



**ICSSR (New Delhi)**

**Sponsored Research Project**

**LAND, IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NAGALAND**

**Submitted by**

**Prof. Kedilezo Kikhi  
Department of Sociology, TU, Assam**

## **Acknowledgements**

At the very outset, we are thankful to ICSSR, New Delhi for sponsoring, supporting and assisting us from the very beginning of the project till its completion. Dr. C. Joshua Thomas, Deputy Director of ICSSR NERC deserves a special mention for supporting and guiding us throughout the process of the project. The Research Associate, Ms. Jagritee Ghosh and the 7 Field Investigators has work very hard in venturing out to the difficult research sites for data collection and subsequently completed the project.

We are thankful to all the subject experts especially from the Department of Sociology for conducting training (in terms of methodology and research tools for doing field work) to the Field Investigators at the initial phase of the project. We are also very grateful to the Department of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Tezpur University for supporting us with logistics and other necessary requirements, including timely financial support.

We are thankful to the librarian and library staffs of the Ratan Tata Library, University of Delhi; Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi; Central Library, University of Delhi; Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, Teen Murti Bhawan; Indian Social Institute, New Delhi; Central Library, Tezpur University; Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati; North East Social Research Institute, (NESRC) Guwahati; Indian council of Social Science Research, North East Regional Centre (ICSSR, NERC) Shillong; Central Library, North Eastern Hill university; and Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures, (DBCIC), Shillong.

Lastly, but not the least, our sincere thanks go to the Naga villages, the village elders, community leaders and every individual respondent who participated in social survey as well as FGDs.

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page Numbers</b>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	2
<i>Project Team</i>	4
<i>Map</i>	5
<i>Executive Summary</i>	6-11
<i>Distribution of village profile and related data</i>	12-13
Chapters	14-75
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Chapter 2: Land relations	
Chapter 3: Customary laws and legal laws	
Chapter 4: Development	
Chapter 5: Identity	
Chapter 6: Conclusion	
<i>Policy Implications</i>	76-77
Appendices	
<i>Bibliography</i>	78-81
<i>Research Questions:</i>	82-90
<i>Village Profiles</i>	
<i>FGD Questions</i>	

**Project Team (Project Tree /Chart)****Project Director:**

Prof. Kedilezo Kikhi

**Research Associate:**

Ms. Jagritee Ghosh

**Field Investigators:**

Ms. Imlikumla Jamir – Wokha & Mokokchung District

Mr. Thepfusalie Theunuo - Kohima District

Mr. Kho-O H. Keyho – Phek District

Mr. Kho-O H. Keyho & Mr. Thepfusalie Theunuo - Peren District

Mr. Ikaho Yepthomi - Dimapur, Kiphire & Zunheboto District

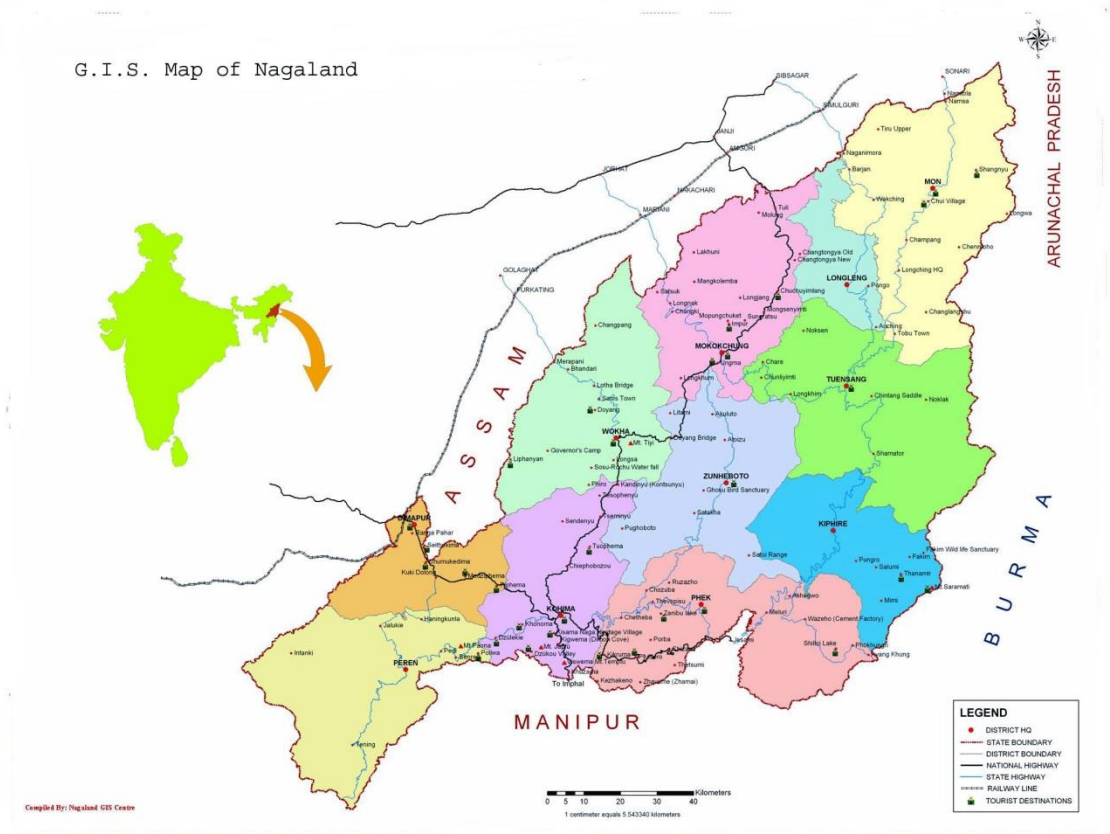
Ms. Phenmei Phom - Kiphire & Longleng District

