

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2025 - 2026





About RIWATCH

A Year of Cultural Engagement, Learning and Meaningful Connections

The year 2025–26 was a vibrant and fulfilling period in the journey of RIWATCH. Throughout the year, the institute remained deeply engaged with communities, cultural practitioners, scholars, students, and visitors through a variety of programmes centred on heritage, traditions, research, and cultural understanding. Each activity reflected RIWATCH's continuing effort to preserve and promote the living traditions and indigenous knowledge systems of Arunachal Pradesh and North-East Bharat. Over the course of the year, RIWATCH organised seminars, workshops, exhibitions, interaction sessions, cultural celebrations, literary activities, and field-based documentation programmes. These initiatives created spaces for dialogue, learning, and exchange, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Particular attention was given to the preservation of mother languages, oral traditions, traditional practices, and intangible cultural heritage through community participation and documentation efforts.

The RIWATCH Museum continued to emerge as an important cultural and educational space, welcoming students, researchers, delegates, officials, armed forces personnel, and visitors from different parts of the country. Programmes such as cultural exchange visits, open mic sessions, exhibitions, and heritage awareness activities added new energy to the campus and encouraged greater involvement of youth and local communities.

The year also witnessed stronger collaborations with educational institutions, literary organisations, cultural groups, and researchers working in the field of heritage and indigenous studies. Publications, exhibitions, and field engagements undertaken during the year further strengthened RIWATCH's commitment towards documenting and sharing the cultural richness of the region.

More than a year of activities and programmes, 2025–26 was a year of relationships, learning, and collective effort. Through continued engagement with communities and institutions, RIWATCH carried forward its vision of preserving cultural memory, encouraging dialogue, and creating meaningful connections between tradition and contemporary society.

Official inspection visit of the NEC



The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), Under-Secretary Miss Parna Sahana, visited the RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML), Khinjili, Roing, for an official inspection of the ongoing project titled "Promotion of Literary Development of Mother Languages of Arunachal Pradesh". The project is supported by the North Eastern Council (NEC) through the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Government of Arunachal Pradesh.



Miss Sahana commended RCML for its impactful work in documenting and promoting the linguistic heritage of the state. She appreciated RCML's activities including number of publications in different languages and language promotional programs undertaken among the native speakers, school students, and teachers. She encouraged the Centre to conduct more research documentation and awareness programs and emphasized the importance of developing more children's literature in mother languages.

She also released three pictorial glossary books in the Singpho language, published by RCML. These publications are the result of a collaborative effort between RCML's research team and members of the Singpho community.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sokhep Kri, Director of the Department of Indigenous Affairs, expressed his deep appreciation for RCML's work and urged the Centre to expand its initiative to all tribal communities across the state. He assured continued support from the Department in these endeavours.

Shri Vijay Swami, Executive Director RIWATCH emphasized the need of language preservation in maintaining cultural identity. He reiterated RIWATCH's commitment in documenting and thereby safeguarding the diverse linguistic landscape of Arunachal Pradesh through audio-visual documentation.

Dr. Mechek Sampar Awan, Centre Head of RCML, presented a detailed report of the Centre's activities since its inception and the future plans to strengthen language documentation and resource development.

Dr. Vilhousienno Neli, Research Officer at RCML, highlighted the critical need of documenting folksongs that carry oral traditions, history and identity which are at high risk of being lost. Dr. Kombong Darang, in his remarks on RCML's audio-visual documentation initiatives, underscored the role of technology in preserving endangered languages and cultural practices.

The visit of MDoNER Under Secretary reflects the ministry's commitment for the preservation of mother languages and culture. The initiative aims to support communities in safeguarding their linguistic and cultural legacies that have been under threat of extinction in the recent periods.

A New Cultural Landmark: Manau Shadung Inaugurated

On 10 May 2025, the Manau Shadung of the Singpho community was inaugurated at RIWATCH to promote cultural heritage. During the event, two Singpho children's books—Ruhkum (Numerals) and Shingra Măka hteq Grupyin Măshă (Nature and Environment)—as part of the Jinghpaw Ga Shărin La Gaq (Let Us Learn Singpho) were released as an initiative to support language revitalization among youth.



Documentation of Anja

On 08 June 2025, RIWATCH documented Anja, the traditional funeral song of the Idu Mishmi community. Considered one of the most significant oral traditions of the community, Anja remains among the least documented cultural practices of the Idu Mishmi people.

According to the singer, only a handful of individuals today are fluent in performing this sacred song tradition. The documentation reflects the sincere commitment of RIWATCH towards preserving and safeguarding the endangered cultural heritage and oral traditions of the indigenous communities of the state that are facing the threat of extinction.



RIWATCH Observes World Environment Day 2025 with Eco-Conscious Initiatives



RIWATCH observed World Environment Day 2025 with a series of meaningful environmental activities under the global theme “Beat Plastic Pollution.” This theme, aligned with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), highlights the urgent need to tackle the growing crisis of plastic waste and its long-term impact on our planet. To mark the occasion, RIWATCH organized a campus-wide cleanliness drive, informative sessions on sustainable practices, and a special plantation programme to reinforce the importance of ecological balance and responsible citizenship.

All the staff members and interns actively participated in the day’s initiatives, demonstrating their dedication to environmental protection and sustainable development. As a token of appreciation and encouragement, winners of the eco-activity competition were presented with plant saplings, which they ceremoniously planted on the institute campus.

