



TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND RIGHTS OF NATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Inaugural Conference of the School of Sustainability and Law, National Law University, Meghalaya

Biographies

Ms Juliana Almeida, International Environment Law Specialist, UNEP

Ms Juliana Almeida is currently working on the UN Environment Programme as an Environmental Law Specialist, focusing on emerging issues of environmental law and judicial capacity development. She has a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Laws in International and European Law, as well as a post-grad in Environmental Law. Juliana has interfaced with the UN during her postings with the Government of Portugal to New York and Vienna. She has worked with the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2020-21 in Brussels and was an advisor to a Member of the European Parliament working on environmental issues.

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Ms Bhaswati Borgohain, ICSSR Doctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University

Ms Bhaswati Borgohain is a ICSSR doctoral fellow in the Department of Sociology, Tezpur University. Her ongoing doctoral research work is the urbanisation process of Arunachal Pradesh, with a focus on the capital Itanagar. A sociology graduate from Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi and post-graduate in Social Work from TISS, Mumbai, she began her career as a researcher in the development sector. She is a published author with three books and a few journal articles. Her research interest areas are Urban Studies, Northeast India and Peace and Conflict Resolution.

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Prof. Philippe Cullet, Professor in Residence, National Law University, Meghalaya

Dr Philippe Cullet is Professor in residence at the National Law University, Meghalaya and Professor of International and Environmental Law at SOAS University of London. He has

published widely in the fields of environmental and natural resources law and policy, and social rights. He is the chair of the IUCN/World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) task force on rights of nature.

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Ms Badapbiang Dkhar, Research Fellow, National Law University, Meghalaya

Ms Badapbiang T. Dkhar is a Research Fellow at National Law University, Meghalaya. She is also the Founder of the Kyrshan Foundation, centred towards education, research and menstrual health advocacy for youth and grassroots communities. Presently her research focuses on ecological heritage and indigenous-tribal governance.

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Prof. Indrajit Dube, Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Meghalaya

Prof. Indrajit Dube is the founding Vice Chancellor of National Law University Meghalaya. Prof. Indrajit Dube was a legal practitioner, executive, and educator. He has taught corporate laws and governance, at various law and management schools and universities in India and overseas for over more than two decades. Before holding the present assignment, he was serving as a Professor at Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT KGP). Prof. Dube has several publications in reputed journals, focusing on directors' liability, integrated reporting, corporate social responsibility, environmental governance, AI and corporate governance. He has authored a number of books which are referred to by distinct national and international institutes. Prof. Dube has also led several projects funded by national and international agencies, including the institutional framework of the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, New Delhi, and the National Mission Project on Ganga River Basin Management. He has also offered consultancies to various regulatory bodies, business houses, and organisations and has designed online course modules for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. Prof. Dube's expertise has earned him global recognition, with invitations to participate in consultations, special lectures, expert talks in different forums and institutions within the country and overseas and also has served as visiting faculty at prestigious universities in Canada, Australia and other jurisdictions. As the founding Vice Chancellor of NLU Meg, Prof. Dube is in pursuit to develop a futuristic university with an educational ecosystem which will promote research, personalized learning and community engagement.

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Ms Vilazonuo Gloria, Project Lead, North East Network

Ms Vilazonuo Gloria is an Angami Naga woman, born and raised from Dimapur, Nagaland. She holds a Masters degree in Social Work, specialized in Community Organization and Developmental Practice from TISS Guwahati. Currently, she works with North East Network, Nagaland as a Project Lead, working on the areas of Natural Resources Regeneration, Biodiversity and Conservation. It is her desire that each youth must experience & learn the



ways of their communities and carry forward the knowledge & skills. She greatly enjoys working with the local communities and traveling that her work takes her as she is on a journey of relearning, reconnecting and sustaining her own culture and heritage.

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Mr Amba Jamir, Policy and Development Strategist

Mr Amba Jamir is a development consulting expert with over 30 years of multidisciplinary and multi-team experience from policy formulation to project development and implementation, Amba is professionally trained as an environmental lawyer and development communicator.

He is an acclaimed grassroots convenor, trainer, and facilitator with experience in the Asia Pacific and South Asian region in areas of environment education, development communication, rural development, community-based resource management, traditional food systems, evidence-based policy formulation and envisioning. Amba works directly with policy makers, development organizations, communities, farmers, and the youth in mountain regions. He has extensive experience working in local, national and international organization, the government and with advanced regional policy and research think tanks such as the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan. He is a founding member of the Sustainable Development Forum Nagaland (SDFN) and the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI), a pan Indian forum for Indian Himalayan Mountain states.