Ms. B. Wanjen Konyak – Kiphire & Mon District

Ms. Yanthrong Chang - Tuensang District

# Map of Nagaland

G.I.S. Map of Nagaland



## **Executive Summary**

### Introduction

Nagaland has emerged as a State, carved out of the Naga Hills districts of Assam and North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) Province in 1963. The term 'Naga' is used as a generic term to refer to the various (Naga) tribal groups residing in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Myanmar, who are substantially different from each other. Nagaland has sixteen different recognised groups including non-Naga groups, the Kukis and Kacharis. The 16 major tribes are Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khamniungan, Kachari, Kuki, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sema, Sangtam, Yimchungru, Zeliang and selected sub-tribes like Tikhir and Rongmai. These communities are spread across the 11 districts of the state – Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Phek, Peren, Tuensang, Wokha and Zunheboto. The different groups differ in dress, language, ritual, custom and in their land ownership and land usage patterns. The Angamis are comparatively more democratic than the chief dominated Konyaks. However, what is similar in the context of all Nagas as in the case of all tribes is the prominence of land. Land, rather village land is undoubtedly still the most important identity marker of the Nagas. For instance, amongst the Angami tribal group, a person whose geographical identity is known but unseen is referred to as coming from '*mikho shekemomi ena*' which when translated would mean 'a person coming from a place whose smoke is not known'. Such a person commands relatively less respect, neither marriage to such a person is considered to be honourable too. The rights and rituals related to land are upheld by customary law which is protected by article 371(A) of the Indian constitution. In spite of these differences, all the Naga tribes tries constitute itself as one distinct group with its own internal diversity.

### **Aims of the Project**

The project study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To re-look at the complex relationship between land, tribal identity and the development process in the context of Nagaland.

2. To examine the social, political and economic implications of the systems of land ownership prevailing in the state of Nagaland.
3. To undertake an in-depth account of changing land relations and ownership patterns, land alienation and ethnic conflicts.
4. To identify the development interest of a transforming Naga tribal society.
5. To understand both short-term and long-term benefits and limitations of culture and tradition-friendly ownership system.
6. To explore and prepare a new system of land ownership without cascading effect on the development and enterprising spirit.
7. To explore the feasibility of contextualizing the modernization process inculcating customary laws and indigenous traditions.

### **Major Research Questions**

1. How to comprehend and document the complex interface of land, identity and development in the context of Nagaland?
2. How crucial is land as an identity marker to construct the identity of different Naga ethnic groups?
3. How the land of the different ethnic groups in Nagaland is regulated by the customary laws?
4. How crucial are changing land relations to affect cultural system especially community land and individual rights?
5. What are the contemporary conflicting issues of land ownership and modern legal laws?
6. How can we strike a balance between administrative and legal systems with community ownership and customary laws for effective development and enterprising spirit?
7. What are the main issues around land alienation? To what extent are ethnic conflicts and land alienation feeding each other?