This symbolic gesture served as a reminder that every small step contributes to a greener and healthier future. RIWATCH remains steadfast in its commitment to integrating environmental consciousness with its core mission of preserving indigenous cultures and traditions. The event not only promoted ecological responsibility but also strengthened the spirit of community and collaboration within the organization.

Workshop on Tawrā Mishmi

The RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML) conducted a two-day workshop on documentation of Tawrā (Taraon) Mishmi language and culture at the RIWATCH on 16 and 17 June 2026. The workshop focused on documentation and elicitation of extensive wordlists and sentence lists of Tawra Mishmi, aiming to preserve the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the community. The audio-visual recordings of language data were carried out at the RIWATCH recording studio for phonological and phonetic analysis and long-term digital archiving.



HIM SAMWAAD 2025

Governor Lt. General (Retd), K.T. Parnaik, in his inaugural address to HIM SAMWAAD-2025, a three-day national dialogue dedicated to critical issues facing the Himalayan region at Golden Jubilee Banquet Hall here on Monday, highlighted importance of collaboration among Govt bodies, academic institutions, civil society and local communities to build sustainable and resilient systems. This year's SAMWAAD centers on health and water, which he described as “deeply interconnected pillars of mountain life.”

He commended the joint efforts of Sewa International, RIWATCH, the GoAP and various NGOs for organizing the dialogue. Citing climate change and glacial retreat as major challenges, Parnaik called for urgent, community-led solutions in water conservation, sanitation, and healthcare, aligning with the goals of SDG 3 (good health) and SDG 6 (clean water).

He also announced a significant milestone — Arunachal Pradesh has achieved 100% saturation under Har Ghar Jal initiative, becoming the first NE state and 10th in India to do so and stressed, that true success lies in extending clean water access to all health facilities. Appreciating the State Biodiversity Action Plan, he advocated for integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches.

“Indigenous wisdom in healing, agriculture, and water management offers time-tested, sustainable solutions,” he reasoned. On development of border areas, he urged for a strategic approach that ensures national security, ecological balance, and local participation, especially in Vibrant Villages located near international borders. He also shared plans for joint initiatives with the Army and paramilitary forces to strengthen these regions.

He spoke warmly of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, calling them the heart and soul of the state. Their rich diversity, deep-rooted traditions, and close relationship with nature offer powerful lessons in sustainable living. He emphasized that this cultural strength must guide development efforts. He also outlined the transformative journey Arunachal is on with expanding roads, green energy, and a growing tourism sector, guided by sustainability. The Pakke Declaration, ban on single-use plastics, Sewa Aapke Dwar and innovations like the Anti-Drug App and GIS-based Terrain Mapping are key initiatives reflecting this balanced approach under the leadership of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

The governor emphasized the need for research, documentation, and preservation of oral traditions, announcing establishment of Tribal Research Centres at RGU and upcoming one at Arunachal Pradesh University at Pasighat as vital steps forward.

The event witnessed participation from thought leaders, including Sewa International Global Coordinator Shyam Parande, Ramakrishna Mission Hospital secretary Swami Vedasarananda, Indian Institute of Public Health's Prof. Anil Kaul and Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh President Dr. Emi Rumi, among others.

The next two would fostering cross-sectoral dialogue on environmental sustainability, health resilience, and indigenous innovation across the Himalayan belt.



Internship Programs at RIWATCH

During 2025, the Research Institute of World's Ancient Traditions, Cultures and Heritage (RIWATCH) hosted internship programs for students from reputed educational institutions to provide practical exposure to field research and community engagement. Three students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, completed their internship from 2 June to 21 July 2025, assisting in documentation, fieldwork, and language preservation activities. Similarly, six students from the Jomin Tayeng Model Degree College, Jia, completed their internship from 1 July to 30 August 2025, engaging in field-based studies, interviews, and data collection on individual topics related to culture, heritage, and education. The internship helped them develop practical research skills and understand community-based learning approaches, while strengthening RIWATCH's academic collaboration with regional and national institutions. Manoj George from University of Kerala was selected in the Vidya Bharti Uchcha Shiksha Sansthan Research Internship Programme in collaboration with IKS Division, MoE, completed his internship in RIWATCH.



Field Study Documenting Oral Traditions of Aka Hrusso, Sherdukpen, Sajolang Communities



The RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML) successfully concluded a comprehensive field study focusing on the Aka (Hrusso), Sherdukpen, and Sajolang (Miji) communities of West Kameng and Bichom districts, Arunachal Pradesh. The study was conducted over a 17-day period from 14th to 31st July 2025. The project aimed to document the oral traditions, folk narratives, and endangered linguistic knowledge of these indigenous groups. RCML researchers worked closely with elders, storytellers, and native speakers, recording a wide range of oral histories, folktales, and linguistic data—many of which face the risk of being lost forever.

This initiative is part of RCML's larger mission to revitalize and preserve indigenous languages and promote a reading culture through community engagement. A major outcome of the project will be the publication of folktale books, serving as educational tools and helping transmit traditional knowledge across generations.



Fifth Academic Council Meeting



Held on 10 August 2025 at the Conference Hall, RIWATCH Campus, the 5th Academic Council Meeting, chaired by Dr. A.K. Tripathy, aimed to strengthen academic programs and institutional collaborations. The Council approved the launch of a Certificate Course in Research Methodology, the publication of the RIWATCH Bulletin, and the organization of a National Seminar in December 2025. It also resolved to prepare a database of institutional MoUs to streamline partnerships. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by the Executive Director, reaffirming RIWATCH's commitment to academic quality and indigenous research excellence.

