

Report of North Eastern Social Research Centre, April 2008-March 2009

Postal Address
110 Kharghuli Road (1st floor)
Guwahati 781004
Assam, India

Website: www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/NESRC

Telephone: (+91-361) 2602819
Fax : (+91-361) 2732629 (Attn NESRC)
Email: nesrcghy@gmail.com

NESRC began on March 1, 2000 with a mandate to combine serious research with involvement in the field and encourage other individuals and organisations to do research on issues of relevance to the Northeast. NESRC tries to live up to this mandate through, research, library, documentation, networking with peace activists, civil society groups working with the marginalised, and processes aimed at policy changes in favour of the poor, publications and professional and newspaper articles. Staff of NESRC: Director: Dr Walter Fernandes; Associate Director: Prof. Alphonsus D'Souza, Director of Research: Gita Bharali, Research Associates: Daisy Nath and Sureshkumar Singh, Librarian cum Secretary: Pranati Das

Research and Library

The library is meant for scholars, social activists, students and others who want to meet and consult each other on issues of relevance to the region. Several hundred new titles are added to the library every year. As a result, today it has around 5,300 volumes, around 40 percent of them on the Northeast. It is supplemented by documentation that includes paper cuttings from six dailies from Assam, one each from Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kolkata and two from Delhi, conference papers and other material, organised by state and theme. Paper cuttings will soon be replaced by material downloaded from the internet to make access to data easy. NESRC also subscribes to around 40 journals, some of them not easily available in the Northeast. The system is being computerised in order to make the library more accessible to its users.

Research is the mainstay of NESRC. Four studies in progress were completed during 2007-08 and new ones were launched in 2008-09. Their themes are chosen according to the NESRC priority areas of livelihood issues, tribal issues and gender issues. Not all studies include every component but the data are analysed according to these variables as well as the class dimension. Being a social research centre it tries to use the studies for networking for policy changes in favour of the marginalised. The studies in progress are:

1. Gita Bharali. *Development-Induced Displacement in Manipur 1947-2007.*
2. Gita Bharali. *Development-Induced Displacement in Arunachal Pradesh 1947-2007.*
3. Walter Fernandes. *Development-Induced Displacement in Sikkim 1975-2007 and in Nagaland 1947-2007.*
4. Walter Fernandes. *Development-Induced Displacement in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura 1947-2000.*

These studies continue the All-India effort to create a reliable database on the extent and type of land used for development projects and the number, type and the present status of the people they displace. The study on Assam published in 2007 showed that the state had displaced more than 1,900,000 persons 1947-2000 from 1,400,000 acres. Hardly anyone has been resettled. With the studies in progress all the states of the Northeast will be covered. Studies have also been completed in seven states of mainland India. The first phase of the study is to collect all the Gazette notifications on land acquisition. The second is collection of data from the district land offices, project sites, knowledgeable persons, research institutes and documentation centres. In phase 3 around 800 displaced persons from 10 to 15 projects are interviewed in each state. The studies are being done in collaboration with the Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Itanagar, Salesian College, Sonada and others.

These studies are on planned displacement and exclude involuntary displacement by conflicts and disasters. The data generated till now point to a figure of 60 million persons displaced physically or

economically from 25 million hectares (62.5 million acres) 1947-2000. Land takeover has increased enormously after liberalisation. So a reliable database on the number and type of persons displaced by it has become crucial because very little information exists. Since development-induced displacement is planned, it should be possible for the state and the project authorities to plan rehabilitation but in reality, people deprived of their livelihood are left to fend for themselves. Compensation paid for private land is inadequate to begin life anew. More than 50 percent of what the projects use is common revenue or forest land whose dependants are not compensated. Fewer than 20 percent of the physically displaced persons have been resettled. Rehabilitation is extremely poor.

5. Alphonsus D'Souza. *The Value System of School Children.*

NESRC has undertaken to do this 20-country study sponsored by Metadigm in three states of the Northeast in collaboration with Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong. At a time when the value systems are changing because of modernisation and consumerism, the effort in this study is to understand how teenagers are coping with the changes. 200 students, an equal number of boys and girls, will be interviewed in each of the 20 schools studied, 10 of them in Assam, 3 in Nagaland and 7 in Meghalaya. The areas studied include students' attitudes towards their parents, other elders, peers, religion, sex, consumerism and other components that are affected by modernisation. Data collection will be completed in May 2009.