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Dr Bankerlang Kharmylliem, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Shillong Commerce College

Dr Bankerlang Kharmylliem currently holds the position of Assistant Professor of Sociology at Shillong Commerce College. Previously, he served as a guest lecturer at the School of Education, North Eastern Hill University. He earned his master's degree in Development Studies and completed his Ph.D., both at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G). His range of interests spans urban sustainability, urban studies, and the sociology of development. He enjoys exploring his hometown of Shillong on foot, a practice that fuels his current research focus on water governance and walkability. He is set to publish his forthcoming book Understanding Social Sustainability in a Hill Town: Water Governance in Shillong with Routledge.

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Ms Shomona Khanna, Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Delhi High Court

Ms Shomona Khanna is an Advocate practicing in the Supreme Court of India and Delhi High Court. Since 1991, she has been associated with numerous civil and democratic rights issues, both as a lawyer and a writer. Between 2011 and 2017 she was Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. In 2017, she initiated the Legal Resource Centre, a collective of lawyers and legal professionals engaged in demystification of the law for Indigenous and Adivasi communities, through legal workshops, training materials, academic and action research. Her most recent publication, which she co-authored with three other



lawyers, is 'Criminalisation of Adivasis and the Indian Legal System'. As part of her endeavours to de-mystify the law for indigenous and forest dwelling peoples, she has spearheaded the development of a 17-part audio-visual course entitled 'Critical Learnings on Forest and Adivasi Rights' which is available under creative commons licence at <https://nagriklearning.com/enrol/index.php?id=6> and <https://vasundharaodisha.org/User/tutorial/>

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Ms Amebari Kharkongor, Assistant Professor, Shillong College

Ms Amebari Kharkongor is currently employed as an Assistant Professor in Shillong College (affiliated with North Eastern Hill University), Shillong and pursuing a PhD at North Eastern Hill University in the Department of History. She worked as an Asst. Professor in the Department of History in Shillong Commerce College, Shillong, for more than two years prior to joining Shillong College. She was also a guest lecturer at North Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, in the Department of History and Archaeology in the year 2019. Further, she worked as an Assistant Editor on Perspectives on Material Cultures in Northeast India, edited by Dr Tilok Thakuria.

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Mr Dilip Kumar, Independent Researcher

Mr Dilip Kumar Mekala is an independent researcher working on climate change adaptation, food & nutrition security while exploring various regenerative agriculture movements and pastoral systems in India. He is a consultant with Indo-German Development Cooperation (GIZ-India) for two of their projects: ProSoil (Soil Protection and Rehabilitation of Degraded Land for Food Security in India) and SuATI (Supporting agro-ecological transformation processes in India). He also manages a permaculture-based livelihoods programme for Action-for-Autism, the National Centre for Autism in India, where he explores the intersection of disability, queerness and climate action. He leads 'future-of-food' programme for a think-tank based out of Goa, India, where he researches on transitional pathways to sustainable food future. Prior to this, he had a six-year stint as a journalist - both in print and broadcast media - covering defence and strategic affairs.

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Dr Amit Kurien, Assistant Professor (Environmental Science), RV University

Mr Amit Kurien is an environmental social scientist working on issues at the convergence of environmental change and rural societal dynamics. His area of interest is the political ecology of land use change in the swidden/shifting cultivation/jhum landscapes of Garo Hills in Meghalaya, Northeast India. He studies the dynamics of land use change, agricultural changes within shifting cultivation, plantations and forests to understand how it influences outcomes such as socio-economic differentiation and livelihood security. The consequences of land use change for intra-community dynamics, nutrition, and multidimensional understandings of



well-being are themes he is currently exploring. His research aims to inform theory, policy, and action.

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Prof Desmond Kharmawphlang, Professor and Head, Department of Cultural and Creative Studies, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU)