79th Independence Day Celebration

On 15 August 2025, RIWATCH celebrated the 79th Independence Day at its Campus with enthusiasm and patriotic spirit. Dr. Nandini D, Visiting Faculty and Academic Council Member, hoisted the National Flag and addressed the gathering, emphasizing unity, collective responsibility, and the sacrifices of freedom fighters. The event witnessed the presence of Director Shri Vijay Swami, Dr. M.S. Awan, faculty, research scholars, and staff members. The ceremony concluded with the singing of the National Anthem and light refreshments, symbolizing harmony and national pride within the RIWATCH family.



Book Distribution Program at Walong Secondary School

On 26 August 2025, the Research Institute of World's Ancient Traditions, Cultures and Heritage (RIWATCH) organized a Book Distribution Program at Walong Secondary School, Anjaw District, to promote awareness of the Meyor language and culture. Copies of the Meyor Pictorial Glossaries book were distributed among students from Classes 1 to 10 by the school's Principal. The initiative aimed to encourage linguistic learning and cultural appreciation among the younger generation, fostering pride in their heritage and supporting efforts toward the preservation of indigenous languages.



Exhibition of Ganpatis of the World at RIWATCH Museum

From 27th August to 6th September 2025, RIWATCH Museum organised a special exhibition titled “Exhibition of Ganpatis of the World” on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. The exhibition was displayed in the International Section of the museum and featured artistic representations of Lord Ganesha inspired by different cultural styles and traditions.

The exhibition provided visitors with an opportunity to witness the diverse forms and creative depictions of Lord Ganesha, reflecting the universal appeal of the deity beyond regional boundaries. Staff members, students, visitors, and well-wishers enthusiastically attended the exhibition and appreciated the blend of devotion, creativity, and cultural expression reflected in the displays. The event created a festive and spiritually enriching atmosphere within the museum premises and reflected RIWATCH's continuous efforts to promote cultural appreciation, artistic heritage, and community engagement through meaningful exhibitions and celebrations.



Free Ayurvedic Medical Camp for Knee and Back Pain



A three-day Free Ayurvedic Medical Camp was organized from 29 to 31 August 2025 at the Arogya – Centre for Nature Cure, RIWATCH Campus, under the guidance of Dr. Nani Sumpa. The camp aimed to promote traditional health practices and provide relief from chronic knee and back pain through therapies such as Sthanika Abhyanga, Janu Basti, Kati Basti, and Bashpa Sweda. A total of 24 participants benefited from the treatments and awareness sessions on preventive health. The camp successfully showcased RIWATCH's commitment to integrating indigenous wellness systems with community healthcare outreach.

Mathematics Laboratory Demonstration



On 10 September 2025, RIWATCH, in collaboration with the DDSE Office, Roing, organized a Lecture-cum-Demonstration on Mathematics Laboratory Creation at the Panchayat Hall, Roing. The objective was to promote experiential and joyful learning of mathematics in middle-level schools. The session was conducted by Mr. Rahul Kokil, Director of Sumanthan Learning Resources, Pune, who demonstrated over 50 educational games to simplify mathematical concepts. Inaugurated by Shri Obang Langkam, Block Education Officer, the event was attended by 29 mathematics teachers from 25 schools. The program encouraged teachers to adopt innovative pedagogical tools, enhancing classroom engagement and concept-based learning.

Inspection Visit by Secretary & Director, Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Government Arunachal Pradesh.

An official Inspection Visit was conducted on 15 September 2025 by Shri Pige Ligu, Secretary DIA, and Shri Sokhep Kri, Director DIA, to assess the ongoing programs and infrastructure at RIWATCH. The delegation was welcomed at the RIWATCH Museum and later toured the Arogya Centre, Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (CICH), RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML), and Documentation Centre.

A presentation on institutional progress, publications, and collaborations was delivered, followed by a visit to the IMCLS Project Site. The visit concluded with tea and discussions on future coordination, and the officials appreciated RIWATCH's contribution to indigenous knowledge and cultural preservation.



Vishwakarma Puja Celebrated at RIWATCH

RIWATCH celebrated Vishwakarma Puja with devotion and enthusiasm at its campus. The occasion was observed to honour Lord Vishwakarma, revered as the divine architect and symbol of craftsmanship, creativity, and skill.

The puja was performed by Shri Babul Gogoi, who offered prayers for the safety and well-being of all vehicles, agricultural equipment, tools, and other working resources used within the campus. Staff members, gardeners, drivers, and other support staff actively participated in the celebration, creating a spiritually uplifting and collective atmosphere. The programme concluded with the distribution of prasad and interactions among staff members, reflecting the spirit of unity, gratitude, and cultural togetherness within the RIWATCH family.



First Meeting of the Drafting Committee – Formation of UWATCH Bill



The first meeting of the Drafting Committee for the Formation of the UWATCH Bill was held on 18 September 2025 at the Gompa Guest House, Itanagar, under the chairmanship of Dr. Joram Begi. The meeting marked the initiation of the legislative drafting process for establishing the University of World's Ancient Traditions, Cultures and Heritage (UWATCH) as a private cultural university. Members discussed the university's vision, governance model, and differentiating features, deciding that RIWATCH will remain the parent body, while UWATCH will serve as its academic subsidiary. It was proposed that the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh will act as the Visitor and the Chairman of RIWATCH as the first Chancellor. Drafting responsibilities were distributed among members with timelines fixed for completion by October 2025. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri Harsh Singh, reaffirming collective commitment to the university's formation.

