

# **North Eastern Social Research Centre Guwahati**

## **Annual Report April 2013 to March 2014**

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# North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati

## Annual Report

### April 2013-March 2014

#### INTRODUCTION

The mandate of North Eastern Social Research Centre is to combine serious intellectual pursuits with involvement with persons and groups active in the field of social change in the region. In the context of ethnic and political conflict, NESRC would like to provide a platform for different groups in the Northeast to meet and search for solutions. In this search the effort of NESRC is to assist and encourage voluntary agencies and others in their intellectual and activist pursuits. Our main activities are research, providing library resources and networking and publications. They have been planned within this perspective.

While research, the mainstay of NESRC, received importance during 2013-14, seminars and workshops aimed at disseminating the findings of our studies too received attention. During the year, NESRC organized a national level seminar, six workshops, one consultation, one round table, one colloquium and one interface. It published two books while two other books were edited by NESRC faculty but published by some of our collaborators. We completed five studies during the year and are about to complete one more. The ongoing studies on *Development-Induced-Displacement* and *Gender Implications of Customary Law* are at various stages.

One of the important highlights of the year was a series of workshops conducted to validate the findings of our major study titled *Gender Implications of Tribal Customary Law*. In keeping with the methodology of the study, the summary of the draft report was shared with the elders and leaders of the tribal community concerned, for their validation. The workshops have been very interactive, engaging and enlightening. The feedback received during the workshops is incorporated in the final report of the study.

As mentioned in the Annual Report 2012-13, NESRC is now housed in new premises. The new facility is spacious and has an atmosphere congenial for serious study and research. The library too is large with space for several scholars to study independently. It continues to attract scholars and students from Guwahati and elsewhere. Several of them have said that they find our collection on the Northeast one of the best in the region. During the past year we have acquired over 500 books on Anthropology, thanks to Prof Raymond Bucko, Professor and Chair Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, Creighton University, Omaha. NESRC remains grateful to DKA, Austria and Jesuitenmission, Nurnberg, for generously supporting the library from its very inception.

What follows is a list of the seminars organized, books published, and papers presented, and conferences attended by the faculty of North Eastern Social Research Centre during 2013-14. 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 provided with a voice in shaping their own destiny.

## STUDIES

### A. STUDIES COMPLETED

1. **Walter Fernandes, Garima Thakuria and Bitopi Dutta:** *Evictions and the Status of Land in Guwahati and Imphal: A Response to Evictions and Displacement*. This study was commissioned by Action Aid, Guwahati.
2. **Melvil Pereira and Chandana Kakati:** *Assessment of Available Facilities for Primary & Upper Primary Education in Tribal Areas of Assam*. This study was commissioned by National University of Educational Administration and Planning, New Delhi.
3. **Walter Fernandes and Bitopi Dutta:** Development-Induced Displacement in Manipur 1947-2010.
4. **Walter Fernandes et al:** Development-Induced Displacement in Sikkim 1975-2010. This study is done in collaboration with Salesian College, Siliguri & Sonada.
5. **Walter Fernandes, Savio Abreu et al:** Development-Induced Displacement in Goa 1965-2010. This study is done in collaboration with Xavier Institute of Historical Research, Alto Porvorim, Goa.

### B. ONGOING STUDIES

1. **Melvil Pereira, R P Athparia, Sunumi Changmi and Kankana Bora:** 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.
2. **Melvil Pereira and Rajashree Deka:** The Share of Children in the State Budget of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland. This study is done in collaboration with HAQ, New Delhi.
3. **Walter Fernandes and Bitopi Dutta:** Development-Induced Displacement in Arunachal Pradesh 1947-2010.
4. **Walter Fernandes, Veronica Pala and Bitopi Dutta:** Development-Induced Displacement in Meghalaya 1947-2010.
5. **Walter Fernandes, Lawrence Kennedy and Bitopi Dutta:** Development-Induced Displacement in Mizoram 1947-2010. This study is done in collaboration with Diocesan Social Service Society in Mizoram.
6. **Melvil Pereira and Ankita Gupta:** *Psycho-Social Care of Children in Conflict Zones: The Case of North East India*. The partners involved in this study are Peace Channel in Nagaland, Jana Unnayan Samiti Tripura (JUST) in Tripura, and Diocesan Social Service Society in Manipur.

