

A report on One day National Webinar

“Effects of Traditional Governance system in the state of Meghalaya”

Organized by the Department of Political Science and IQAC Cell, Nongstoin College

Welcome address by the Principal

The Principal of Nongstoin College, Nongstoin express her appreciation to the organizers Department of Political Science and IQAC Cell, Nongstoin College for organizing the one day webinar. She also welcomes all the distinguished resource persons, participants from different institutions and students who took part in the webinar. She wished the webinar a successful interaction and outcome oriented programme.

Brief Introduction by Dr. T. Dash

Local self government has a deep root in socio-cultural milieu in the human society. Different models of local self government is working I different parts of the world including India. There are numerous instances where socio-cultural and religious institutions have a deep impact on political institution like local self government and also vice-versa which is observed in the modern political institution across world and India. India being a plural society it has its own variants of local self government exits in different parts including traditional political institutions which is recognized under sixth scheduled of the Indian Constitution. But in reality there is a gap exists in between theory and practice. It is also noticed that there is an exclusion of certain sections of the community. Therefore, true democracy can be achieved as and when all the sections of human being will participate in the process of local self government. With this backdrop, the Department of Political Science and IQAC Cell, Nongstoin College welcomes all the resource person and participants to the webinar on the topic “Effects of Traditional Governance system in the state of Meghalaya.

Key Note Address by Dr. Soma Bhowmick

Dr. Soma Bhowmick introduced local self government as a part of the social system in particular in Meghalaya. She discuss the historical aspects of the traditional institutions since the pre-British period which located in the Brahmaputra Valley. Further, she depicts the picture of the traditional institutions under the British period and finally its recognition after independence India under the provision of the Sixth Scheduled to the Indian Constitution. She also discuss that the existence of traditional institutions as effective with time and it is being accepted by the local population. Traditional institutions were being part of larger academic, political and social discussion as form of local governance. The main challenges faced by the traditional institutions are two folds – the first is limitations by the constitutional provisions – the unrecognized status by the state and central government which is not possible for financial independence. The next challenge is the transitional stage of the society with its modern outlook in the 21st century. Dr

Soma Bhowmick stress the need to reform the traditional institutions into a democratize and inclusive institutions. She had also suggest that in order to solve the crisis both state and Autonomous District Council must take active cooperation to demand constitutional recognition to empower the role of the traditional institutions as form of local self government by pointing its pro-active role in dealing with the pandemic situation.

Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja

Dr. Kumar in his paper Role of Traditional Governance system in the State of Meghalaya highlight the system of governance, its status, the issues that need to reform the existing traditional institutions and share his views for further reforms. On the issues of governance system he pointed to the weaknesses which need to be address such as its structure, lack of participation by the people, leadership problems, revenue generation and devolution of structure. He also emphasized the need to have transparency, accountability, transform action into reality at the grassroots level in the state of Meghalaya. He also pointed the problem of service delivery at the local level in the absence of local planning and monitoring agency, centralized system of governance controlled by the Autonomous District Council (ADC). He pointed service delivery is affected by the lack of planning at the grassroots level, the existence of informal authority which is not recognized by the constitutions, customary laws affects the development at the grassroots level and successful implementation of central schemes. He therefore, suggests/advocates that the traditional institutions should be recognized by the constitution so that it can bring holistic growth and development. In order to address the need of the people the traditional institutions should be incorporate in the village development planning, the need for a comprehensive participation in development plan, the traditional institutions have to involve in the process of plan formulation in various fields to prepare the status report and perspective plan or vision for development. He also suggest to conduct awareness programme, training as well as the need to change attitude/mindset by involving all stake holders in the traditional institutions.

