

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON
MUSEUMS AND INTANGIBLE NATURAL HERITAGE WITH FOCUS ON
METHODOLOGY

Organised by the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in collaboration with Centre for Environment & Development (CED), Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) and Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) at Thiruvananthapuram during 9-11 March 2013

Inaugural session

During the inaugural function of the workshop i.e. 9th March 2013, Dr Babu Ambat, Executive Director of CED, welcomed the participants. The workshop was inaugurated at 10:30am on 09-03-2013, by the Chief Guest Shri. K. Jayakumar, Honorable Vice Chancellor of Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, Kerala. In a formal Inaugural programme, Dr. Babu Ambat, Executive Director, Centre for Environment & Development (CED) welcomed the gathering. A brief introduction about the objectives of the workshop was done by Dr. B. Venugopal. Director, National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi. In his inaugural address Shri. K. Jayakumar, detailed about his personal involvement as Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Culture where discussions on the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage were initiated. He was of the opinion that the idea of ‘intangible heritage’ would be difficult to understand and the first step in safeguarding of IH would require a systematic approach on advocacy and sensitization among all including policy makers.

Guests of Honour during the function were Dr. Oommen V Oommen (Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board), Dr. Rajasekharan (Consultant Scientist at JNTBGRI) and Dr, T. Sabu (Programme Director, CED). Sh. Yogendra, RMNH, Mysore gave vote of thanks.

Thereafter, the workshop went in to its academic sessions.

Session 1: Intangible Natural Heritage (INH)

Key Note Address : “The method adopted for Kani model of benefit sharing”

Key Note Speaker : Dr. P. Pushpangadan, AIHBPD, Trivandrum.

Dr. P. Pushpangadan had shared mainly his experience with Kani tribes and the evolution of Kani model or Pushpangadan model of benefit sharing during his key note speech.

Arogyapacha- a medicinal plant of Agasthyamalai region with its botanical name *Trichopus zeylanicus* was accidentally found during his visit to the region in 1987 and the information on its medicinal value was disseminated from a Kani tribe Kuttymathan Kani, one who had also attended Johannesburg Earth Summit. A commercial Ayurveda medicine “Jeevani” was prepared by JNTBGRI by using the plant “Arogyapacha”. An effective patent was done to protect the ownership and the profit is being shared with the tribal community. The profit helped the Kani tribes for formulation of a Kani trust, construction of community hall, installation of solar lights, facility of single teacher school, jeep facilities etc.

Speaker: Dr. Oommen V Oommen, Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board

Dr. Oommen V Oommen, during his talk said, Good air, good water and safe food are primary concerns of our Kerala state Biodiversity Board. He gave a call to restore and replenish the

natural resources. “Do not over exploit the nature, try for sustainable utilization”. Further he said that the Preparation of PBR (People’s Biodiversity Register) is our prime concern in order to document the people’s traditional knowledge. The motto behind this project is “Translation of Traditional Knowledge to a documentary evidence .i.e. Intangible to tangible heritage.

Speaker: Sh. K. Rajesh, President Pallichal Grama Panchayath delivered his speech in Malayalam. He briefed the audience on the role of Panchayath in PBR

Session; 2; Intangible Cultural Heritage

Key Note Address: “Environmental Imagination in performing Arts of Kerala” by Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan, Executive Director, Sahapedia, New Delhi. In India Intangible Cultural Heritage is referred as Living Cultural Heritage. Nataka academy of Delhi was designated as nodal centre for putting the register on ICH expressions. Dance & Drama originated with the intimate relationship of people with Nature. Human mind is always shaped by the place they belong which obviously results in cultural diversity. The present need is to rediscover the past and review to the present requirement. The new generations has to be sensitized to the issues and impacts of traditions.

Representatives from the four families of Mudi yettu shared their experiences in Malayalam Language. They showed anguish on the apathy of the governments and academies in not giving due recognition even after securing UNESCO recognition for the ritual art form of Mudi yettu which has immense environmental significance. They requested that the practitioners be given due respect and help morally and financially so that the ritualistic form of Mudi yettu can be safeguarded. The session was chaired by Dr. C.R. Rajagopalan, University of Kerala. During open discussion session, the observation was put forth by the participants and there was high degree of concern towards the efforts to be made to safe guard the indigenous oral tradition in its native condition.

Day: 2; Field Visit;

PBR exercise with Kani Tribe. (Coordinated by Dr. Rajasekharan, JNTBGRI)

It is 8:15 in the morning on 10-03-2013; the participants were picked up from the hotel at Peroorkada in a JNTBGRI Bus KI-16, B -3953. We have reached the forest area called Chonampara – a tribal settlement 7 km away from Kottur of Thiruvananthapuram district by 9:15 am. The visit was piloted by Dr. Pushpangadan and Dr. Rajasekharan from JNTBGRI. We were asked to trek a little distance to reach Kani tribal Settlement. The forest witnessed with tall trees, beautiful terrains, and lush green environment with feathered ferns on either side of the path. The chirping sound of Bulbul rebounded in regular intervals of time along with continuous sound of Cicada.