8. How severe is the issue of land mortgage with community ownership which is a prerequisite for investment by any financial institutions?
9. How can we explore or could there be alternative system of land ownership to contextualise modernisation process and development?
10. Can we make the indigenous people plan or decide the type of development they need rather than seen as receivers or beneficiaries of the process of development?
11. Can the people of the state play decisive roles in the effective implementation of development programmes?

The idea of land, identity and development are very complex in itself and more so if it is to be seen in relation to each other. This idea turns more intricate when one tries to go in with a comparative logic of comparing and weighing of a Phom with an Angami or may be an Ao with a Yimchungru in terms of the superimposition of the ideas of land, identity and development. In that the project has fairly been successful in achieving most in dealing with the research questions.

The term 'land' itself is comprehensive because it includes different types of land used for different purposes, as also for forests and water resources. In an agrarian society as Nagaland, land can be of two basic types, viz. agricultural land and non-agricultural land. While agricultural land is used for cultivation, non-agricultural land includes house sites, grazing grounds, and land set aside for other non-agricultural activities. Talking about traditional agriculture, an indigenous form of farming is the result of the co-evolution of local, social and environmental systems. It exhibits a high level of ecological rationales expressed through the intensive use of local knowledge and natural resources, including the management of agro-biodiversity in the form of diversified agricultural systems. The traditional agriculture among Naga tribes-people is an extremely complex system. Farming families, in order to sustain their livelihood, adopt and maintain diverse forms of agricultural practices mainly a) terraced rice cultivation (TRC), b) shifting or jhum cultivation, c) home garden, and d) firewood reserve forests, simultaneously. Intimate knowledge of the micro-climate prevailing in the village enables traditional farmers to select crops and its varieties for cultivation which is important for food security required by the family. The family also has to take



into consideration the physical features such as the aspect, slope and soil fertility status of the field to be cultivated. Areas put to other forms of traditional agriculture such as firewood forests, rice nursery sites and home/kitchen gardens are integral parts of the agricultural practices. The ownership rights or property vary from tribe-to-tribe, village-to-village. Among the different Naga tribes, both the systems of 'individual' and 'community' rights, which persons and group of persons separately have over the things, prevail in the society. However, in all the communities the ownership of land is based on gender lines. Almost in no community do women own land.

There is a clear-cut distinction between the items of property, the types of rights that could be exercised over such property and the rules governing the exercise of such rights, and finally the types of groups and individuals that may exercise these rights. And the customary laws of the land are a custodian of the rights and rituals related to the land. Although, article 371A is the custodian of the customary laws in the state, a lot of the customs and practices of the communities have changed and withered due to conversion to Christianity. For example, the chief-ship among the Chakhesangs is no more practiced in Dzulhami village in Phek district. This kind of changes in the traditional structure leads to unique cases of identity. Thus, one finds a complex superimposition of land, traditional structures to identity. However, there is emergence of new elites and this creates a different kind of identity. These new elites may be the educated youngsters, job holders, businessmen and village council members. Therefore, one could experience an identity assertion in terms of village to land in a very traditional sense as provider to land as status and sources of income generation. The example of horticulture and plantation carried out by 'rich individuals' in the village is a good example. To have a clearer sense, it can be stated that almost all the community has its own way of land transfer which is driven by customary but then there is this case of individuals gaining land which is driven by the lack of money. People sell land to bear the cost of health and education.

Migration is a common process and human history is a history of migration. But if one has to locate the trends of migration in Nagaland, one finds a very specific trend of out-migration from the villages to the town for better life chances. Again, one very

interesting fact is that how people from more far-flung villages come to a relatively 'developed' villages and work as daily wage labourers in agricultural fields or in construction sites. This is a very interesting phenomenon because it impacts the agricultural production. Nagaland is chiefly an agricultural state as most of its people are cultivators. But the question is what happens to the agricultural production when most of the youngsters out-migrate to towns or do not aspire to be cultivators? Does this lead to agricultural insufficiency and dependency? So, there is a constant tussle between the customary and the modern life chances. And it is these factors which are converting customarily owned lands to individual or private lands. Here, also comes the dimension of development in the villages of Nagaland. The term 'development' is generally used in connection with the poor or under-developed regions. Post-developmentalists call development as delusion and disappointment and failure and crisis as steady companion of development. So very often, post-developmentalists call development as pregnant with various promises but never able to deliver it. Post-developmentalists call development agenda as a chaotic situation, where modernity has failed traditional ways and the working-class people are in no man's land. Thus, the post-developmentalists call development a myth. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse puts it, the meaning of development has changed overtime from resource management and trusteeship in 1850's to growth (modernization theory by Rostow) 1950's to engineering disasters in 1990's as post-developmentalists would put it (Pieterse, 2010). Nevertheless, if development is to be understood as empowerment and equal opportunity as argued by Amartya Sen, then it would mean improvement in the natural, economic, social, cultural and political conditions (1999). In both senses, development entails economic, social and cultural progress, including, in the latter sense, finer ethical ideals and higher moral values. Development means improvement in a complex of linked natural, economic, social, cultural and political conditions. In the context of northeast, critiques argue, under the present system of development planning, people do not plan or decide rather are seen as receivers or beneficiaries of the process of development. Further still to understand development in Nagaland, one has to understand Village Councils (VCs) and Village Development Boards (VDBs).