6. Daisy Nath. *The Share of Children in the Assam Budget.*

7. Daisy Nath. *The Flow of Funds of Sarba Shikshya Abhijan (SSA)*

These studies complement each other. Past studies show that the state of education is extremely poor among the children of the marginalised groups like the tea garden and fishing communities. In the Assam budget only 4.9 percent of the allocation is for children. Around 90 percent of that allocation is for education but most of it is used for salaries and infrastructure building and not directly for children. As a result it does not remedy the situation of low access to education of the marginalised groups. SSA is an effort to remedy this situation by providing an opportunity to every child to study at least up to primary school. The funds for it come from the central government and reach the village through various layers of the state government. These two studies are meant to see the extent of allocations in the state budget and the flow of the SSA funds.

8. *Processes around Peace and Conflicts in the Northeast.*

As part of the peace initiatives of NESRC, two persons each from Nagaland, Manipur Tripura and Karbi Anglong in Assam will study conflicts and peace in their state. Persons in Karbi Anglong and Nagaland will look at the traditional peace processes in four tribes and search for ways of updating them to suit today's needs. In Manipur one person will see whether the text books and teaching methods support peace or oppose it or are neutral. The second person in Manipur and two in Tripura will study conflicts caused by people's displacement and possible alternatives. Dr Walter Fernandes and Prof. Alphonsus D'Souza are guiding these studies.

Continuing the Research Process

As a social research centre, NESRC tries to combine academic inputs with involvement in social issues through civil society networks working for social change or for policies in favour of the marginalised. One such initiative is the Assam Water Resource Policy. The state government circulated its draft for a response in a week. It is being discussed 18 months later. Gita Bharali is deeply involved in the task of including in it people's concerns such as recognition of common property resources as people's livelihood, a move away from the trend to privatise rivers and build major dams that can destroy biodiversity and people's sustenance. Some of these concerns are being included in the revised policy. Walter Fernandes is involved in action on the national rehabilitation and land acquisition acts. Daisy Nath follows up the study on the child budget by circulating the report to all the members of the Legislative Assembly. This effort continues through newspaper articles, internships and affiliation. NESRC has granted affiliation to an ICSSR fellow and had a student of peace studies from Henry Martyn Institute for a 3-month placement since it is involved in peace initiatives with civil society.

Publications

Research and social involvement are shared with the public through publications. Some of them are books published by NESRC. Others are professional and newspaper articles published outside. These efforts are intrinsic to advocacy on behalf of the communities with which NESRC is involved.

Books Published by NESRC during 2008-09

1. Walter Fernandes (ed). 2008. *Search for Peace with Justice: Issues around Conflicts in Northeast India*. Pp. 175, Price Rs 160. USD 00; Euro 00. In this collection of papers, scholars and others involved in peace and conflict studies in the region analyse the background and causes of conflicts and possible solutions. The involvement of the civil society and religious leaders in peace processes are among the themes.
2. Tom Mangattuthazhe. 2008. *Violence and Search for Peace in Karbi Anglong, Assam*. 66 pages, Price Rs 60, USD 00; Euro 00. Karbi Anglong experiences regular ethnic conflicts. The author as Secretary of Diphu Citizens' Peace Forum is involved in the peace processes in the district. He uses this vantage point to analyse the causes of the conflicts and peace efforts by various civil society groups. A picture emerges from his analysis of collaboration between parties apparently in conflict. The need to network for peace is obvious.
3. Gita Bharali. 2009. *Jalabayu Paribartanar Bishaye* (About Climate Change). Pages 40, Price Rs 20. Legal Awareness series No. 5. Though the Northeast is a mega-biodiversity zone and a biodiversity hotspot that is feeling the impact of climate change, awareness about it is extremely weak in the region. This booklet written in simple language is an effort to create awareness about it and also to counter the demand that the people's livelihood in the region be turned primarily into a carbon sink to the benefit of Europe. Awareness about these issues is essential if the threat to people's livelihood is to be removed.
4. Walter Fernandes and Sanjay Barbora (ed). *Land, People and Politics Contest over Tribal Land in Northeast India*. 000 pages. Rs 150, \$ 18, Euro 15. Published jointly with the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. This book brings together papers from six states of the region on the traditional systems of tribal land management and processes of its alienation which is both internal and external. Privatisation of community land within the tribe changes class and gender relations while alienation to outsiders causes poverty. Both of them are attacks on tribal identity and cause conflicts.

