North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati

Annual Report
April 2018 to March 2019

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I am happy to present to you the annual report of NESRC for the year 2018-19. NESRC began on March 1, 2000. Its mandate is to combine serious research with involvement in the field and encourage other organisations and individuals to do research on issues of relevance to the Northeast. During the past years, NESRC has tried to live up to this mandate through, research, library, documentation and networking with peace activists and civil society groups who are active among the marginalised or are involved in processes aimed at policy changes in favour of the poor. Its publications and professional and newspaper articles have been other tools of supporting the marginalised.

The study of development-induced-displacement in Northeast India, started in 2005, should come to a close by July 2020. We have already published the reports of the study on Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The remaining states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, will be covered latest by July 2020.

Likewise, the multi-year gender impact of customary law study is inching closer to completion. This study looked at the customary law of two tribal communities each of seven Northeastern States from the angle of the rights of women. With three publications of the 14-volume series still remaining to be published, it is hoped that we will bring closure to this study latest by March 2020.

The peace and conflict resolution project organised two seminars. The first seminar focussed on the role of the media in the context of decreasing space for dissent in a democratic India. The second seminar examined the role of women in the resolution of conflicts. During the year, we published one book under this project titled *Living with Conflicts: Possibilities of Peace-Making in the North East*.

During the year, we also completed the study of traditional land management system. Born of this study is a book titled *Ownership, Management and Alienation: Tribal Land in Northeast India*. This book was jointly published by North Eastern Social Research Centre and Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, the sponsor of this study.

As I present this annual report. I want to place on record the contribution made by Late Prof Alphonsus D’Souza, the associate director for over a decade, the
librarian and a senior research fellow of NESRC who passed away on the 6th of September, 2019. Prof. D’Souza’s contribution to NESRC is immense. Initially, he was the associate director from 2000 to 2009. Since 2009, he was the librarian and senior fellow at NESRC. He guided many studies some of which have been published. He toiled hard to organise the tribal theology seminars which resulted in the publication of five volumes of edited books. He closely followed the customary law study and guided it right from the start. He was the proof reader of most books published by NESRC. He was also the doctoral guide at Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, and Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahti. Dozens of doctoral students have benefited from his advice. His passing away is a huge loss for NESRC. May his soul rest in peace.

The pages below provide more information on the various activities organised by NESRC during 2018-19. It is with great joy that we present this Annual Report for your perusal. We want to assure you that NESRC remains committed to the building of an inclusive society where everyone feels counted, included, and wanted, and provided with a voice in shaping their own destiny.

A. STUDIES COMPLETED

1. Melvil Pereira, Meenal Tula and Vizokhole Ltu. Gender Implications of Tribal Customary Law: The Konyaks of Nagaland
3. Walter Fernandes, Joydeep Baruah and Augustin Millik. Traditional Land Management, Recent Changes and Types of Alienation among the North Eastern Tribes.
4. Walter Fernandes and Asojiini Rachel Kashena. The Role of Women in Peace Processes in North Eastern India
5. Melvil Pereira, Meenal Tula and Anuprova Ghose. Gender Implications of Tribal Customary Law: The Poumais of Manipur

B. ONGOING STUDIES
1. Melvil Pereira and Meenal Tula. Gender Implications of Tribal Customary Law: The Lyngngams of Meghalaya

SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND COLLOQUIUMS

1. **National Seminar on “Centralisation, Democracy and Dissent: The Role of the Media in Contestation and Reconciliation”** was organised by the North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) on the 28th and 29th of May 2018 at DBI, Joypur, Guwahati. This seminar brought together media persons, researchers and peace activists involved in a search for alternatives to conflicts emanating from mainstream ideologies today. The invitees presented papers on a gamut of contemporary issues ranging from conflicts in the Northeast to Naxalism or the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, while a few of them looked at the world from the lens of the rural poor, Dalits and Tribals. Some tried to understand the issues that result in nationalist struggles or ethnic conflicts. The objective of the seminar was to provide a platform for the youth and peace activists of the Northeast to know more about the thinking of such persons and to encourage activism in favour of peace and pluralism in the Northeast as well as in other conflict regions of India.