Fieldwork on Traditional Housing Architecture (August & September 2025)

The RIWATCH Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (RCICH), conducted field research on the traditional housing architecture of three tribal communities — the Idu Mishmi, Kaman Mishmi, and Meyor — in two phases between 11–15 August and 4–11 September 2025. The study aimed to document indigenous architectural knowledge through interviews, audio-visual recordings, and photographs for cultural preservation. In the first phase, fieldwork was carried out among the Idu Mishmi in Intaya, Mayu, Weya, and Bhismanagar villages of the Lower Dibang Valley District.





I Four elders — Sipa Melo, Buge Mena, Sodri Umpey, and Jumuti Mendo — shared insights on house construction, materials, and design. The team recorded 112 minutes of audio along with photographs for documentation. The second phase focused on the Meyor and Kaman Mishmi communities in Anjaw District, covering villages such as Mushai, Dhanbari, Walong, Sapkung, Tinai, Kalin, and Hawaii. Twelve elders from both groups were interviewed, resulting in over 480 minutes of recorded discussions and extensive visual documentation. The study contributes valuable data to RIWATCH's archives on indigenous architecture and cultural heritage.

Observed UNESCO International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage & Formal Inauguration of the RCICH

To mark the significance of both the establishment and the mandate of the RIWATCH Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (RCICH), the Centre observed the UNESCO International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage at RIWATCH on 17 October 2025. The observance highlighted the Centre's commitment to the preservation, promotion, and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, in alignment with UNESCO's vision and global cultural heritage frameworks.

The program was attended by a distinguished gathering comprising Heads of Departments, village elders, cultural practitioners, representatives of indigenous communities, scholars, and like-minded individuals engaged in cultural research and heritage activities. The presence of community elders and practitioners added depth and authenticity to the observance, reinforcing the idea that intangible cultural heritage lives and thrives within communities.

Keeping in focus the importance and spirit of the day, various intangible cultural expressions of indigenous tribes were showcased as part of the program. These cultural expressions encompassing traditional practices, performative arts, and symbolic rituals were presented to welcome the guests and to effectively communicate the significance of intangible cultural heritage to a wider audience. The presentations served not only as a cultural welcome but also as a powerful medium for raising awareness about the need to recognize, respect, and sustain living heritage traditions.

On the same occasion, the RIWATCH Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage was formally inaugurated by Prof. Ranjit Singha, Smt. Lui Chiba, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Lower Dibang Valley, and Shri Sokeph Kri, Director of Indigenous Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The inauguration marked the formal commencement of the Centre's institutional journey and reinforced its role as a key platform for cultural research, documentation, and heritage preservation in the region. Although the program was concise in duration, it was highly meaningful and impactful. It provided an important platform to engage a wider audience in discussions on the relevance of intangible cultural expressions and the urgent need to safeguard them in the face of rapid socio-cultural change.

The observance successfully reaffirmed RIWATCH's vision and commitment to strengthening community-based approaches to cultural heritage preservation and to fostering greater public awareness of intangible cultural heritage.



A remarkable initiative towards preserving indigenous traditions

The IGU-TAMRO Training Centre was inaugurated at Bizari Village, Lower Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh. Supported by the International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS) Delhi and implemented by RIWATCH & IMCLS, the centre aims to promote and sustain the traditional Igu practices and wisdom of the Idu Mishmi community.



Book on Tribal Folktales of Arunachal Pradesh Launched; Contributors Feted at RIWATCH

A book titled “The Songs of the Teteyii: Selected Folktales from the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh” was officially launched during the Celebration of International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage at RIWATCH. The book was officially released by Shri Sokhep Kri, Director, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, alongside Prof. Ranjit Singha, Retired Professor, Dibru College, Dibrugarh, and Smt. Lui Shiba, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Lower Dibang Valley District.

Edited by Dr Kombong Darang, Dr Vilhousienuo Neli and Dr Mechek Sampar Awan, this book is the culmination of a folktale writing competition organized by the RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML) in 2024. Eight folktales from different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were selected and compiled for publication. Dr. Awan, Centre Head of RCML, noted that this publication represents a comprehensive effort to promote and revitalize the oral traditions and languages of the state's diverse tribal groups. The folktales serve as a window into the worldview, values, and beliefs of these communities, reflecting their unique perspectives on life, nature, and human relationships. Bringing these stories into print ensure their accessibility to broader audiences while reinforcing their significance in contemporary discourse around cultural preservation.

The event honoured all the contributors to the publication, with special recognition for Dr. Prem Taba (First Prize), Nima Dorjee (Second Prize), and Subinay Mannow (Third Prize), who received certificates and prizes for their scholarly contributions.

Dr. Darang, one of the editors, emphasized that the book reflects RCML's ongoing mission to sustain the tradition of storytelling. He stressed that beyond documentation and promotion, "it is equally important to sustain our culture by practicing it in our daily lives." This sentiment underscores a crucial perspective on cultural preservation—that true sustainability of traditions requires not merely archival efforts but active engagement and practice by community members, particularly the younger generation, ensuring these narratives remain vibrant and relevant for future generations.



Sacred Addition of Bronze Lord Buddha Statue at RIWATCH Museum

RIWATCH Museum witnessed a spiritually significant occasion with the ceremonial unveiling of a bronze statue of Lord Buddha at the museum premises. Buddha statue is Donated by Chief Monk Ven Aggadhamma . Namsai Pariyatti Sasana Buddhist Vihara Society District Namsai Arunachal Pradesh India.

A prayer ceremony was conducted in the presence of members of the Khamti community, RIWATCH staff members, and invited guests, including Chow Pulanta Mansai, Chow Sijanta Mansai, Sri Haren Soikia, and Sri Jogdish Borma, who participated in offering prayers and blessings on the occasion.

