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Two Days National Seminar  
**Ethno-Science and Traditional Technology of Tribes and Indigenous Peoples of  
Northeast India**

*Organised by*  
Department of Social Work & Department of Sociology,  
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU),  
Regional Campus, Manipur

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> February, 2016

**Venue:** IGNTU Regional Campus, Manipur

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### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Department of Social Work & Department of Sociology, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Regional Campus, Manipur is organising a two days National Seminar on “**Ethno Science and Traditional Technology of Tribes and Indigenous Peoples of Northeast India**” on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The seminar is sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. The sub themes:

- Agriculture Practice including Seed Conservation, Pest and Water Management
- Forest Management such as Conservation and Water harvesting etc.
- Traditional Art and Craft such as Iron Smithy, Weaving, Pottery Making, House Architecture, Salt Making, Paper Making, etc
- Traditional Medicine and Medical Plants
- Traditional Processing Food such as fermentation of bamboo shoot, dry fish, soya bean etc and Beverages
- Traditional Knowledge System and Intellectual Property Rights
- Others related to the theme

Interested individuals can submit their abstract (500 words) or poster (one page) with an author (s) profile (50 words) on any of the sub-theme to <asha\_sougaijam@yahoo.co.in> on or before 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. Selected abstracts will be notified by 18th January, 2016.

Registration: Rs 300 (Three Hundred) for students/scholars and Rs 500 (Five Hundred) for others.

Sd/-

Dr. Asha Sougaijam  
Co- Convener

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**Concept Note:**

Indigenous knowledge has often been dismissed as unsystematic and incapable of meeting rapid economic growth needs of the modern world. Historically, modern societies have regarded tribes and indigenous people and traditions as less progressive, and as a result many groups of tribes and indigenous peoples, especially their younger generations, are influenced to devalue their native cultures and to adopt new lifestyles and technologies. Consequently, indigenous knowledge systems have not been captured and stored in a systematic way and are, therefore, facing extinction. The lust for modernity and new technologies are threatening the loss of a great store of knowledge held by native people. A good number of indigenous and tribal groups have suffered from long-term discrimination, inequity and exclusion from the planning and execution of development programmes and projects.

Science will always remain part and parcel of the 'social processes' that bring actors, institutions and nature into specific, culturally shaped and historically evolving relations. However, what is needed all the more is to understand the perspective of the tribes and indigenous people in a scientific manner. "Ethnoscience" in its most nuanced form introduces a perspective based on native or tribal perceptions. It looks at the intricacies of the connection between culture and its surrounding environment. Thus, "Ethnoscience", is the scientific approach to traditional knowledge. It became popular among the academics with the path breaking work of Harold Conklin among the Hanunoo of the Philippines in the 1950's.

Today, this approach is used to understand coherence of the indigenous and tribal knowledge systems, their empirical precision, and their attunement to local environmental contexts. Scientists have developed an appreciation of the responses to both natural objects such as plants, diseases, soils, and animals, and human activities such as agriculture by the tribes and indigenous people. Ethnobotanists have discovered cases in which the number of plant species recognized by local communities is greater than the number of scientific species recognized in an area. The general realization is that traditional peoples are a potential source of knowledge for science in areas such as biodiversity. Such realization has not been limited to academic scientists but has extended to pharmaceutical and agricultural companies in the 1980s and 1990s and led to concerns about bio-prospecting and indigenous property rights.

From times immemorial, India's North East has been the meeting point of many communities, faiths and cultures. A place renowned for its magical beauty and bewildering diversity, North East India is the home for more than 200 separate tribes speaking a wide range of languages, following separate tradition and custom. Many tribes still live in organic harmony with the nature, understanding the blessing of the nature and also developing its own ways of coping up with the vagaries of time. In fact the region is not only a hot bio-diversity spot of the world but also one of the cradles of indigenous knowledge system, which

is yet to be explored. For many of these people, memories are not recorded in written form but are weaved as designs at the helms of the clothes. For that matter oral tradition has helped them to identify who the enemies are and who the friends are: this is how history is remembered as ballads and songs. Remedies of the curses of ill health are collected from the thickets or the dense forest. Their art and craft are the gifts that modern men envy today. Only an ethnoscientific approach can reveal the richness of wealth and knowledge that the diverse communities of the Frontier India have been holding close to their bosom against the endless waves of time.

In a way this proposed national seminar is a continuation of the national seminar entitled “Aspects of Ethno-Science and Traditional Technology among the Tribes of Central India”, which was organized by the Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi on 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, March 2014. The success of the seminar and its relevance in the context of “Make in India” campaign has prompted the University to organise a series of seminars on the same theme throughout India. The present proposed seminar is specially focused on Northeast India which on many fronts including understanding from an ethno-science perspective remains un-explored, not only about the potential of the region but also in terms of its worldview and knowledge system.

With this backdrop, the seminar aims to explore the theoretical as well as empirical models and methods of traditional technology among the tribes and Indigenous peoples of Northeast India. The sub-themes are:

- Agriculture Practice including Seed Conservation and Water Management
- Forest Management such as Conservation and Water harvesting etc.
- Traditional Art and Craft such as Iron Smithy, Weaving, Pottery Making, House Architecture, Salt Making, Paper Making, etc
- Traditional Medicine and Medical Plants
- Traditional Processing Food such as fermentation of bamboo shoot, dry fish, soya bean etc and Beverages
- Preservation, conservation and promotion of traditional technology: Role of State, NGOs and Community based Organisations.
- Traditional Knowledge System and Intellectual Property Rights
- Any other relevant to the theme

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