7. **Melvil Pereira and Jyotikona Chetia:** Safeguarding the Commons for the Next Generation. NESRC is partnering with Seva Mandir, Udaipur.
8. **Walter Fernandes *et al*:** Development-Induced Displacement in Tripura 1947-2010. This study is done in collaboration with Holy Cross College, Agartala.
9. **Walter Fernandes *et al*:** Development-Induced Displacement in Nagaland 1947-2010. In partnership with Peace Channel, Dimapur.
10. **Walter Fernandes *et al*:** Development-Induced Displacement in Andhra Pradesh 1947-2010. In collaboration with Laya, Visakhapatnam.

### SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND COLLOQUIUMS

1. **An Interface on *Budget for Children in Assam: 2008-09 to 2013-14*:** The interface on Budget for Children in Assam was jointly organized by NESRC, Guwahati and HAQ, New Delhi, on 6 November 2013. The venue was Hotel Pragati Manor, G S Road, Guwahati. Over 70 participants, mostly from various departments of the Government of Assam and from the NGO sector, took part in the interface. The findings of the analysis of the budget of State of Assam from the point of view of children from 2008-09 to 2013-14 were shared with the participants. The objective of the interface was advocacy for increasing the allocation of funds allotted for children in the Assam budget.
2. **A Round Table Discussion on a Book on Minority Rights:** A round table discussion of the book titled *Taking Sides: Reservation Quotas and Minority Rights in India* by Rudolf Heredia was organized on 18 April 2013, in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati.
3. **National Level Seminar titled *Globalisation and Response of the Churches*.** The seminar was jointly organized by NESRC, Guwahati, and Tribal Study Centre, Eastern Theological College (ETC), Jorhat. Held at INSPIRATION, Joypur, Guwahati, on 16-17 April, 2013, it was an inter-denominational and inter-disciplinary effort. The seminar was attended by over 60 participants from all over India. The objective of the seminar was to assess the response of the various churches to globalization and its impact on North East India. The seminar concluded with the sharing of action-plans by various Churches working in the North East to the challenges of globalisation.
4. **Regional Level Workshop on *Gender Implications of Customary Law*:** A workshop was organized on 27 August 2013 at Jirsong Asong, Diphu, in collaboration with Peace Team, Diphu.
5. **Colloquium on *Chieftainship among the Tribal Communities in North East India*:** A colloquium was organised by NESRC on Chieftainship during which Dr R P Athparia, former director, Anthropological Survey of India, Regional Centre, Shillong, delivered a

special lecture. Research scholars and students from higher education institutions of Guwahati took part in the colloquium.

6. **Consultation on Armed Forces Special Powers Act:** A consultation on *Armed Forces Special Powers Act* in collaboration with Legal Cell for Human Rights was organized at Jagriti, GMCH Road, Christian Basti, on 8 March 2014. The participants were students of Law Colleges of Guwahati and activists from all the seven states of North East India. There were over 80 participants for the day long consultation.
7. **Regional Level Workshop on Gender Implications of Customary Law:** A workshop on *Gender Implications of Customary Law: The Case of the Sumi People* was organized on 26 March 2014 at Zunheboto in collaboration with Zunheboto Government College. The workshop focussed on the status of women in the customary law in the context of modernization and changes that are taking place in Sumi society.
8. **Regional Level Workshop on Customary Law and the Status of Women:** A workshop was organized on *Customary Law and the Status of Women in the Konyak Community* on 28 March 2014 at the District Hall, Mon, in collaboration with Wangkhao Government College. The participants included elders, politicians, teachers, pastors and other members from the Konyak tribal community.
9. **Three Workshops on Conflict and Peace in Northeast India:** NESRC joined Indian Social Institute, Delhi, the Department of Economics, University of Mumbai and Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, in organising seminars on *Conflicts and Peace in the Northeast* on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 10<sup>th</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