The addition of the bronze Buddha statue has enriched the cultural and spiritual atmosphere of the museum and stands as a symbol of peace, harmony, and respect for the diverse spiritual traditions of Arunachal Pradesh and North-East Bharat.



RIWATCH Publications exhibited at Bahu Bhasa 2025 held at IIIT Hyderabad

November 6-8, 2025, RIWATCH participated in Bahu Bhasa 2025, a national festival celebrating India's linguistic diversity, held at International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad and organised by the Open Knowledge Initiatives (OKI). The three-day festival brought together scholars, language activists, academic institutions, and representatives of indigenous communities from across the country to discuss issues related to language documentation, preservation, digital inclusion, and multilingual knowledge systems.

As part of the event, RIWATCH organised an exhibition of its publications focusing on the linguistic and cultural heritage of North-East India. The exhibition attracted significant interest from participants, researchers, and visitors, who appreciated the institute's efforts towards documenting and promoting indigenous traditions, languages, and knowledge systems. Publications displayed during the festival reflected RIWATCH's continued commitment towards preserving the rich cultural diversity of the region and making such knowledge accessible to wider audiences.

A key highlight of the programme was the address by Dr. Mehek Sampar Awan, Centre Head of the RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages. During his interaction, he drew attention to the urgent need for documentation and technological support for the many underrepresented and lesser-documented languages spoken across North-East India. He emphasised that linguistic diversity is an important cultural asset and stressed the need for inclusive representation and equal opportunities for all language communities in the digital era.

The festival also provided a valuable platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration among institutions and organisations working in the field of language preservation and cultural documentation. RIWATCH's participation in Bahu Bhasa 2025 reflected its ongoing efforts to promote linguistic heritage, strengthen cultural awareness, and contribute towards the larger national conversation on preserving India's diverse languages and traditions for future generations.



Fieldwork & Documentation of Indigenous Faith, Belief, and Value Systems of Arunachal Pradesh by RCICH.

During the reporting period, extensive fieldwork was conducted from 13 to 23 November 2025 among three indigenous communities of Arunachal Pradesh—Tai Khamti, Singpho, and Tangsa. The selection of these communities was guided by the objective of ensuring cultural diversity and representativeness within the study, as each community embodies distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions.

The primary objective of the fieldwork was to document and analyse indigenous faith, belief, and value systems.

Special emphasis was placed on understanding cosmology, ritual practices, customary laws, festivals, social governance, origin myths, and community ethics. The study adopted participatory and qualitative research methods, including structured and unstructured interviews, informal discussions, and field observations to ensure that community voices remained central to the documentation process.

Community-wise Coverage

Tai Khamti Community:

Field interactions were conducted with 17 informants (16 male, 1 female) across Empong, Golden Pagoda, 7 Km, Kherem villages in Chongkham Circle, and selected areas in Namsai Circle.



Singpho Community:

A total of 6 informants (5 male, 1 female) was interviewed in Bordumsa and Miao Circles, including Pisi village.



Tangsa Community:

Fieldwork covered three sub-tribes—Ponthai, Longchang, and Rongrang—with 15 informants (13 male, 2 female). Study areas included Rajanagar and Wagun Ponthai



In total, 38 informants participated in the study. The documentation process resulted in:

- 1,720 minutes of audio recordings
- 194 photographs

The fieldwork was completed within the stipulated timeframe and successfully achieved its planned objectives. The data collected provides a strong foundation for further analysis and documentation of indigenous faith and cultural systems. Engagement with elders and knowledge holders significantly enriched the research outcomes and reinforced the importance of ethical, participatory, and culturally sensitive approaches in indigenous studies.

The findings from this initiative are expected to contribute meaningfully to the preservation, understanding, and promotion of the diverse cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh.

An Outreach Program (Language and Cultural Promotion Program – Wakro Circle, Lohit District)

An outreach program titled “Language and Cultural Promotion Program” was successfully conducted on 15 November at Wakro Circle, Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh, with the primary objective of promoting linguistic awareness and cultural appreciation among school-going students. The initiative specifically focused on strengthening awareness and pride in the Miju Mishmi language and culture among the younger generation.

The program witnessed active participation from Heads of Departments, representatives of community-based organizations such as the Cultural and Literary Society of Mishmi (CALSOM) and the Kaman Language Development Committee (KLDC), along with school principals, teachers, and students from various schools in Wakro Circle. The presence of community leaders and educational stakeholders reflected a shared commitment toward safeguarding indigenous languages and cultural heritage. The outreach activities emphasized the importance of engaging with one’s mother tongue in both academic and social contexts. Special attention was given to highlighting the role of indigenous languages in transmitting traditional knowledge, ethical values, and cultural worldviews across generations.

As part of the program, an extempore speech competition and a pictorial quiz competition were organized in the Miju Mishmi dialect. These interactive activities encouraged students to confidently express themselves in their native language while fostering creative engagement. The competitions generated enthusiastic participation and made language learning both meaningful and enjoyable.

Students from Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Wakro; Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Wakro; Apna Bal Vidyalaya (ABV), Wakro; and Don Bosco School, Wakro participated in the event. A total of 80 students took part in the competitions. GHSS Wakro secured the first position, followed by KGBV Wakro, reflecting commendable linguistic competence and active engagement.