Prof Desmond L. Kharmawphlang is a poet and folklorist. He has published collections of poetry and books on folklore and folkloristics. He has also collected, compiled and edited folk narratives and folk songs of North-East India. An Associate Member of the Folk Fellows instituted by the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, Helsinki, he was on the executive board of the Belief Narrative Network of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research from 2011-21. He has held teaching positions as Visiting Fellow and Professor at various universities in India and abroad - Switzerland,(1991); U.K. and the Republic of Ireland(1995); Oslo University,(1997) Norway; Oregon State University, Portland University (2002) and Maui University, Hawaii, (2011) U.S.A.; Helsinki University,(2002) Finland; Hellenic-American University,(2009) Greece; Qinghai Institute of Social Sciences,(2011), China; ASEAN Centre, (2017) Indonesia; Chulalongkorn University,(2018) Thailand; the Dyason Visiting Fellowship at Melbourne University,(2018), Australia; Catania University, Sicily, (2018), Italy; the Ca Foscari University, Venice (2019), Italy; University of South Wales at Cardiff (2019) in the U.K. He also won the Arts and Humanities Global Discovery Visiting Fellowship supported by Ohio State University, Columbus, USA. He teaches folkloristics at North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong, in the state of Meghalaya. He is Principal Investigator of the project Protecting Endangered Heritage in the Abode of Clouds, a project undertaken in collaboration with Melbourne University and sponsored by the British Library. He is also Principal Investigator of the project: Folklore, Wildlife and Nature: A Study on their Inter- Relationships, sponsored by the North Eastern Council, Government of India.

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Dr Bhogtoram Mawroh, Senior Associate, North East Society for Agroecology Support (NESFAS), Shillong

Dr Bhogtoram Mawroh has a PhD in geography from North Eastern Hill University. He joined NESFAS (North East Support for Agroecology Society) in 2018 and is presently working as the Senior Associate in charge of the Research and Knowledge Management unit. In early 2023 he was appointed as the TIP-NESFAS International Indigenous Peoples Food Issues Coordinator by Bioversity International. The focus of his work is on agrobiodiversity, agroecology, health and nutrition, food sovereignty, along with the promotion and revitalisation of traditional farming practises in the indigenous territories of North East India.

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Dr H.H. Mohrmen, Social Scientist, North East Society for Agrobiodiversity Services

Dr (Pastor) H.H. Mohrmen is a Unitarian Pastor, writer and one of Meghalaya's most respected environmental activists. He has a PhD from Martin Luther Christian University and was trained at the Unitarian College in Manchester, UK. Dr Mohrmen has also worked extensively as a journalist; writing a weekly column in The Shillong Times, helping start Myntoilang Cable News of Myntoilang Network in 1996 & writing for vernacular papers in Meghalaya since 1991. He is also a published author of several books. His views on the issue of environmental protection has been featured in prominent news agencies like the Telegraph, Al Jazera India, The New York Times, Times of India, Caravan Magazine, Down To Earth Magazines and in almost all the vernacular papers of Meghalaya.

Dr Tsewang Namgail, Director, Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust

Dr Tsewang Namgail is Director of the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust since 2013. He has an M.Sc. (zoology honours) from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India, an MPhil in wildlife biology from the University of Tromso, Norway, and a PhD in community ecology from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Subsequently, he worked as a researcher at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in San Francisco and Las Vegas, working on migratory ducks and reptiles in the Mojave Desert. He was also a postdoctoral scholar at the Pennsylvania State University. Dr Namgail has supervised several graduate students in the Netherlands as well as in India. He was a visiting scientist at the Wageningen University in 2013-14. He has done pioneering ecological work on several taxa in the Himalayan region, focusing largely on birds and mammals in Ladakh. He has published over 20 scientific articles in international peer-reviewed journals. He also has written extensively on nature conservation issues in magazines and newspapers. Apart from scientific research, he has a keen interest in conserving the natural resources of the Himalayas, and has implemented numerous community-based conservation programs in Ladakh.

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Mr Golan Naulak, Regional Policy and Development Professional

Mr Golan Suanzang Naulak is a regional policy and development professional with over ten years of experience in the North Eastern states of India. His research interests and work broadly focusses on the intersection of policy, politics and development in the areas of climate change, health and education. He has previously worked with Integrated Mountain Initiative, Public Health Foundation of India, St Joseph's University, and handled projects supported by MoEF & CC, MDDoNER, UNDP, FAO, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. A champion for local Innovation and community empowerment, he also leads Highland Community Network to drive sustainable solutions through youth engagement. He holds a postgraduate degree from SOAS, University of London where he was a Chevening Scholar.

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Ms MD Pallavi, Singer, Actor, Composer

Ms Pallavi MD is a singer, actor and composer from Bengaluru. She has been performing Kannada poetry (bhavageethe) for the last twenty eight years. She has won the META Best Actress award for her solo theatrical play C Sharp C Blunt. She has won the State award for her song in the film Duniya, and the State Kempegowda award for her contribution in the field of music. She has acted in Girish Kasaravalli's Gulabi Talkies and Prakash Belawadi's Stumble-both National award-winning films. 'Playgrounds', a short film she co-wrote and directed, won the best film award in the Hong Kong Film Festival and at IFFLA, Los Angeles. She has been awarded the prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for her contribution to the field of Bhav Sangeet and the Kempegowda State Award for her contribution in the field of music. She has been a part of many international and interdisciplinary collaborations. She is keen on collaborating with multidisciplinary artists.

