North East India: Land and the Tribes”, *Anthropological Researches in India: Retrospect and Prospect*, NEDSF, Guwahati, Nov. 11-13, 2011.

“Land and Culture”, *International Seminar on Resources, Tribes and State*, Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, February 13-15, 2012.

VISITING LECTURE

Walter Fernandes

Inclusion and Exclusion in North East India Amsterdam, Holland: Department of Political Science, Amsterdam University, November 22, 2011.

Land Management and Ethnic Conflicts in North East India Ghent, Belgium: Centre for Peace and Conflicts, Ghent University, November 23, 2011.

PARTICIPATION IN SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

Walter Fernandes and Melvil Pereira.

Preparatory Meeting of Studies on Climate Change. IUCN, Katmandu, August 2-7, 2011.

Walter Fernandes, Melvil Pereira & Garima Thakuria

Round Table on *Dams and Development*. Guwahati: PANOS, at Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok, March 16, 2012.

Walter Fernandes

Preparatory meeting of Durban Climate Change COP-17, New Delhi: Indian Network for Ethics and Climate Change, May 5-7, 2011.

Dialogue on GIAN, *Advocacy on Governance of Natural and Mineral Resources*. Loyola, Spain, June 17-24, 2011.

Melvil Pereira

Workshop on *Reporting Research on Dam Issues*. Guwahati: Panos South Asia, July 13-14, 2011.

International Colloquium on *Children & Governance*. New Delhi: HAQ, Centre for Child Rights at National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), November 9-11, 2011

Seminar on *Globalisation and Conflicts*, Eichstaett, Germany, December 6-9, 2011

Tribeni Gogoi

Workshop on *Increasing Elbow Space for the Voluntary Sector*, organised by The ANT- The Action Northeast Trust at DBI, Joypur, Guwahati, March 13-14, 2012

Garima Thakuria

Seminar on *Anthropological Researches in India: Retrospect and Prospect* organized by SANSKRITI- North Eastern Institute of Culture and Religion at NEDSF, Guwahati on November 11-13, 2011.

National Workshop on *Peace and Conflict Resolution*. Guwahati: Forum for Harmony and Humanity, Assam, Char Chapori Sahitya Parishad, Assam at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati on Jan 6- 8, 2012.

State Level Convention on *Dams Brihat Nodibandh Birodh*. Guwahati: Brihat Nodibandh Birodhi Nagarik Samiti at Lakshidhar Bora Kshetra, February 26-27, 2012.

Jyotishman Taye

Training cum Workshop on *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)*. Shillong: ICSSR-NERC, February 13-22, 2012.