The program concluded with reflective discussions emphasizing the need for sustained documentation efforts, integration of indigenous languages into educational practices, and stronger community participation. Overall, the outreach initiative significantly contributed to strengthening linguistic and cultural consciousness among Miju Mishmi students and reaffirmed the importance of collaborative, community-based approaches for the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages and traditions.



Workshop on Aka Hrusso community



The Research Centre for Mother Language (RCML) conducted a three-day intensive workshop on the documentation of the Aka Hrusso language and culture, held from November 20 to 22 at RIWATCH.

The workshop focused on verifying linguistic data collected during their field study in West Kameng District. The Centre aims to produce extensive audio-visual documentation to support long-term preservation initiatives, during the workshop RCML researchers successfully documented more than 1,400 words, 500 sentences, and 38 folktales. The linguistic dataset will contribute to future grammar and lexicon studies, while the collection of folktales will support upcoming publications dedicated to the community's oral literature

**International Seminar on “Interpreting Cultures and Traditions:
Shifting the Lens”
(19–21 December 2025, RIWATCH, Roing, Arunachal Pradesh)**



RIWATCH successfully organised a three-day International Seminar titled “Interpreting Cultures and Traditions: Shifting the Lens” from 19 to 21 December 2025 at its campus in Roing, Arunachal Pradesh, with financial support from the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata. The Seminar was conducted in collaboration with ICCS Bharat, Rajiv Gandhi University, IFCSAP, and Arunachal Pradesh University, Pasighat.

The Seminar aimed to critically reassess dominant frameworks of cultural interpretation and promote indigenous, participatory, and decolonising approaches to the study of traditions. It provided a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue on documenting, preserving, and reinterpreting living traditions grounded in community-rooted knowledge systems.

The event witnessed participation from scholars and practitioners from India and abroad, including delegates from the USA, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan. A total of 43 research papers (38 national and 5 international) were presented across 11 technical sessions, covering themes such as indigenous knowledge systems, rituals, language, oral traditions, ecology, material culture, and methodological innovations. Overall participation included 43 paper presenters, 28 speakers/session chairs and collaborators, 45 participants (including cultural troupes), and distinguished guests.

Keynote and plenary sessions were delivered by eminent scholars and policymakers, including Prof. Yashwant Pathak (University of South Florida, USA), Prof. Tomo Riba, Shri Mukut Mithi (Patron, RIWATCH), and Dr. Chowna Mein, Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. The Seminar also featured special lectures and book launches, including important RIWATCH publications on festivals, geo-heritage, and regional culture.

Cultural programmes formed an integral part of the Seminar, featuring documentary screenings and traditional performances by cultural troupes from Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh (Adi, Singpho, and Idu Mishmi communities). These performances highlighted the living, performative dimensions of indigenous traditions.

The Seminar successfully strengthened interdisciplinary dialogue, fostered academic networking, generated material for proceedings and publications, and reinforced ethical and community-based approaches in cultural research. It significantly enhanced the academic and public visibility of RIWATCH and contributed meaningfully to contemporary discourse on indigenous cultures and heritage preservation.

Wisdom Meets Tradition: Saraswati Puja at RIWATCH

On the occasion of Saraswati Puja celebrated on 23rd January 2026, the campus of RIWATCH was filled with devotion, cultural harmony, and togetherness. Staff members from all centres and departments enthusiastically participated in the celebrations, creating a warm and festive atmosphere.

The programme began with traditional rituals and a soulful Saraswati Vandana dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the symbol of wisdom, learning, and creativity. The collective participation of all staff members added warmth and spiritual significance to the occasion, making it a memorable moment of cultural bonding and reflection. The celebration concluded with the distribution of prasad and informal interactions among staff members, strengthening the spirit of unity and shared cultural values within the RIWATCH family. The event reflected RIWATCH’s continued commitment towards preserving and celebrating India’s rich cultural traditions.



RIWATCH Observes 77th Republic Day; Plans Festival of Languages of North East Bharat



The RIWATCH solemnly observed the 77th Republic Day at its campus in Khinjili, Roing. The celebration was marked by a sense of patriotism and collective reflection on the constitutional values of the nation.

Dr. Mechek Sampar Awan, Centre Head, RCML–RIWATCH unfurled the National Flag. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Awan emphasized the responsibilities and duties of citizens in upholding the Constitution of India. He highlighted the importance of civic responsibility, national unity, and active participation in nation-building, urging all present to contribute meaningfully toward the growth and progress of India.

Following the Republic Day programme, a consultative meeting was held to plan the future academic and cultural initiatives by RIWATCH. Prof. Simon John, Director of the Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University, attended the meeting and shared valuable insights on innovative strategies for the revitalisation, preservation, and promotion of indigenous cultures and languages.

The meeting unanimously resolved to organize a Festival of Languages of North East India at RIWATCH. The proposed festival aims to celebrate the rich linguistic diversity of the region and provide a platform for scholars, researchers, and indigenous communities to showcase, document, and revitalize native languages. Preliminary conceptualization and planning for the festival were discussed, including its academic, cultural, and community-oriented components.

The initiative reflects RIWATCH's continued commitment to the preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North East India in general.

Cultural Exchange and National Integration: Student Experience in Inter-State Living Study Tour at RIWATCH

Cultural Exchange and National Integration: Student Experience in Inter-State Living Study Tour at RIWATCH

On 9 November 2026, RIWATCH warmly welcomed participants of the Student Experience in Inter-State Living (SEIL) North East Bharat Study Tour, a nationwide cultural exchange initiative of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad aimed at fostering national integration, cultural understanding, and youth engagement across Bharat.