### PUBLICATION: BOOKS

For effective advocacy in support of the marginalized, the findings of the studies and deliberations of the seminars/workshops must be circulated in the form of professional and popular publications. NESRC published following books during the year:

1. **Alphonsus D'Souza, O L Snaitang and Limatula Longkumer. 2014. *Globalisation and Response of the Churches*.** This book contains the fruits of a Seminar held on 16-17 April 2013. The papers contained in it discuss the situation in Northeast India on issues such as the ecological crisis, growing inequalities and gender discrimination. Pp. 310. Price Rs. 300, \$ 25, Euro 20.
2. **Enakshi Ganguli Thukral, Kumar Shailabh, Farhana Yasmin, Prabal Piyush Bharali and Tribeni Gogoi. 2013. *Budget for Children in Assam: 2008-09 to 2013-14*,** This booklet contains an analysis of the Assam budget from 2008-08 to 2013-14 from the point of view of allocation of financial resources for children. Pp. 99, Price Rs. 50

3. **Walter Fernandes (editor). 2013.** *Human Rights in Northeast India: Human Rights Education for Class VIII*, published in October 2013 (Published by NED Social Service Society, Guwahati) Pp. 106. Price Rs. 45.
4. **Rajendra Prasad Athparia (editor). 2013.** *Anthropology in North East India*. 2013. New Delhi: Omsons Publications (co-editor with K. Jose SVD and Gautam K Behera).

### PROFESSIONAL ARTICLES

Apart from our own publications, the faculty of NESRC share their findings also through professional journals, books and newspapers. They published the following articles this year:

**Melvil Pereira and Michael Kolb. 2013.** “Individual Rights and Accommodation of Communal Ethos: The Dilemma of Liberalism,” *Journal of Northeast Indian Cultures*, Vol.1, No.1: 11-27.

**Alphonsus B. D’Souza. 2013.** “Traditional Knowledge of the Angami,” *Journal of Northeast Indian Cultures*, Vol.1, No.1: 49-59.

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Whither Commons? A Case of Community Land and Resources in Northeast India”, in Joseph Marianus Kujur and M K George (eds), *Towards a Politics of Change: Essays in Memory of Paul G. Delhi: Indian Social Institute*, pp. 239- 262.

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Interface of Tribal Land Laws with State Laws: Implications for Tribal Forest Conservation”, in Sarthak Sen Gupta (ed). *Exploration of Anthropology in North East India*. New Delhi: Gyan Publications (forthcoming)

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Rights of Minorities”, in Walter Fernandes (editor). 2013. *Human Rights in Northeast India: Human Rights Education for Class VIII, published in October 2013* (Published by NED Social Service Society, Guwahati, Pp. 106. Price Rs. 50)

**Rajendra Prasad Athparia. 2013.** “Research Priorities in Social Sciences in North East India,” in Gautam Kumar Behera and K. Jose SVD (eds), *Anthropology in India: Restrospect and Prospect*. New Delhi: Abhijeet Publication, pp. 107-110.

**Rajendra Prasad Athparia. 2013.** “The Livelihood pattern of the Noctes, Arunachal Pradesh: Continuity and Change,” in Manis Kumar Raha (ed). *North East India: The Human Landscape*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co. pp. 80-98.

**Jyotikona Chetia. 2014.** “Migration and Employment in India: A Study in Dhemaji District of Assam,” *International Journal of Current Research*. Vol.6, Issue.01, pp.4781-4783. ISSN 0975-833X. January, 2014

**Jyotikona Chetia. 2014.** “The Fundamental Right to Education and Child Neglect: A Case Study of a Particular Village in Maharashtra,” *International Journal of Current Research*. Vol.6, Issue.02, pp.5325-5328, ISSN 0975-833X February, 2014 (Co-authored).