Dr. Richard Jangamlung

Dr Richard start his presentation by arguing that in a democratic system like India local self government play an important role. He pointed out by using an example that traditional institutions in Afghanistan are part and parcel of modern political system. He also pointed that Meghalaya and Manipur have similar existence of Traditional institutions. Manipur existed as an independent kingdom before merging with India has three important communities – the Meiteis, the tribal's and Indian migrated people. The traditional institutions have their own boundary as well as social, political and judicial powers. There are three types of traditional institutions in Manipur which include – authoritarian as practice by the Kuki, Mizo and Thangkhol, republican practice by the Mao and semi-authoritarian/republican practiced by the Zeliangrong. He discuss that ADC was introduced in Manipur in the year 1971 under the fifth scheduled in which the people were not satisfied and demand to include under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This led to a series of amendment by the government beginning from 1975


onwards. A series of amendment took place in the years 2000, 2006 and 2008 to fulfill the aspiration of the people. He also report that no elections were conducted since 1990's and the general elections to the Autonomous District Council (ADC) was again re-introduced in 2010. The presenter also pointed to the different limitations face by the ADC in Manipur since the introduction under the Fifth scheduled do not grant Legislative and Judicial powers. The lack of legislative powers restricts the ADC to enact laws in order to protect the customary laws as practiced. Therefore, it creates problems with regard to the process of succession because there are no written procedures for the methods of elections which allow everyone to contest and fight to become the head. He also pointed that since there is no codification of customary laws different traditional laws appeared which are only based on belief or being irrational. The ADC under the Fifth Scheduled was not being empowered to generate revenue which affects its function. The author suggested that there is a need to strengthen the traditional laws and its institutions as well as codification of customary laws. The reason being that people still depend and prefer on the traditional institutions in terms of conflict management. It can also serve as the mechanism to connect with the government administration with people's participation. Its important role can be seen under the Covid 19 and the lockdown period in India.

Mr. Rubenker Nongrum

Mr. Nongrum in his paper traced the historical origin and growth of local self governance and its inclusion under the constitution of India. He traced the evolutions of the institutions of local self governance at different period of time started from the Vedic and Post-vedic period which constituted the Gram Panchayat and its Samiti. He also traced its existence as a unit of administration under the different dynasty that ruled India at different period of time. Under the Muslim dynasty it became a part of institution to collect taxes. The British create their own institutional hierarchy in which the traditional institution of local self government was under their administration and control. After India achieved independence, the Constitution of India through its amendment recognized the local self government with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system through the 72nd and 73rd amendment. The local self governance became an important part in the decentralization process and various community development programme.

Mr. Skhemborlin Wahlang as a rapporteur summarise all the papers presented by the resource persons in the webinar.

Dr. Bostick Mawsor proposed the votes of thanks for the Principal of the College, the organizers, the resources person, participants and students who took active part in the webinar.


Dr. T. Dosh
organising Secretary
Dept. of Pol. Science
Nangstoin college



NATIONAL WEBINAR
***Effects of the Traditional Governance
System in the State of Meghalaya***

Date: 28th/12/ 2020 Time : 10:30 AM. Platform: Google meet: <https://meet.google.com/zmj-cuva-zba>

Organized by
Department of Political Science and IQAC Cell, Nongstoin College, Nongstoin



Dr. Trilochan Dash
Organising Secretary &
Head Dept. of Political Science
Nongstoin College, Meghalaya



Dr. Mrs. Iaisan Mawthoh
Principal, Nongstoin College
Meghalaya





Key Note Address

Dr. Soma Bhowmick, Registrar, William Carey University, Meghalaya & Joint Secretary, East Zone, Indian Political Science Association (IPSA).

Resource Persons

Dr. Moses Kharbithai, Assistant Professor, Assam University, Silchar.

Topic: Assessment of the Role of the Traditional Governance System in the State of Meghalaya.



Dr. Richard Jangamlung, Assistant Professor, William Carey University, Meghalaya.

Topic: Traditional Political Institution in Manipur: Problems and Prospects.

Shri Rubenker Nongrum, Research Scholar, William Carey University, Meghalaya.

Topic: Evolution of traditional political institution in India.



Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad.

Topic: Centre for Panchayat Raj, Decentralized Planning and Social Service Delivery.