During their visit to the RIWATCH campus at Roing, the delegates explored the RIWATCH Museum and interacted with the RIWATCH team to gain insights into the indigenous traditions, cultural heritage, and heritage preservation initiatives of Arunachal Pradesh. The participants showed keen interest in the diverse cultural practices and community-based initiatives undertaken by RIWATCH.

The interaction provided a meaningful platform for cultural exchange and mutual learning, strengthening the spirit of unity in diversity and reflecting the vision of the SEIL programme, which continues to build bridges of understanding among the youth of different regions of Bharat.



Book Exhibition at Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi Festival 2026



As an integral component of the Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi Festival celebrated from 12-15 February, 2026, RIWATCH, in collaboration with the Singpho Development Society, has organized a book exhibition showcasing vital documentation of Singpho linguistic and cultural heritage. The exhibition features a carefully curated collection highlighting the Children's Pictorial Glossary and the Singpho Folksong Book, among other significant publications of RIWATCH. These works represent dedicated efforts to preserve and transmit the community's linguistic and cultural treasures, making them accessible during one of the most significant celebrations in the Singpho cultural calendar.

The exhibition serves multiple interconnected purposes: illuminating the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the Singpho community, fostering awareness and appreciation among festival participants and providing an educational platform that bridges generations. By integrating this scholarly and cultural component into the festival's celebratory atmosphere, the exhibition is expected to have lasting educational and cultural significance, strengthening ongoing efforts toward language revitalization and cultural preservation within the Singpho community.

On behalf of the Singpho community, Shri Ongyun Maio, General Secretary of the Singpho Development Society, expressed his sincere appreciation to RIWATCH for organizing the meaningful book exhibition. He remarked that such initiatives play a vital role in the preservation, promotion, and development of the Singpho language and literature. He further noted that the exhibition received an encouraging response from community members as well as international delegates, who showed keen interest in the displayed publications and actively participated by purchasing numerous books.

An international participant of the festival, Shri Nbyen Dan Hkung Awng, Director of Kachinland College, PhD Campus, SNS-60 Shatapru, Kachin State, Myanmar conveyed his delight at being introduced to a wide collection of books focusing on Singpho and other languages and cultures of Northeast India. He observed that the exhibition provided a valuable platform for fostering cross-border literary engagement and strengthening cultural ties. He also expressed his eagerness for future collaborations with research institutions like RIWATCH to revitalize and promote ancient knowledge and indigenous wisdom in the years to come.

Book Release and Exhibition at Tamlā-Dü Festival of the Mishmi Tribes



The RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML) released six children's pictorial glossary books in the Taraon (Tawrā) Mishmi language aimed at promoting and preserving the community's native tongue. The titles include Tathi Kara Ma Mēho Weyi Pya (Animals & Birds), Tatyu Tsaiya (Numerals), Ji-Ba (Action Verbs), Tum/Atum Khalai Yü Mlā (Nature & Environment), Mē Tyang Tho (Human Body), and Wrek Zo Tapawtari Mago Halya (Crafts and Artefacts).

Published under the theme “Taraon (Tawrā) Tükübra Kasa Ringke” (“Let Us Learn Taraon”), the books were launched by Shri Mama Natung, Hon'ble Minister for Home and Inter-State Border Affairs, PHE & Water Supply, and the Department of Indigenous Affairs during the 56th Central Tamlā-Dü Festival Celebrated from 13-15 February, 2026 at Tezu.

These publications are the result of a close and well-coordinated collaboration between the RIWATCH Centre for Mother Languages (RCML), the Tawrā Language Development Committee (TLDC) and the Cultural and Literary Society of Mishmi (CALSOM). This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to safeguarding the Taraon (Tawrā) Mishmi language and strengthening intergenerational transmission through culturally rooted educational resources.

A book exhibition was also organised by RIWATCH in collaboration with TLDC and CALSOM during the festival. It showcased the newly launched Tawrā Pictorial Glossary Books and other publications of RIWATCH. The exhibition aimed at illuminating the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the Tawrā community, creating awareness and appreciation among festival participants and visitors.

In his address, Shri Natung appreciated the dedication and hard work of the RIWATCH team, acknowledging the commitment required for such an important initiative. He expressed his gratitude for their efforts in preserving and promoting mother languages and assured continued government support for research, documentation, and awareness programs. He also emphasized the need to develop more children's literature in indigenous languages to ensure their transmission to future generations.

APLS–RIWATCH Open Mic

On 24th February 2025 at Roing, the Lower Dibang Valley unit of Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society, in collaboration with RIWATCH Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage, organised an interaction-cum-open mic session under the theme “Let’s Celebrate Expressions – Ink, Imaginations and Infinite Possibilities” at Roing Reads. The programme brought together budding writers, students, parents, and literature enthusiasts who shared poems, reflections, and creative writings on diverse themes. A special highlight was the interaction with budding writer Wulla Linggi, who inspired participants by sharing her writing journey and poems.

The RCICH also organised a book exhibition showcasing publications on the traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh. The event reflected a collective effort towards promoting creativity, literary culture, and cultural awareness among the youth and wider community.



RIWATCH

Celebrates International Mother Language Day 2026

The Research Institute of World’s Ancient Traditions, Cultures and Heritage (RIWATCH) successfully organised the International Mother Language Day Celebration on February 26th February, 2026 at Central Reh-Ko, Roing, on the theme “Youth Voices on Multilingual Education”. A vibrant student rally was also organised as part of the celebration, where more than 200 students marched from General Ground, Roing to Reh-Ko, raising slogans to promote awareness about the importance of mother languages and linguistic diversity.