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Dr Usha Ramanathan, Law Researcher

Dr Usha Ramanathan is a law researcher working on the frontier between law, poverty and rights. She was a member of the of the 2014 Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Government of India) High Level Committee on Socio-Economic, Health and Educational Status of Tribal Communities of India.

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Ms Angela Rangad, Member, Thma U Rangli Juki (TUR)

Ms Angela Rangad lives and works in Meghalaya. She is trained in Anthropology and Law and is one the founders of Thma U Rangli-Juki (TUR) and Workers' Power. Angela has played a seminal role in establishing the Meghalaya Right to Information Movement and has been involved in causes and issues that promote the use of RTI to seek accountability. She has coordinated the first set of social audits of MGNREGA in the State. She is a key member of many progressive movements and campaigns in the State advocating for and promoting equal rights for dignity and justice to all residents of the State, including the right to work, right to self-determination, environmental justice, right to food and right to information.

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Dr Joseph Riamei, Assistant Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice (CODP), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)

Dr Joseph Riamei is Assistant Professor at School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati Campus and Chairperson, Centre for Community Organisation & Development Practice. He has academic career spanning over one decade of teaching and research on Conflict and Peace, Social Action, Advocacy and Movement, Tribes and Governance, Community Organization and Development Practice, Issues of Identity and Livelihood, Environmental Movements, Project Management, etc., Dr. Riamei has published books on Voluntarism in Tribal Society and Asymmetrical Federalism in North East India. He



has published numerous articles on Tribes and Governance, District Councils, Conflicts, Diversity and Inclusive Policies, Politics and Tribe, Federalism, Social Work Education, etc. in peer reviewed journals and edited volumes. He has authored several reports and research project for the Government agencies and Non-profit organizations.

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Dr Abhinandan Sakia, Assistant Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati

Dr Abhinandan Saikia is an Assistant Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati off-campus, Assam. He is associated with the Centre for Ecology, Environment and Sustainable Development and also presently the Associate Dean – School of Social Sciences and Humanities. Prior to this, he has worked in organizations like National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS - CSIR), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - India, New Delhi and the United Nations Development Organizations (UNDP), New Delhi. Academically, Dr. Saikia is from an interdisciplinary background. Graduated in Botany, he did his post graduation in Environment Management from Forest Research Institute (FRI) University at Dehradun. Later he completed his doctoral studies in Science Policy from the Centre for Studies in Science Policy (CSSP), under the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. His thematic areas of interest are – Agroforestry, Biodiversity, Common Property Resources, Sustainable Innovation Studies, and System Ecology. He has been involved in various forums related to the discourse on economy and ecology.

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Prof Rekha Shangpliang, Faculty, Department of Sociology, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU)

Prof. Rekha M Shangpliang is a faculty at the Department of Sociology, NEHU. Her areas of specialization are Sociology of Environment, Sociology of Gender, and Family and Kinship studies. She has 3 books to her credit namely, Forest in the Life of the Khasi (2010), Socio-Economic Dimension of Forest among the Khasi (2013), Environment and Society in the context of North East India (2018), besides having a number of chapters in edited books and articles in national and international journals. She has conducted a number of projects on Forest legislations in Meghalaya, women and sustainability, Khasi matriliney, Politics of Environment etc. Her notable contribution is the production of a Documentary on “Mawlynnong-God’s own garden” which was released on 5th June,2014.

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Dr Jyotishman Teye, Assistant Professor, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Gauhati University

Dr Jyotishman Teye who hailed from Assam earned his MA (2011) and PhD (2018) from the prestigious Department of Anthropology at Gauhati University. He served as a Research Associate at the North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC). Later Mr. Teye also served as



a guest lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, at Gauhati University while simultaneously pursuing his PhD. He was granted the prestigious ICSSR doctoral fellowship (2013-2014) during his PhD pursuit. During his academic journey, Mr. Teye also lent his insights as a Research Associate at the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD). Currently, he is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Gauhati University where he teaches Social and Cultural Anthropology. He is also a member of Bharat Soka Gakkai (BSG), a grassroots activity-based NGO striving to contribute to peace & sustainability. His scholarly pursuits encompass a diverse range of interests, including traditional conflict resolution among tribes, religion, Buddhist study, indigenous knowledge, climate change, urban studies, and others.

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