

## Indigenous and Tribal Faith & Culture (ITFC)

Plurality is the beauty of India and heterogeneousness defines the very existence of Assam with its spread along the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra and Barak River. Assam amplifies multiplicity because of its disparate tribes, culture, diaspora & dialect. Further the assortment of customs, norms, ethnicity, religion, religious practices of the indigenous people of Assam not only adds to its rich culture but also imbues mysticism for people outside Assam, specially the current generation who finds such diversity intriguing and mesmerising. In recent times a realization has dawned upon all that this rich biodiversity of Assam needs **Preservation, Protection and Promotion**.

As a result, the Govt of Assam under the eminent leadership of **Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma** has taken a laudatory step of creating a new flagship Administrative Department entirely dedicated for the nourishment, upliftment, sustenance and evolution of **Indigenous & Tribal Faith and Culture of Assam**, namely the "Indigenous & Tribal Faith and Culture Department". This department has been created vide **Notification No.AR.38/2021/34 dated 30th July, 2021**.

The mandates of the Department are :

- i. To act as the nodal Department for the promotion, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for the welfare and all-round development of the indigenous tribal people of the State;
- ii. To look after the proper implementation of the Acts related with the protection of the tribal people in the State;
- iii. To be responsible for the protection, preservation of the indigenous faith and culture of the tribal people of the State by virtue of various means viz by compilation in book formats (both hard and soft formats), in academic libraries/digital libraries, through regular promotional activities, podcasting/vodcasting methods etc;
- iv. To ensure provision of adequate funds under various schemes/programmes for the holistic activities in the protection and preservation of the indigenous tribes of the State;
- v. To explore scope for using the indigenous tribal knowledge in other fields like healthcare, education, agriculture, culture, etc. Efforts should be made to link and incorporate new knowledge with ethnic characteristics;
- vi. To help incorporate/monitor schemes and programmes implemented exclusively for the protection and preservation of the indigenous tribes of the State;
- vii. To identify the problems/lacunae/obstacles regarding the protection and preservation of the indigenous tribes of the State and suggest remedial measures;
- viii. To take up such other activities as may be entrusted by the State Government from time to time;

The Department shall take steps to preserve the various ethnic activities of Indigenous Tribal people including the Bodo Indigenous people in their way of playing, dancing, weaving and playing instruments.

The focal point of the Department is to act as a Nodal Department for Promotion, Formulation and Implementation of policies and programmes that would boost the customs, faith, and culture of Indigenous and Tribal people of Assam and work towards the welfare of their upliftment and development.

The department shall in the near future take up various schemes/ programmes for Protection, Preservation & Promotion of Indigenous Tribes of the state while at the same time utilise the rich Native & Tribal Knowledge in Healthcare, Medicine, Education, Agronomy, Forestry, Crops, Cultivation, Architecture etc.

Government of Assam has specially created this Department to espouse ancient aboriginal knowledge, customs, traditions etc with modern methodology and utilise both ergonomically for the development of Assam.

With this initiative the State Govt. aims in making its progeny aware of the rich Tribal and Indigenous Knowledge and Customs and welcomes people from these ethnic groups to register and furnish information on their beliefs and tradition. Government of Assam also welcomes adequate representation of the ethnic tribes and groups and desires to work towards elevation of the same through this department.

Vide Notification No. ITFC.40/2021/9 dated 27th October 2021, a new Directorate of Indigenous & Tribal Faith and Culture, Assam under the administration of Indigenous & Tribal Faith and Culture Department was created. This is in addition to the three existing Directorates namely:

1. Directorate of Museum
2. Directorate of Archaeology
3. Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies

Now all the four Directorates under the Department of Indigenous & Tribal Faith & Culture collectively shall work with the department of ITFC to Promote, Preserve, Protect Tribal and Indigenous Knowledge and Customs and make the people aware of the ethnic civilization of Assam and the value and fortune it adds to the State of Assam.

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