The programme witnessed the gracious presence of Shri Manish Shaurya, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Roing, as the Chief Guest, and Shri Amih Lego, DDSE, Roing, as the Guest of Honour. Dr. Ista Pulu ji, President, IMCLS, also graced the occasion. The event commenced with a welcome address and felicitation by Dr. Mechek Sampar Awan, Centre Head, RCML-RIWATCH, followed by an insightful talk on the importance of International Mother Language Day by Dr. Rotnojoy Reang, Research Officer, RCML.

A documentary film showcasing the richness of indigenous traditions and languages was presented by Shri Tage Umbrey, Centre Head, RCICH, and Shri Nabu Umbrey, Assistant Documentation Officer, RIWATCH. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest emphasized the importance of preserving linguistic diversity and encouraged the younger generation to take pride in their mother languages. The Guest of Honour highlighted the role of multilingual education in strengthening cultural identity and inclusive learning.

The programme saw enthusiastic participation from more than 200 students representing various educational institutions, including Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya (VKV), Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV), Intaya Public School, Divine Valley School, Government Higher Secondary School, Government Secondary School Mayu, and Pendrive Academy.

The celebration served as a platform to promote awareness about the significance of mother languages as carriers of culture, identity, and traditional knowledge systems. It also reinforced the need to engage youth in preserving and promoting linguistic diversity. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Shri Harsh Singh, Administrative Officer, RIWATCH, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, participants, and organizers for making the programme a success.



Lt. Gen. Abhijit S. Pendharkar, GOC Spear Corps visits RIWATCH

RIWATCH, Roing, had the privilege of welcoming Lt. General Abhijit S. Pendharkar UYSM, AVSM, YSM, General Officer Commanding, 3 Corps on 22 March 2026. He was accompanied by Maj. General R. S. Chandel, GOC, 2 Mountain Division, Dinjan, Brig. Kaustubh Kekre, SM, Cdr, 181 Mountain Brigade Lohitpur and other army officials.

He visited various departments of RIWATCH and especially shown keen interest in the Centre for Mother Languages. He well appreciated the work of RIWATCH in preservation and promotion of the most endangered mother languages of Arunachal Pradesh. Publication of research papers, books on various topics of cultural importance and the folk tales and folk songs were some of the activities of RIWATCH that impressed him a lot.

Shri Vijay Swami, Executive Director RIWATCH presented a PPT highlighting the journey, vision, and ongoing initiatives of RIWATCH.

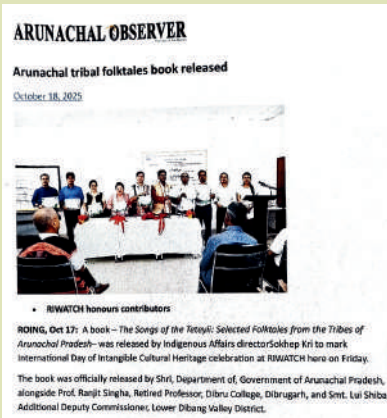
During the presentation, he also shared plans for establishing an additional wing to the existing museum called as “Life in the Bunkers.” This will inspire the youths to join the Defence services, explicitly explain the role of freedom fighters of Northeast India, and provide an opportunity to the people to have a real-life experience of walk through in Army Camp.

Lt General Pendharkar appreciated the vision of RIWATCH to bring Traditional Knowledge to academic forefront. He commended the institute’s initiatives and community development efforts. The meeting was attended by the faculties of RIWATCH, staff and members of the RIWATCH Governing Council.



Press Coverage

1. Manau Shadung of Singphos Inaugurated at RIWATCH to Promote Cultural Heritage
2. DoNER under Secy review literary project in Arunachal Pradesh
3. Two Days Workshop on Tawra Mishmi Language and Culture Concludes at RIWATCH
4. Farmers' Program on Precision Farming held at RIWATCH
5. RCML-RIWATCH Completes Field Study to Document Oral Traditions of Aka, Sherdukpen, Sajolang Communities
6. RIWATCH Organises Mathematics Lab Demonstration
7. RIWATCH Inaugurates the Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage
8. RIWATCH Participates in Bahu Bhasa 2025
9. RIWATCH Hosts Intensive Workshop to Document Aka Hrusso Language and Culture
10. International Seminar on Interpreting Cultures and Traditions Concludes at RIWATCH
11. RIWATCH Observes 77th Republic Day; Plans festivals of Languages of North East Bharat
12. RCML releases 6 children's pictorial books
13. RIWATCH Hosts Book Exhibition at Manau Poi Festival
14. RIWATCH Organised the International Mother Language Day Celebration 2026 at Central Reh-Ko, Roing
15. RCML-RIWATCH Conducts Study on Wancho Materials Culture
16. Lt. Gen. Abhijit S. Pendharkar, GOC Spear Corps Visited RIWATCH
17. Hon'ble Minister Biyuram Wahge and MLA Mutchu Mithi visited RIWATCH



Students Visits



Denning College for Teacher Education, From
Tezu,



Global Valley School, Roing



Secondary School Cheta, Roing



Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya ,
School, Sadhiya



Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya ,
School, Pashighat



Delegates from Pune

VIPs Visits



Inspection of Project Ms. Parna Sahana,
Under by Secretary, mDoNER



Dr. Ashwani Lochan Hon'ble President of AUS,



Jarken Gamlin (Retd.), Chief Information Commissioner of
Arunachal Pradesh



Pige Ligu Secretary & Director, Department of Indigenous
Affairs (DIA), Government Arunachal Pradesh