2. **National Seminar on the “Role of Women in Peace Processes”** was organised by North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) on the 2nd and 3rd of November 2018 at Jagriti, Christian Basti, Guwahati. This seminar tried to examine the dual themes of the impact of conflicts on women in the Northeast and elsewhere in India and their role, forms of intervention, capacities and limitations in peace building. Northeast was the point of reference in this seminar. There were participants from different organisations of the Northeast who shared their
experiences keeping in mind the traditional knowledge of the communities that women appropriate to organise peace strategies.

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


PROFESSIONAL ARTICLES

Apart from our own publications, the faculty of NESRC disseminate the finds of their studies by publishing their papers in journals, periodicals, edited volumes and newspapers. They published the following articles during this year:

Meenal Tula and Jyotikona Chetia

Melvil Pereira


Walter Fernandes


NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Walter Fernandes
“How to Deal with the NRC?” *The Morung Express*, August 4, 2018.

“Samp Mare Lati Na Tute,” Dainik Jagran, August 5, 2018.


**PRESENTED PAPERS**

**Augustin Millik**

“Celebrating the Karbi Youth Festival: Reimagining Identity” paper presented in Roots to Bridges: Workshop on Ethnography organised by collective initiatives on 14th and 15th December, 2018 at North Eastern Diocesan Social Service Society (NEDSSS), Guwahati.

**Kusumika Ghosh**


**Vizokhole Ltu**

“Women, Property and the Customary law” paper presented at the Roots to Bridges: Workshop on Ethnography organised by collective initiatives on 14th and 15th December, 2018 at North Eastern Diocesan Social Service Society (NEDSSS), Guwahati.

**Walter Fernandes**


Resource Person

Melvil Pereira
One credit course on Social Analysis to students of B.Th Programme at Oriens College, Shillong.
Guided the doctoral study of Varghese Vellikakamat Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati.
Walter Fernandes
“Formulating A Research Proposal, Choosing a Theme and Understanding Issues,” 
Refresher Course for Assistant Professors from the Northeast. Guwahati: Assam Don 
Bosco University, July 10-11, 2018.

“Formulating a Research Proposal and Writing Professional Papers,” One Day 
Seminar for the Staff of Don Bosco College, Itanagar, February 11, 2019.

PARTICIPATED IN SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

Meenal Tula
Workshop on: Gender Equity and Inclusion: Transformative Pathways in Higher 
Education’ organised by WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and 
Peace) in collaboration with Cotton University, Guwahati as part of its project 
‘HAMSA: Campus Equity Initiative’. The project is supported by the Public 
Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi at Cotton University, Guwahati on 11-14 
March 2019.

Meenal Tula and Jyotikona Chetia
Workshop on Feminist Interventions and Methodologies: Custom, Law, Resistance. 
Organiser: Humanities across Borders (HaB) Methodologies Workshop at Cotton 
University, Guwahati, Assam (India), 2-4 April 2018.

Kusumika Ghosh
Attended a 'Partner Training on Conflict Sensitivity' organised by Miserior-DPS 
India in Mumbai, 20th - 22nd November, 2018.

Anuprova Ghose
Consultative Workshop on “Forest Rights & Gender” organised by North East 
Network supported by Rights Resources Institute, Washington on 4-5 October 2018 
at DBI, Kharguli, Guwahati.

CONCLUSION

NESRC has made some contribution to the people of the Northeast thanks to the 
commitment of the members of its staff and faculty. 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– Germany, Jesuitenmission-Germany, NED Social Forum - Guwahati, LCHR – Guwahati, Laya - Vishakhapatnam, Peace Channel – Dimapur, JUST - Agartala, DSSS – Imphal, ASHA-Agartala, OKD-Guwahati and many others. I also wish to appreciate the generosity of individual donors who have helped build the corpus fund of NESRC. We place on record our immense gratitude to all of them.

**Date:** 7th October 2019  
**Place:** Guwahati  
**Director:** Dr Hector D’Souza