Books Published by Others

5. Kedilezho Kiki, Alphonsus D'Souza and Visakonu Hibo (ed). 2009. *Angami Society at the Beginning of 21st Century*. 284 pages, Rs 950.00. New Delhi: Akansha Publications. This book brings together revised versions of papers presented at a seminar of the same title in November 2007 at Kigwema, Nagaland.
6. Kedilezho Kikhi, Alphonsus D'Souza and Visakhonu Hibo. 2009. *Introducing Sociology and Understanding Society: Sociology for Class XI*. 128 pages, Price Rs 125.00 Dimapur: Heritage Publishing House.

Professional Papers Published during 2008-09

Gita Bharali

1. 2008. 'The social Reality of Adivasi Movement' in Dilip Gogoi (ed). *Cotton Conclave*. Guwahati: Cotton College, pp. 44-45.
2. 2008. Development-Induced Displacement, Deprivation and Rehabilitation in Assam: A Critique of NPRR 2003' in Sujata D. Hazarika (ed) *Peace in Dialogue: Universals and Specifics: Reflections on North east India*. New Delhi: Akanksa Publishing House. Pp.253-265. 2008

3. 2008. "Development-Induced Displacement and Human Security in Assam" in Akhil Ranjan Dutta (ed) *Human Security in North East India: Issues and Policies*. Guwahati: Anwasha. Pp. 203-218.

Alphonsus D'Souza. 2009. "Traditional Learning Systems and Modern Education," in Kedilezho Kikhi, Alphonsus D'Souza and Visakonu Hibo (ed). *Angami Society at the Beginning of 21st Century*. New Delhi: Akanksha Publications, pp. 27-17.

Walter Fernandes and Gita Bharali 2008

2008. "Customary Law-Formal Law Interface: Impact on Tribal Culture" in T.B. Subba, Joseph Puthenpurakal and Shaji Joseph Puykunnel (ed) *Christianity and Change in Northeast India*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company. pp. 93-108.

Walter Fernandes

1. 2008. "Paying the Price of Someone Else's Development," *Agenda-Infochange*. No. 12, pp. 8-12.

2. 2008. "Tribes in Post-Independence India" in Sebastia L. Raj et al. (eds). *Eradicating Human Misery*. Jabalpur: XID Publications, pp. 123-138.

3. 2008. "Sixty Years of Development-Induced Displacement in India: Scale, Impacts and the Search for Alternatives," in Hari Mohan Mathur (ed). *India: Social Development Report 2008: Development and Displacement*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 89-102.

4. 2008. "Displacement and Alienation from Common Property Resources," in Lyla Mehta (ed). *Displaced by Development: Confronting Marginalisation and Gender Injustice*. Sage Publications, pp. 105-129.

5. 2008. "The Role of Land in Ethnic Conflicts in the Northeast," in Walter Fernandes (ed). *Search for Peace with Justice: Issues Around Conflicts in Northeast India*. Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, pp. 66-84.

6. 2008. "Demystifying Development as a Recipe for Peace in the Northeast," Proceedings of the Seminar on *Contested Space and Identity in the Indian Northeast*. New Delhi: Academy of Third World, Jamia Millia Islamia, pp. 32-34.

7. 2009. "Understanding the Angami Today in the Context of Modernisation and Globalisation," in Kedilezho Kikhi, Alphonsus D'Souza and Visakonu Hibo (ed). *Angami Society at the Beginning of 21st Century*. New Delhi: Akanksha Publications, pp. 69-90.

Newspaper Articles

Gita Bharali

1. Unnayanar Namat Ussedit Mahila' (Displacement Vs Women) *Dainik Janambhumi*, 25 April, 2008

2. 'Bhumi, Gosthigata Sangharsa and Uttar Purbanchal' (Land, Ethnic Conflicts & NE), *Dainik Janambhumi*, 3 June, 2008.