The Nagaland Village and Area Councils Act, 1978 is meant for the whole of Nagaland. It mentions that every recognised village shall have a Village Council. A Village Council

shall consist of members, chosen by villagers in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages, and the same would be recognised by the State Government. The Act also says that the hereditary village Chiefs, Gaon Burahs (GBs) and Angs (Chiefs) shall be ex-officio members of such Council and shall have voting right. The Act also determines the qualification of the members apart from the power and duties of the council. A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a member of the Village Council unless he is a citizen of India and has attained the age of 25 years. The Act also pens down the criteria for the selection of the Chairman. The Village Council will choose a member as Chairman of the Council. During the absence of the Chairman, from any sitting of the village Council a member of the Council nominated by the Chairman shall act as Chairman. Village Development Boards are unique to the state of Nagaland. Village Development Board is a statutory body, functioning under the primary village authority known as Village Council. The institution of the VDBs, which are synonymous with the concept of decentralized grass root level planning in Nagaland, was first set up in 1976 in Ketsapomi village in Phek District on an experimental basis. Village Development Board acts as the development wing of the Village Council. So, all the schemes in the village pass through the hands of Village Development Board. Therefore, on the one hand when being a member of the Village Council and Village Development Board becomes a marker of new identity, on the other hand, people in most of the focus group discussions (FGDS conducted) have complained about rampant corruption. People have also articulated about the vicious cycle of corruption and unemployment. One could also find disparity between the eastern and the western Nagas in terms of income and modern-day amenities. Also, the identity politics of the eastern Nagas is very different from the western Nagas. Therefore, to conclude, land, identity and development amongst the Nagas are complex and are superimposed over one another.

To

Date: 25/11/2016

The Dean, Research & Development  
Tezpur University, Assam

Ref. Memo No. DoRD/Sociology/KK/20-152

Registration No: DoRD/Sociology/KK/20-152

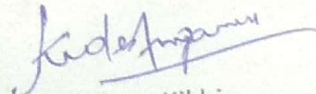
**Subject:** Submission of final UC/SE for the Project Land Identity and Development in Nagaland

Sir,

I am submitting herewith the final UC/SE of the above mentioned project sponsored by ICSSR, for you necessary record.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi  
Project Director

~~1419~~

SL-100  
2015-16

F/4379  
12/9/16

To  
The Finance Officer  
Tezpur University  
Tezpur 784 028, Assam

Ref. Regd.No. DoRD/Sociology/KK/20-152

Sub: Request for signature in the Statement of Expenditure on verification for the research project "Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland".

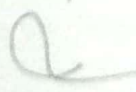
Sir,

I request your kind authority to sign the Statement of Expenditure on verification of the ICSSR sponsored research project "Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland" which needs to be submitted to ICSSR, New Delhi.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi)  
Project Director  
12/9/16

~~DRCA~~  
For NAB  
  
12/9/16

Project duration is 2 years w.e.f. 24th 2013





**TEZPUR UNIVERSITY**  
**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR**  
(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament)  
TEZPUR – 784 028 :: ASSAM

