

The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Germany funded project
Creation of a curriculum on “The Health and Wellbeing of Indigenous and Tribal Communities in Meghalaya: A Pilot Project”

The first-of-its-kind curriculum being created will be called Tribal Health and Wellbeing and is a four-credit subject meant for postgraduate students and community organizations working in tribal areas. The objectives of the project are to create a curriculum, provide regional, national and international perspectives, and integrate a holistic, pluralistic, and multidisciplinary approach.

The curriculum has 11 units that cover all aspects of health in a tribal community. It has units such as health-seeking behaviour, tribal way of life and wellbeing, traditional food, cultural syndrome, tribal holistic healing, traditional health practices, and tribal resilience and wellness.

Project Activities

1. Research Engaging Grassroots Leaders – **July 2023**
2. Consultative Workshop – **August 30, 2023**
3. Experts Review Meeting – **September 15, 2023**
4. Publication: Curriculum on the Health of Indigenous and Tribal Communities: Meghalaya
5. Content Diffusion Event engaging multipliers, educators, practitioners, youth, and indigenous knowledge holders – **October 18, 2023**

Diffusion Event

With great enthusiasm, the diffusion event of a project entitled Creation of a Curriculum on “The Health of Indigenous and Tribal Communities” funded by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung South Asia, Germany, was organised in the Martin Luther Christian University in its campus at Nongrah.

The event showcased the content, pedagogy, toolkits, evaluation activities, experiential learning, and assessment of the subject. Members who participated in the event were representatives of different NGOs, government departments, institutions, traditional healers, the Chancellor, Dr. Glenn Kharkongor, Pro chancellor Mr. Malcolm D. Roy, Vice-chancellor Dr. TK Bamon, Deans, and faculty members of the university. Besides others, present at the event were Dr. Bethabara Decruse, Project Director, MACS, and Mr. N Luikham, Member Secretary, Meghalaya State Biodiversity Board, Dr. Eva Khongwir, Scientist, Meghalaya Biodiversity Board, Dr. D. Khonglah, SAN-KER, Fr. Bensar W. Kharsta, Director, Social Service Centre, Dr. Jasper B. Manih, Traditional Healer, Dr. Darju Rongpeit, Traditional Healer, Mr. Manbha Myrthong, Project Coordinator, KJPA, Ms. Patricia Mukhim, Editor, The Shillong Times, Dr. Merril Sangma, and Badarishisha Nongkynrih, NESFAS.

Deliberations and insights on different units put on display were discussed at length. Some of the important issues that came to light included the loss of medicinal herbs due to the loss of forest and biodiversity, faith and use of traditional medicines by people in Meghalaya both in

urban and rural sectors, cultural syndrome, the importance of traditional diet in combating micronutrient deficiency and malnutrition, and fear of expression of sexual orientation and gender identity.

It may be added that as part of this project, interviews at the community level were conducted in July 2023, followed by a consultative workshop in August in Shillong. An expert review meeting was then held in Bangalore with healthcare experts working in tribal communities. At present, the compilation of the book is in process.

