

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MISSION TEAM

Minutes of the first meeting held on 10th Nov, 2008.

Members present: As per Annexure "A".

The first meeting of the Indigenous Knowledge Mission team of the Meghalaya State Planning Board was held at the official residence of the Hon'ble Chairman, MSPB, Shri P.A. Sangma on November 10th, 2008 at 6:00 P.M.

In his opening remarks the Chairman expressed his gratitude to all the members present for having kindly consented to attend the meeting. He informed the members that the objective of the meeting was to initiate a broad discussion on activating the Indigenous Knowledge Mission Team of the Meghalaya State Planning Board. He informed the members that a two member team of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, had recently visited Shillong and were happy to note that the MSPB had taken steps to constitute an Indigenous Knowledge Mission for collating, documenting and researching on the indigenous knowledge and practices prevalent in the State. In the discussions with the Chairman, MSPB, the ILO team voluntarily offered to sponsor indigenous knowledge studies and documentation in Meghalaya. The Chairman further informed the members that a team of ambassadors from six Latin American countries will also be visiting Shillong on November 25th, 2008. Their interaction with the State government will also include a discussion on Meghalaya's indigenous knowledge and practices. The Chairman also highlighted on the importance of the Mission and felt that Prof. Glen Kharkongor may take over as the Convener of the group in the absence of the chairman so that continuity is ensured in his absence.

The following remarks and observations were made by the members at the meeting.

Prof. Glen Kharkongor

Prof. Kharkongor noted that indigenous knowledge is a visionary concept. Meghalaya can construct its own model on the basis of existing information available about indigenous knowledge around the world. It is important to use our own resources from within the State itself, to collect inputs which in turn will shape our model of documenting indigenous knowledge.

The department of Arts & Culture will be the appropriate nodal and coordinating department to propagate the importance of the study on indigenous knowledge.

Legislation is imperative to the preservation and protection of indigenous sites across the State and to also accord due recognition to important propagators/leaders and to their contributions to the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

The National Innovation Foundation (NIF), Ahmedabad, Gujarat can be approached to provide incentives to traditional and innovative practices being followed in the State.

The working group can prepare a register of indigenous practices as part of its documentation process.

Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih

Dr. Nongkynrih noted that this working group should prioritise three core areas: protection, conservation and judicious use of indigenous knowledge.

He highlighted that we need to develop a Vision Plan then build a structure and a plan of action to move forward.

When addressing indigenous knowledge he cautioned that one should not be amazed at the product/physical entity but rather at the knowledge behind the development of this product/physical entity. He cited the example of the “Mylliem lock” which is indigenously made by blacksmiths at Mylliem, East Khasi Hills. Though this lock may resemble any other lock available in the market yet it cannot be opened by any other key except with the key specially made for the lock. One marvels at the knowledge behind the manufacture of this indigenous product.

He cautioned against any swift move to codify indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge has been able to grow and thrive for centuries in an atmosphere of flexibility. Modern law on the other hand is rigid and will retard the growth of indigenous knowledge.

Shri. Toki Blah

Mr. Toki Blah dwelt upon the importance of development of indigenous knowledge and quoted an example of the plethora of knowledge of the rural folks which the urban citizens are not aware of.

He highlighted the need to showcase a participatory approach to answer to the menace of global warming and mentioned that this is an important issue that needs to be flagged.

Smti. Patricia Mukhim

Smti. Mukhim observed that Meghalaya must have a land mapping and land use policy for the judicious utilization of all varieties of land. This will increase the productivity of the land as well as the production of food grain and cash crops in the State.

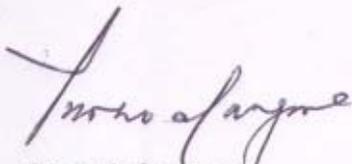
Shri P.J.Bazeley

The working group must initiate a broad structure and framework on indigenous knowledge. We need to design the macro perspective first before we develop on the micro details.

2. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu which has been engaged in studies on mountain development could also be consulted while preparing this framework.
3. An institution or an organization may be invited to conduct preliminary studies on indigenous knowledge across the State. The department of Arts & Culture can be the nodal agency for executing the road ahead or perhaps a Project Authority could be set up for the same.
4. Community Health Centres (CHC's) and Primary Health Centres (PHC's) which have available and unutilized infrastructure can offer these facilities to indigenous, herbal health practitioners.
5. It is important to place intellectual property rights in proper perspective when discussing about our indigenous knowledge and their documentation thereof.
6. There is need to develop a symbiosis of traditional practices with modern technology.

After threadbare discussions, the Chairman and members finalized the outcome and the following decisions were taken:

1. Prof. Glen Kharkongor was requested to prepare a concept paper on indigenous knowledge in Meghalaya highlighting the ideas discussed at the meeting. Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih has also been requested to assist Prof. Kharkongor in this preparation. The paper will highlight the role to be played by the Mission team and structure the roadmap ahead as an enabling framework for the team to work upon.
2. The concept paper will be circulated to the members for their suggestions and feedback before the next meeting so that the final cut could be adopted by the next meeting.
3. Members from the Jaiñtia Hills and the Garo Hills will also be co-opted to the Mission Team.
4. The next meeting of the Indigenous Knowledge Mission Team will be held on December 12th, 2008 at 6:00 P.M. at the residence of the Chairman, MSPB.
5. *It was decided that a formal recommendation will be made to the Government of Meghalaya to hand over the unused/partially used CHC's and PHC's to indigenous herbal practitioners across the State to enable them to carry on their practice.*



Sh P A Sangma

Chairman, MSPB,

Annexure "A"

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| Shri P.A. Sangma - | Chairman, MSPB |
| Shri P.J. Bazeley I.A.S. (Rtd.) - | Honorary Member, MSPB |
| Prof. Glen Kharkongor - | Member, MSPB |
| Shri Toki Blah - | Member, MSPB |
| Smti. Patricia Mukhim - | Special Invitee |
| Dr. A.K.Nongkynrih - | Special Invitee |
| Shri C. Reuben Lyngdoh- | Special Invitee |
| Shri D.P. Wahlang I.A.S. - | Commissioner & Secretary, MSPB |
| Shri A. B. Lyngwa - | Special Officer, MSPB |
| Shri Babeth Sangma - | Political Secretary to Chairman, MSPB |