**FORM GFR 19 A**  
(See Government of India's Decision (1) below Rule 150)

Form of Utilization Certificate

SINo	Letter No. & Date	Amount in Rupees	Certified that out of Rs 15,00,000.00 (Rupees Fifteen Lac) only grants-in-aid sanctioned and released <u>Rs 12,75,000.00</u> during the Financial Year 2013-15 in favour of Registrar, Tezpur University Napam Assam, under Indian Council of Social Science Research Letter No. given in the margin and <u>Rs Nil</u> on account of unspent balance of the previous year, a sum of ₹ 12,75,000.00 (Twelve Lac Seventy Five Thousand only) has been utilized as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016 for the purpose of ICSSR funded research project entitle "Land Identity and Development in Nagaland" for which it was sanctioned, leaving an unspent balance of <u>Rs Nil</u> as on 31.03.2016
1	F.No.02/97/2012/ NER(ST)/RP Dtd 21.03.2013	15,00,000.00	

Certified that I have satisfied myself that the conditions on which the grants-in-aid was sanctioned have been duly fulfilled and that I have exercised the following checks to see that the money was actually utilized for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.

Kinds of checks exercised.

1. Grants in aid Registrar.
2. Statement of Expenditure.
3. Audited Annual account verified and checked by C&AG.

Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi  
Project Director

For SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY & CO.  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

CA. SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY  
(Proprietor)  
Membership No.- 305054

Finance Officer  
26.11.16  
Tezpur University  
**Finance Officer**  
Tezpur University

Registrar  
Tezpur University  
**Registrar**  
Tezpur University

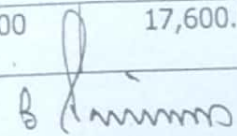
Contact Nos.

Vice Chancellor: 03712 – 267 003 (O) :: Fax: 03712 – 267 006  
Registrar: 03712 – 267 004 (O) :: Telefax: 03712 – 267 005

**Annexure A: Statement of Expenditure Incurred during the Period: (1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)**  
The following Expenditure was incurred during the period and review:

**ICSSR Sponsored Project: Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland**  
**(Registration No. DoRD/Sociology/KK/20-152)**

Sl. No.	Items	Amount approved in accordance with the sanction order	Expenditure incurred before the beginning of the period under review (02.04.2013 to 31.03.2015)	Expenditure incurred during the period under review (01.04.15 to 31.03.16)	Total expenditure at the end of the period under review	Balance of the grant still available	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>A. Recurring</b>							
1	Personal Requirement			-	2,86,000.00	0.00	-
	a. Research Associate (RA)	2,86,000.00	2,86,000.00	-	2,86,000.00		-
	b. Research Investigator	2,31,000.00	2,26,000.00	7,800.00	2,33,800.00	(-) 2,800.00	-
	c. Typing Assistant	22,000.00	-	nil	nil	22,000.00	-
2	Travel: Fieldwork/Hiring Vehicles	4,75,000.00	1,99,904.00	1,53,632.00	3,53,536.00	1,21,464.00	-
				nil	nil	30,000.00	-
3	Data Processing	30,000.00	-	-	14,967.00	15,033.00	-
4	Stationery and Printing	30,000.00	14,967.00	-	47,292.00	17,708.00	-
5	Books and Journals	65,000.00	28,120.00	19,172	31,200.00	3,800.00	31,200 adjusted for RA fellowship
6	Contingency Expenses	35,000.00	-	31,200.00	31,200.00		
<b>B. Non-Recurring</b>							
7	Equipment/s (2 laptops + printer +	2,41,190.00	2,19,102.00	17,600.00	2,36,702.00	4,488.00	-

  
Finance Officer  
Tezpur University



	camera + 3 voice recorders + 4 External Hard Drives)						
8	Overhead Charges/ Institutional Charges	88,050.00	55,031.00	16,472.00	71,503.00	16,547.00	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15,03,240.00</b>	<b>10,29,124.00</b>	<b>2,45,876.00</b>	<b>12,75,000.00</b>	<b>2,31,040.00</b> (-) 2800.00 <b>= 2,28,240.00</b>	-

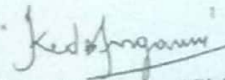
**Note:**

- a. Total amount sanctioned for the project = Rs. 15,00,000.00  
b. Amount received from the Council before the beginning of the period under review (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> installments ) = Rs. 10,50,000.00  
c. Amount received from the Council during/for the period under review (4<sup>th</sup> installment) = Rs. 2,25,000.00  
d. Total amount received from the Council (b+c) at the end of the period under review = Rs. 12,75,000.00


Actual Expenditure  
(Up to date, 2016) = Rs. 12,75,000.00

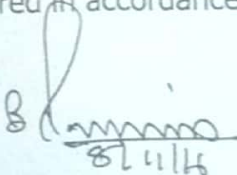
- Fund Available = Rs. 0.00

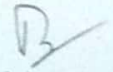
Certified that the expenditure of the scheme has been incurred in accordance with the budget approved by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.