A team of Kani tribe welcomed us happily by offering a traditional drink prepared by the plant-Arogyapacha. The Kani tribe is a small group, previously nomadic but now settled community of almost 30,000 members based in the Agasthyar hills in southern Western Ghats of India.

There was a brief introductory session and interaction with the President of local Panchayath and with tribal representative. A small ritual was performed by the tribe during the session to offer prayer to the goddesses – Mother Earth. Raman Kani, Chandran Kani and Eechan Kani performed the ritual prayer with a country made instrument. .

Dr. Rajasekharan, gave a brief introduction of the PBR register and the participants were gathered into four groups

Group 1: Art, Culture, customs & beliefs

Group 2: Birds, Mammals & Fishes

Group 3: Medicinal Plants & Food Plants (Agricultural practices)

Group 4: Non-wood forest products & forest conservation.

After the formulation of groups, each group was assigned to document the oral knowledge of the tribe in a prescribed format. The group was accompanied by 2 or 3 members of Kani tribes, who are knowledge providers for the PBR exercise. After the completion of the process of recording data, there was a small presentation of each group by their group leaders. At the end, we had a delicious, traditional food prepared by the tribes (mainly from tubers).

Day: 3; (11-03-2013)

Session 3; Panel Discussion on Methodologies for Documentation

Topic 1: Calendar Methodology:

Speaker: Shri. Premkumar, Moozhikulam Sala.

The methodology developed by Moozhikulam Sala for the Njattuvela was expanded to incorporate other forms of Intangible heritage including the annual circle of Mudiyyettu performances. A draft of the calendar prepared by Premkumar was distributed among the participants. (The speech was in Malayalam language)

Topic 2: Art for Life Methodology:

Speaker: Ms. Deepsikha Chakrabarthy & Mr. Bikas Chandra Saha Banglanatakdotcom, Kolkata.

Ms. Deepsikha Chakrabarthy & Mr. Bikas Chandra Saha introduced Banglanatakdotcom, Kolkata, through their power point presentation. The main focus of the organization is on documentation of oral tradition such as Patachitra, Jhumur Kaach so on. The main motive behind Banglanatakdotcom is to safe guard the cultural traditions and to promote the same through cultural tourism. The plat from created by the organization provides hub for cultural activities, capacity building, cultural tourism etc. also, ensures the community inclusion and global participation. The recent efforts to promote Village tourism help them to strengthening cultural identity and people participation. Community led tourism is major contribution of Banglanatakdotcom to the cultural society.

Topic 3: Responsible Heritage tourism:

Speaker: Dr. Sunny George, Nila foundation

Dr. Sunny George of Nila foundation explained the traditional practices of rice cultivation of Nila river basin, their handloom work by using natural dyes etc. the very innovative concept of “Traveler forest” – a area of the forest dedicated for plantation of saplings by tourist, helps in maintaining the dynamics of land. The concept of TREE WALK – imparting information to the

visitors pertaining to the uses of trees, story associated, the history, geography of the tree and also the contribution of tree to the nature in term carbon absorption, quantum oxygen supplied etc. will be informed as part of their educational activities for the visitors.

Topic 4: Community Digital Archive:

Speaker: Mr. Vinod Nambiar, Vayali Folk Group.

The droplets of myths, history and reality associated with river Nila is being continuously document by the Vayali folk group. Mr. Vinod Nambiar informed about the digital community Archive. Since, their inception in the year 2008, they have documented cultural landscape of the river Nila. Nearly 10 communities, 500 hour Videos, 200 Audio, 5000 photos and some written literature are documented in their process of sharing information of cultural importance through their Digital community Archive.

Session 4; Exhibition Development

Coordinated by: Dr. T. Sabu CED & Sh. Yogendra (RMNH, Mysore)

An effort was made to find out the ways and means to accommodate interpretation and expressions of the workshop through material evidence. Dr. B. Venugopal, as museum personnel express his great concern in documentation of workshop experience in the form of exhibition. Since, Museums are considered as Society Resource centre, the material collection plays a vital role in reaching the community.

Then the session of the workshop was opened for discussion and following points were highlighted:

Recording of Feedback as primary effort.

Re-gathering of stake holders to structure the action oriented plan.

Inviting multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary expertise.

Networking of all the participating institution.

Requirement of Mind mapping sessions.

Decided to upload all information regarding Intangible Heritage through email ID; ihindia@gmail.com to be coordinated by CED.

(Report prepared by Shri B.S. Yogendra, RMNH Mysore)

Summary Report of Field work on Day 2 (10th March 2013)

(Report Compiled by Dr T. Sabu, CED with inputs from Team Leaders)

Group 1: ART and CULTURE

Members: Dr. Rajagopalan (Leader) + Dr. A.S.K. Nair, Dr. Sunny George, Mr. Udayakumar.P, Mr. Anoop P.K, Smt. Sheethal V.S

We did the Group Interview at Chonampara Community Active informants assembled at 'Muthakani's house. The persons assembled were Aruvi, Chandrankani, Sudhakaran and of course the Panchayath member Sridevi.