### PRESENTED THE FOLLOWING PAPERS

**Melvil Pereira. 2013.** “The Land Administration System among the Garo of Meghalaya”, Workshop on *Autonomous District Councils and Land Administration in North East India* organized by Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014, in NIRD-NERC, Guwahati.

**Melvil Pereira. 2013.** “Share of Budget Allocation for Children in Assam Budget”, Convention on *People’s Expectations from the New Union Government on Budgetary Priorities* organized by Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi, and North East Network, Guwahati on 7 October 2013, at Hotel Landmark, Ulubari.

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Overlapping Jurisdiction between the Traditional and the Modern Political Institutions: The Case of Garo Hills Autonomous District Council”, National Conference on *Land Rights, Environmental Protection and Inclusive Development within India’s Federal Political System*, organized by Centre for Policy Research, Delhi, and Chr Michelsen Institute, Bergen, at India International Centre, on 16-17 January.

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Codification of Tribal Customary Laws and Women’s Rights in North East India”, National Seminar on *Women Empowerment and Cultural Constraints in North-East India* organized by National Institute of Rural Development, at NIRD regional centre, Khanapara, on 10-11 March.

**Melvil Pereira. 2014.** “Conflict in the Wake of AFSPA in Naga Society,” A ICSSR-NERC sponsored seminar on *Conflict to Peace Trap: The Naga Story*, organized by Japfü Christian College, Kigwema, Nagaland.

**Rajendra Prasad Athparia. 2013.** “Cultural Affinity of Different Linguistic Groups of North East India,” National seminar on *Endangered Cultures and Dialects with Special Reference to North East India*. Guwahati: SANSKRITI-North Eastern Institute of Culture & Religion. 9-10 November.

**Rajendra Prasad Athparia. 2014.** “Women Power Structure in Matrilineal Jaintia Society.” National Seminar on *Women Empowerment and Cultural Constraints in North East India*, organized by National Institute of Rural Development, at NIRD regional centre, Khanapara, on 10-11 March.

**Bitopi Dutta. 2014.** “Gendering development Induced Displacement in the North East,” XIV National conference of the IAWS: *Equality, Pluralism and the State: Perspectives from the Women's Movement*, at Gauhati University, 4-7 February.

**Bitopi Dutta. 2013.** “Domestic Violence against Women in the Dhemaji district of Assam,” National Seminar on *Tribal Scenario in India* on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee of Anthropological Survey of India, NERC, Shillong, 2-3 December.

**Ankita Gupta. 2013.** “Growth and Development Issues of Tribal Children in India: The Case of North East India,” National Seminar on *Tribal Scenario in India* on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Anthropological Survey of India, NERC, Shillong, 2-3 December.

## PARTICIPATED IN SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

### Melvil Pereira

Seminar cum Talk on *Constitutional Provisions in the Sixth Scheduled Areas* organized by Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Jawaharnagar, Guwahati, on 6 August 2013.

Consultation on *Land Reformation Act*, organized by ActionAid at Hotel Alankar, Chandmari, Guwahati, on 26 August 2013.

Seminar on *Transnational Policy Dialogue for Improved Water Governance in Brahmaputra River* organised by Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, and SaciWaters, Hyderabad, on 10 September 2013.

National Seminar on *Responding to the Maoist Spread in India's Northeast*, organized by Centre for Development and Peace Studies at Hotel Gateway Grandeur on 3-4 February 2014.

North East Consultation on *People's Manifesto*, organized by Wada Na Thodo at Don Bosco Institute, Joypur, Guwahati, on 15 March 2014.

### Rajendra Prasad Athparia

Seminar cum Talk on *Constitutional Provisions in the Sixth Scheduled Areas* organized by Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Jawaharnagar, Guwahati, on 6 August 2013.