3. "Noi-Pariya Raijor Samachya" *Dainik Janambhumi*, 16th July, 2008.

4. "Banpani Aru Garakhahania" *Dainik Janambhumi*. 7th August, 2008.

5. "Bangladeshi Bahiskaranar Karane Ashingha Gana Andolonar Prayojan" in *Dainik Janambhumi*, 19th August, 2008.
6. "Jalanitir Khasarak Raijor Punar Xamalochana" *Dainik Janambhumi*, 15th November 2008.
7. "Axomot Sishu Kiman Surakshit" *Dainik Janambhumi*, 15th December, 2008.
8. "SEZ: It's a Boon or Bane?" *The Assam Tribune*, 13th January, 2009.

Walter Fernandes and Alphonsus D'Souza.

"India: Religion in a Land of Contrasts," *Living Faith* (London Internet Journal), August 15, 2008.

Walter Fernandes

- 1, "Kandhamal: Social Issues Communalised," *The Sentinel*, October 5, 2008.
2. "Displacement and Political Parties," *The Assam Tribune*, October 28, 2008.
3. "Bangladesh our Sorrow?" *Tehelka*, November 29, 2008.
4. "Bombay Terror Attacks, Religion and Class," *Living Faith*, London Internet Journal, December 9, 2008.
5. "Defeated Pawns," *The Assam Tribune*, March 8, 2009.

Daisy Nath. "Children and Education," *The Assam Tribune*, December 9, 2009.

Conferences and Seminars during 2008-09

Organising our own seminars and conferences and taking part in those organised by others is another mode of sharing our research findings and other resources. Based on an earlier decision to support the process of moving towards a composite history of the Northeast as against the ethnocentric histories that legitimise conflicts, most seminars organised during the year are on the role of history in conflicts and peace processes in the Northeast. Attendance at others too was useful from this perspective. NESRC organised the following seminars in collaboration with other agencies that hosted the seminars. Because of the importance of climate change in the region, NESRC joined INECC in organising a Round Table on this issue.

1. *The Role of History in Conflicts and Peace in Manipur*, Maram: Don Bosco College, April 22-23, 2008.
2. *History and the Nationalist Conflicts in Nagaland*. Kohima: Department of History and Archaeology, Nagaland University, July 26, 2008.
3. *Manipur History and the Potential for Peace*. CEPEM, Manipur University, July 28, 2008.
4. *History and Conflicts in the Northeast*. Tezpur: Department of Mass Communications, Tezpur University, August 17, 2008.
5. *Ethnic Histories and the Garo-Khasi Tension in Meghalaya*. Tura: Martin Luther Christian University, September 3-4, 2008.
6. *History and Conflicts in Assam*. Moranhat: Institute of Tai Studies, September 7, 2008.
7. *Round Table on Climate Change in the Northeast*. Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, jointly with Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change, October 21, 2008.

8. Consultation on the Child Budget and Child Care. Guwahati: NESRC, December 5, 2008.

9. Networking around Child Issues. Guwahati: NESRC, February 16, 2009.

NESRC also organised an exposure programme for 15 students and staff members from 3 universities having peace studies divisions. It included visits to organisations and persons involved in peace initiatives and participation in seminars on conflicts and peace at Kohima, Imphal, Tura and Guwahati.

Presence at Seminars and Paper Presentation

Gita Bharali Participated in:

Workshop on Strategies for Child Development, Guwahati National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, August 27, 2008.

Presentation of *Land Reforms Report*, Guwahati: National Institute of Rural Development, October 30, 2008.

Was a resource person at the:

Meeting of the National Committee on Land Reforms, Guwahati: September 25, 2008.

Training programme on displacement and rehabilitation. Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, December 9, 2008.

Presented the Following Papers

1. "Incompatible Equality: Challenges of Tribal Livelihood in the Context of Present Development Model" Seminar on *Encountering Globalisation: Tribals in Northeast India*, Itanagar: Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, 27–28 February 2009.

2. "Work Participation Among Displaced Women" Seminar on *Work Participation of Tribal Women in North East India*. Dibrugarh: Department of Economics, Dibrugarh University, March 4, 2009.

3. "Primary Education of Plantation Labourers' Children" Seminar on *The Status of the Young Child in North East* organised by FORCES, New Delhi at Guwahati, March 23-24.

