



Organised by the Department of English, Tripura University in collaboration with NEC Shillong.

MYSTIC MOUNTAINS, MAGICAL RIVERS: A FESTIVAL OF NORTH-EASTERN FOLKWAYS

15th, 16th and 17th January, 2018

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Concept Note:

India's North East is one of the most amazing and exotic places in Southeast Asia. The mystic stoicism of its hills, magical rivers, overcast valleys, winding roads, ethnic outfits and lip-smacking cuisine lie in wait to enthrall the visitor. A home to over 220 indigenous communities and equal number of languages, cuisine and many belief systems, North East India is also unfortunately one of the most misunderstood regions. The paradoxicality of being an 'exotic paradise' as well as a 'terrorist hub' makes it more incredible than incredible India. Remoteness both geographical and intellectual is an issue that needs to be addressed, not only academically but also through a plethora of activities that shall involve interfaces between Literature, Culture, Art, Craft, Traditions and Performances of the region. The proposed Festival spread across a period of three days aims to be a celebration of life, a festivity of everything Northeastern and the authentication of a uniqueness that attracts by virtue of its being beautiful, vibrant, unique and plural.

The festival also proposes to hold a National Seminar which would serve as a platform for the convergence of myriad folkways in the region as well as their adaptations in other forms of expression such as in art, literature, and music through an academic interface. Papers are invited from writers, researchers, performers and the academia for lively, invigorating and enriching academic sessions. Language is not a barrier and presenters in languages other than English need to provide a workable and brief translation of their presentation/ paper.

National Seminar

ETHOS AND WORLDVIEWS: FOLKWAYS TO THE NORTHEAST

Call for Papers:

Folklore and folk-life not only pertain to the 'shared experiences and wisdom' of a group but also entail social formations and historical potential (*clan vital*) of the group. Folklore, thus, evidently becomes the means of expression of a group's attitudes and cultural life. Many 19th century works of British administrators who acted as amateur anthropologists (Mills, J. Shakespeare, Hutton, Hudson, Verrier Elwin, C. Haimendorf, et al.), provide valuable insights into the nature of folklore of the region. However, their works are fraught with certain limitations for they wrote from an outsider's perspective and also without the advantage of modern methodologies. The same trend could be found

in the late 20th century writings about the northeast by anthropologists from mainland India. The emergence of trained folklorists from the region changed the equation for they write from certain vantage points and their works appear more analytic as against the broadly descriptive style of the formers.

The northeast region of India is a thriving confluence of social groups which express their feelings and worldviews in myth, orature, dance, music, crafts, customs and beliefs. The region has a long tradition of rich and distinct folklore and folklife (in the broad areas of oral literature, material culture, social folk custom and performing folk arts) so much so that it is often described as 'anthropologist's paradise'. The present day 'postcolonial' (the term itself is questionable) northeast can be divided into broad cultural streams of traditional and folk belief systems as well as Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and ethnic faith, "flowing and merging constantly forming a synthesis of a common hope, shared values, traditions, and a sense of oneness" which is more virtual than real.

While we cannot ignore the distinctiveness of each group, one would also find affinities among these groups. Folklore has played an important role because literate tradition emerged in the 19th century for most of these groups. In the absence of a literate tradition, transmission and sustenance of lore depended on the groups themselves. Hence, these groups became performing communities. However, the traditions of writing and telling did not necessarily clash when creative writing began in the region. The folk narrative elements often got merged with the modern narrative. It is no surprise that one finds certain folk elements in the writings of Temsula Ao or Desmond Kharmawphlang, Mamang Dai, or Nongkynrih, or Robin S. Ngangom because their works are woven around myths, legends and tales from a bygone era. Despite the sudden change that is inevitable in the transition from the oral to the literate tradition, certain cultural markers, intrinsic to the culture with which one writes, do remain intact and recognisable. Hence, the emerging literatures from the northeast are rooted to the writer's immediate environment and the ways of the people. Besides, in the northeast, folk and literate traditions exploit the idea of nature as a vital force and also attribute to them human feelings. Various rituals, customs, songs, etc. bind man to his ancestral environment. Nature, in this sense, is a powerful poetic instrument which reveals the age-old tradition of protecting the ecosystem. We constantly communicate with rivers, mountains, trees, and lakes. For us, mountains and rivers are very much a part of our consciousness for they speak to us and live with us.

Within such a framework, the objective endeavour of this seminar is to look into the vast constituent elements of folkways in the northeast region and their manifestations in the forms of art, music, dance, and modern literature. Papers/lecture demonstrations are invited which may fall under one of the broad areas given hereunder:

1. Performance and Folk Art
2. Oral Literature
3. Material Culture
4. Folk Customs
5. Folk and Modern Literature
6. Folk, Fusion and Rock Music
7. Digital folklore
8. And any other theme that is related to but not limited to the topic.

Submission and format (Abstract):

An Abstract specifying a broad area of not more than 300 words having 5 keywords must be created in MS word using Times New Roman font. The abstract may contain one or two figures if required.

Title of the Abstract: 14 pt., bold, centered.

Author, co-author: 12 pt.

Address: 12 pt., Text: 12 pt.

The Abstract may be sent as an e-mail attachment to ashesgupta@tripurauniv.in. The organiser's intend to publish the papers in a compendium volume.

Registration fee:

1500 INR for outstation participants.

1000 INR for local participants and Research Scholars from beyond Tripura University

0500 INR for Research Scholars of Tripura University.

Important Dates:

Last date for submission of abstracts	5th January, 2018
Date of intimation of acceptance	7th January, 2018
Last date for request for accomodation	10th January, 2018

NB: ABSTRACTS ALREADY SUBMITTED AND ACCEPTED FOR PRESENTATION AS PER PREVIOUS NOTIFICATION/SCHEDULE OF THE SEMINAR-CUM-FEST STAND INVITED FOR PRESENTATION. FOR FRESH SUBMISSION AFTER SCREENING AND SELECTION, INVITATION SHALL BE SENT.

How to Reach:

Agartala has direct flights from Kolkata, Guwahati, and Imphal. Train services are also available from Guwahati and Silchar. Bus and Sumo services also connect Agartala with Silchar, Guwahati, and Shillong. Tripura University is 5 km away from the Agartala Railway Station and 18 km from Agartala Airport.

Travel and Accommodation:

Due to paucity of funds, the organisers are not in a position to reimburse travel expenses of the participants/paper presenters (except Resource Persons). **However, modest arrangements shall be made for food and accommodation.**

On behalf of the organizers:

Prof. Ashes Gupta,
Organising Secretary & Convener of the Fest,
Dept of English,
Tripura University.

I really was never any more than what I was -a folk musician who gazed into the gray mist with tear-blinded eyes and made up songs that floated in a luminous haze. — Bob Dylan, Chronicles, Vol.1