  
(Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi)  
Project Director

For SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY & CO.  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

  
CA. SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY  
(Proprietor)  
Membership No.- 305054

  
8/11/16  
Finance Officer  
Tezpur University  
Finance Officer  
Tezpur University

  
Registrar  
Tezpur University  
Registrar  
Tezpur University



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY: TEZPUR UNIVERSITY  
(A Central University)  
Tezpur – 784 028, Assam, India

Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi  
Project Director

Date: ~~18.10.2016~~

5/12/16

Ref. F.No.02/97/2012(NEP)-RP

To

Mrs. Revathy Vishwanath  
Asst. Director  
In-charge, Research Projects  
ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg,  
JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067  
011-26742351

Sub: Submission of the **Final Report** and Utilization Certificate (GFR 19-A) for the Research Project *Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland*.

Respected Madam,

I am submitting herewith the final report of the research project in triplicate (2 hard copies + 1 soft copy) for your kind necessary action. The final report is inclusive of the short (executive) summary.

I am also attaching an up-to-date expenditure statement (for your reference) and Utilization Certificate (GFR 19-A).

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely

(Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi)

Enclosures:

4. Final Report (2 hard copies & 1 soft copy) inclusive of the Executive Summary.
5. Annexure A – Up-to-Date Statement of Expenditure.
6. Utilization Certificate (GFR 19-A)

Copy to: 1. The Member-Secretary, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067.  
2. Finance Branch, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067.

Dr. Kikhi

**Subject:** Re: Expert Comments  
**From:** kedilezo kikhi (kedithejakikhi@yahoo.co.in)  
**To:** rpr@icssr.org;  
**Date:** Monday, 16 January 2017 4:30 PM

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the comments of the expert on the Project report "Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland". I was on leave and i could join my duty just today. I could not respond to your mail earlier. But i will sent the undertaking certificate from the institute with regard to assets/books, etc. at the earliest.

Kindly give me few days.

Warm Regards,  
Dr. Kedilezo Kikhi  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Sociology, Tezpur University, Assam  
Email id: kedithejakikhi@yahoo.co.in  
Phone No: 08011546650  
[http://www.tezu.ernet.in/dsoc/people/faculty\\_profile/Kedi.pdf](http://www.tezu.ernet.in/dsoc/people/faculty_profile/Kedi.pdf)

On Monday, 16 January 2017 4:17 PM, "rpr@icssr.org" <rpr@icssr.org> wrote:

F. No. 02/97/2012-13/RP

Dear Dr. Khikhi,

Under Grant-in-aid Scheme rules of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, your report entitled "**Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland**" was refereed to an expert for evaluation. We have received the comments from the expert and a copy of the same is sent herewith for information.

in accordance with the rules of ICSSR an undertaking certificate has to be furnished to the ICSSR stating that the assets/ equipments/ books purchased for the Project out of the ICSSR grant have been transferred donated to institute/ university library duly signed by the library head of Affiliated Institute

Incharge  
Research Projects  
ICSSR, New Delhi-110067  
Ph: 011-26716690



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY: TEZPUR UNIVERSITY  
(A Central University)  
Tezpur – 784 028, Assam, India

Prof. Kedllezo Kikhi  
Project Director

Date: 30.03.2017

Ref. F.No.02/97/2012-13/RP mail dated 16 January 2017

To

Mrs. Revathy Vishwanath  
Asst. Director  
In-charge, Research Projects  
ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg,  
JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067  
011-26716690

Sub: Submission of **Undertaking Certificates** for the Research Project *Land, Identity and Development in Nagaland*.

Respected Sir/Madam,

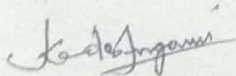
With reference to your mail dated January 26, 2017, I am submitting herewith the undertaking certificates with regard to the assets/equipment/books purchased for the project out of the ICSSR grant which have been transferred donated to the institute/university library. The certificates submitting herewith are duly signed by the concerned authorities.

This is for your kind necessary perusal.

Kindly sent an acknowledgement on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

(Prof. Kedillezo Kikhi)



Enclosures:

1. Undertaking certificate – asset/equipment
2. Undertaking certificate –books

Copy to:

1. The Member - Secretary, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067.
2. Finance Branch, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110067.

off. copy