Gita Bharali and Walter Fernandes participated in the Meeting of DKA partners, February 23-24, 2009.

Walter Fernandes

Participated in

Seminar on Climate Change. Vishakapatnam: Indian Network for Ethics and Climate Change, November 5-8, 2008.

National Seminar on *Challenges to Peace and Development*, Bhubaneswar, Orissa Development Action Forum, January 5-7, 2009.

Was a resource person at:

1. Renewal and Evaluation, Medical Mission Sisters, Chumukedima, Nagaland: April 17-19, 2009.

2. Training Programme for Practitioners of Rehabilitation, New Delhi: Council for Social Development, September 17-19, 2008.
3. National Institute for Rural Development, for a session for post-graduate trainees, on the Sixth Schedule, September 19, 2008.
4. Training programme on peace initiatives. Mumbai: Society for Religion and Secularism, October 21, 2008
5. Social Analysis of the Northeast, Oriens Theological College, Shillong, October 27-28, 2008.
6. Gave lectures at Eichstaett University, Germany, December 9 and Gent University, Belgium, December 12, 2008.
7. Training Programme for Rural Development Workers, Guwahati: National Institute for Rural Development, March 10, 2009.
8. Seminar on the Young Child. Guwahati: FORCES, January 23-24, 2009.
9. Training programme for senior lecturers, Staff Training College, Gauhati University, March 7, 2009.

Presented the Following Papers

1. "The Role of History in Conflicts and Peace," Keynote Address, Seminar on *The Role of History in Conflicts and Peace in Manipur*, Maram: Don Bosco College, April 22-23, 2008.
2. "Displacement, Impoverishment and Marginalisation," *Workshop on Civil Society*. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences and London School of Economics, May 2-5, 2008.
3. "Customary Law to Formal Law: Folklore to Mainstream," *National Seminar on Tribal Folklore and Modernisation in Northeast India*. Diphu Campus, Assam University, September 28-30, 2008.
4. Gave the inaugural address at the Xavier Board Meeting of college principals on October 4 and valedictory address at the meeting of 150 high school principals, October 10, 2008. Guwahati: Don Bosco Institute.
5. "Special Economic Zones: Who Gains Who Loses?" *National Seminar on Special Economic Zones*, New Delhi: Council for Social Development, October 7, 2008.
6. "Land, Cultures, Modernisation and Conflicts in India," *XIII. International Congress of North-South Dialogue: The Role of Land in Cultures*. Barcelona: WMI and Barcelona University, December 16-19, 2008.
7. "Biodiversity, CBD, TRIPS and North Eastern Tribes," *Seminar on Biodiversity and Sustainable Living*. Guwahati: K. C. Das College of Commerce, January 28-29, 2009.
8. "Displacement, New Legislative Measures and People," Keynote Address, *National Seminar on Rehabilitation and Legal Measures*, New Delhi: Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, February 26, 2009.
9. "Globalisation, Look East Policy and Constraints to Research in the Northeast," *National Seminar on Constraints to Social Science Research in the Northeast*. Shillong: ICSSR – NERC, March 27-28, 2009.

Daisy Nath.

1. 'Impact of Globalisation on Tribal Women of North-East with special reference to Angami Women' Paper presented at seminar on *Encountering Globalisation: Tribals of North East India* by Rajib Gandhi Tribal University Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on 27th and 28th February 2009.

2. “Sustainable Development and Displacement,” *Seminar on Sustainable Urban Development*, organised at Guwahati by HAZARDS, New Delhi, January 21-22, 2009.

3. “Share of Children in the Assam Budget,” Seminar on *The Status of the Young Child in North East* organised by FORCES, New Delhi at Guwahati, March 23-24.

Suresh Kumar Singh participated in the Meeting of Peace Activists. Guwahati: United NGO Mission Manipur, February 18-19, 2009.

A word of Thanks

NESRC lives on project specific funding. During the year its funds came from ICSSR and HAQ, Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi, Laya, Vishakapatnam, DKA Austria, IWGIA, Denmark, Misereor and Prokur, Germany, Cordaid, Holland, Franz Xaver Stiftung, Switzerland, and CRS, USA.

Guwahati
20th April 2009

Dr Walter Fernandes
Director