Indian Association for Women's Studies Regional Workshop in collaboration with Indian Council for Historical Research on *Customary Law and Women in North East India*, at ICHR-NERC, Gauhati University, on 14-15 December, 2013.

Workshop on *Tourism in North East India*, organized by Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati, 20 September 2013.

National Seminar on *Responding to the Maoist Spread in India's North East*, organized by Centre for Development and Peace Studies (CDPS), 3-4 February 2014

Workshop on *Millennium Development Goal-2014*, hosted by OKDISCD, UNICEF and Planning & Development Department., Govt. of Assam, Guwahati, 19 February, 2014.

### **Bitopi Dutta**

Colloquium on *A Philosophy of Liberation* by Michael McGhee, Professor of Philosophy, University of Liverpool, UK, organized by Cotton College State University, Guwahati, held at Sudmersen Hall, Cotton Campus, Panbazar, Guwahati on 21 January 2014.

Stakeholder Consultation on *Poverty, Inequality and Violence in Urban India: Towards more Inclusive Urban Planning*, organized by sSTEP & NEN, Guwahati, and Centre for Urban Equity, Ahmadabad, in February 2014 at Alankar Hotel, Chandmari, Guwahati.

### **Jyotikona Chetia**

National Seminar on *Responding to the Maoist Spread in India's Northeast*, organized by Centre for Development and Peace Studies at Hotel Gateway Grandeur on 3-4 February 2014.

Regional Workshop on *Gender Budgeting for Officers of State Departments of North East*, on 26-28 February 2014 organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

### **Ankita Gupta**

National Seminar on *Responding to the Maoist Spread in India's Northeast*, organized by Centre for Development and Peace Studies at Hotel Gateway Grandeur on 3-4 February 2014.

## **RESOURCE PERSON**

### **Melvil Pereira**

Panellist on the topic *Youth and Society* during a Youth Festival organized by Foundation for Social Transformation on 21 January 2013 at KBR Hall, Cotton College, Guwahati.

Resource Person for the Annual Chapter of Sisters of Charity at the Provincialate of Charity Sisters, Zoo Road, Guwahati, 2 December 2014.

Resource Person in a workshop on *Interdisciplinary approaches to doing studies of 'tribes'*, organized by Tribal Study Centre, Assam University, Diphu Campus Diphu, on 13 March 2014.

### **Rajendra Prasad Athparia**

Delivered a lecture on “*Tribal Customary Law & Women Interface in North East India,*” Special lecture Series hosted by Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes (Govt. of Assam), 13 September 2013.

### **Bitopi Dutta**

Resource Person for a Conference on *Transnational Policy Dialogue for Improved Water Governance in Brahmaputra River* organised by Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, and SaciWaters, Hyderabad, on 10 September 2013.

Moderated a session during the First Youth Festival organized by Foundation for Social Transformation on 21 January 2013 at KBR Hall, Cotton College, Guwahati.

## **EVENT**

### **Bitopi Dutta and Ankita Gupta**

Part of the organising team for the *First Queer Pride Parade* in the Northeast hosted in Guwahati in February 2014

## **CONCLUSION**

NESRC has made some contribution to the people of the Northeast thanks to the commitment of the members of its staff. It has been possible because of the generosity of others who have provided financial and other assistance to our work. Among those who have supported us financially and with solidarity are DKA/KFO - Austria, Jesuitenmission - Switzerland, Misereor – Germany, Missio Aachen and Munich – Germany, Referrat - Germany, Jesuitenmission-Germany, IWGIA - Denmark, HAQ and NUEPA - New Delhi, NED Social Forum - Guwahati, Seva Mandir – Udaipur, Laya - Vishakhapatnam, Jirsong Asong - Diphu, Peace Channel – Dimapur, JUST - Agartala, DSSS – Imphal, LCHR - Guwahati and many others. We place on record our immense gratitude to all of them.

Guwahati  
31 July 2014

Melvil Pereira  
Director