Concept Note:

The concept of traditional local governance system is as old as the history of humanity but only recently it has entered into the broad academic discourse. Therefore the social scientists such as Anthropologists, Historians, Sociologists and Political Scientists have no unanimous decision regarding to define traditional institutions within the realm of social, cultural and economic systems since tradition in any given society is a composite whole. In the last five decades, Khasi society has faced a number of challenges, which has led to serious public debates about the role of traditional institutions and its governance system. The debates are not only political in nature but are also rooted in the issue of equity. Traditional institutions face four main challenges: (1) The succession to the political office of chieftainship is a major source of conflict among groups belonging to the same clan. The clan council selects an adult male from among themselves as Chief. Due to internal conflicts, there is often more than one claimant to the position, and the ADCs are not able to confirm anyone. The political vacuum at the top has led to confusion in the administration at the local level. In such situations, the ADC usually appoints an acting chief, not necessarily from the particular clan. However, there have been serious allegations about acting chiefs misusing authority by permitting timber contractors to cut trees from community forests, and selling off community lands with rich mineral resources. This has resulted in conflicts between traditional institutions and ADCs on the succession and confirmation of chiefs, headmen and royalty rights. (2) There are cases where chiefs of Hima, in collusion with politicians and timber merchants, have converted large tracts of community forests into private property without the Hima. These forestlands are registered in the revenue department of the state government, which legitimizes the conversion into private ownership. Further, personal benefits received by those who hold power in the traditional authority pose a threat to the equity of community forestry. e consent of the people of the Hima. These forestlands are registered in the revenue department of the state government, which legitimizes the conversion into private ownership. Further, personal benefits received by those who hold power in the traditional authority pose a threat to the equity of community forestry. (3) Parliamentary politics and development schemes of the state are changing political behaviour. Traditional institutions are based on customs and the decision making process is based on consensus. The party-based politics of electing MLAs and ADCs is creating divisions and political factionalism in traditional

institutions. MLAs have power over development programmes, and ADCs have control over traditional institutions. Both bodies are legal authorities and have tremendous influence over people in general and traditional institutions in particular. People feel that the leaders of traditional institutions have been politicized and their decisions are no longer fair. In the process, the poor are increasingly becoming marginalized. It is also causing unscrupulous use of natural resources by new emerging elites from the community. Lastly, The excessive interference of the pressure groups in both traditional and modern governance system further weaken and dilute the system of administration at the grass root level. Most parts of West Khasi Hills District are isolated and marginalized further day by day due to lack of transport and communication, poor connectivity in electricity and telephone, poor education and health care facility which is the primary duty of the Village Council to carry on but it failed to do that. Therefore, the tribal communities need a holistic approach to address the problems that affect the people at the grass root level.

Sub-theme of the Study

- #. To evaluate the Local Self Governance system in India in historical perspectives.
- #. To analyze the traditional governance system and how it affects the tribal people in Meghalaya State and particularly in the West Khasi Hills District.
- #. To analyze the impact of the paradigm shift from a traditional governing system to a modern governance system.
- #. To suggest measures towards improvement of an effective governance system in the State of Meghalaya.

Programme for National Webinar

Welcome address	Dr. (Mrs) Iaisan Mawthoh, Principal
Key Note Address	Dr. Soma Bhowmick, Registrar, William Carey University, Meghalaya & Joint Secretary, East Zone, Indian Political Science Association (IPSA).
About Programme	Dr. Trilochan Dash, Head Department of Pol. Science, Nongstoin College.
Resource person	Dr. Moses Kharbithai, Assam University, Silchar.
Resource person	Dr. Richard Jangamlung, William Carey University. Meghalaya.
Resource person	Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad.
Resource person	Shri Rubenker Nongrum, Research Scholar, William Carey University. Meghalaya.
Vote of Thanks	Dr. Bostick Mawsor, Nongstoin College.

REGISTRATION FOR NATIONAL WEBINAR ON 'Effects of the Traditional Governance System in the State of Meghalaya' HELD ON 28-12-2020/ MONDAY.

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