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


6. Alphonsus D’Souza and Jyotishman Taye 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 Taye: *Reasons and Impact of Tribal Youth Migration to Agartala*.

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**PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS**


2. Farhana Yasmin and Alin Mahanta. 2011. *Assam Sorkaror Bhumir 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.


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*


**Melvil Pereira**


### NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

**Walter Fernandes**


“Development-Induced Displacement and Human Rights” *Seven Sisters’ Post*, Nov. 24, 2011

“Identity and Creation of New States,” *Seven Sisters’ Post*, January 21, 2012


**Melvil Pereira**

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


**Tribeni Gogoi**

“Children Need Attention” *Seven Sisters’ Post*, March 6, 2012

### RESOURCE PERSON

**Walter Fernandes**


Melvil Pereira


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**PAPERS PRESENTED**

Walter Fernandes


Melvil Pereira


Garima Thakuria


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.

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.


Melvil Pereira

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.


Jyotishman Taye

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