We started the group interview with 'Chattu Pattu'. It is a magical ritual performance. It is an oral tradition for expulsion of evil spirit. We have followed the ethnographic methodology. There are several types of Chattu Pattu like Vayattuchattu, Pinichattu, Nayattuchattu, Mannazhikku Chattu etc. There were more than 100 Chattu Pattu, but most of which have been gone extinct. We understood that women have an important role in Chattu Pattu. The instrument they used to play is called Kokkara. It can be made out of both iron and bamboo. Chattu Pattu is a healing therapy used to heal psychological problems like 'fear'. But it is not used for treating diseases.

Next is the ritual called 'Koduthi'. This ritual is a festival performed for the salvation of ancestors, village deities.

Aruvi, a member of Kani, later sang a Ballet called 'Ottu' proclaiming the heroic work of 'Karatt Thampuran' also called 'Seethangan'

Next we discussed the Birth Ceremony. There was an established 'midwifery' system. Aruvi has attended more than 35 deliveries. The umbilical cord is cut not with knife or blade, but with instruments made out of reed. All the medicines and nourishments for the mother for 10 years after birth will be prepared 2 months before.

Marriage: There are elaborate puberty related rituals. There is a ritual just opposite to dowry. The money is to be given by the Boy's side to the girl's side.

Death: When somebody dies, immediately the Plathy (the chief/ senior person/ magician) will arrive and tie the 'spirit', otherwise the spirit will kill all those who assembled there. Body is always laid with head to the southern side. The body is buried and not burnt.

Group II – Wild Animals, Birds and Fishes

Team Leader: S. Justin Manohar Raj

Team Members: 1. Vinod Nambiar, Ajay Kumar, Bhagirath Das, Kalu Ram, Manoj Kumar

Area Covered: Arayavala Settle of the Kani Tribe in Chemlampara

Guide: Madahavan Kani and Eechan Kani.

Field Experience: It was an astonishing experience, no doubt in that. This community has got deep rooted connection with Nature. They have their own nomenclature for each and every animal and bird in the forest. We had around three hours trekking from the Chemlampara

settlement to the Arayavala settlement. The guides were very informative and they explained in a very detailed manner. Due to the summer dryness and noon time, we couldn't see much of animal life but they were trying to give us the picture like how the animals look like and the sound they make.

Trekking was a totally a different experiment for the team members, except Vinod. There were streams on our way, small waterfall, terrains etc. It was very nice and was able to feel it directly from the nature.

The details of the Animals and Birds have been covered the data sheet. Here is the list:

Birds

Neduviliyan (Local Name)

Wild Fish

Dedummean (Blangy)

Muthipottan

Kallankary

Pora

Mammals

Elephant

Insects

Kaduva Chilanthi

Kadantha

Karinthelu

Meeru

Reptiles

Perumpabu

Karimchathi

Kariyilaporiyan

Amphibians

Muthi makri

Mollusk

Nathakka

Wild Animals

Elephant

Wild Pig

Insects

Papfly (Butterflies)

(Prof.S.Justin Manohar Raj, Senior Programme Coordinator [P.B.R], Kerala Biodiversity Board, Pallimukku, Pettah, Thiruvananthapuram- 24. KERALA.9847341364)

Group 3: No report prepared

Group 4: Non Wood Forest Products:

The team members includes Dr.A.R.R.Menon, Dr.T.Sabu (both from CED) and three members from Kani tribe (Mr. Vinod, Mr. Suresh and Mr. Surendran).

We visited the ‘Mancode tribal settlement’ at Chonampara in Kottur area. There are 8 households in the in the settlement. Due to ‘sivaratri’ festival, most of the houses were empty. But an interview was organized with ‘Ayyappankani’ who settled there about 20 years back. The three Kani members also participated in the discussion for collecting details.

With respect to MFP collection it was informed that about 20 different items were frequently collecting (list available) in different seasons. They informed that the old conventional collection procedures are still following (e.g. cutting branches for ‘Nellika’ collection, debarking of trees for ‘Karuva patta’ collection etc). The products are selling through mediators to the local market. There is no strict marketing strategy, hence the prize of the products are varying (usually 2-3 times lesser than the actual market prize – e.g. Honey prize: Rs. 150—500/kg, Kudampuli (*Garcinia*) Rs. 40-80/kg, Arrow root leaves Rs.10/50 leaves, Kadukkapoovu (gall of *Terminalia* species) Rs.200/kg etc.).

The MFP collection was not regularly done due to the shortage of product availability. The area is more open in nature than that of the situation in 20 years back. Most of the members in the settlement are fully dependant of the forests. On an average 1 month fire line works and few days’ casual labor works are the sole income generating activity. In addition to that MFP collection is the main activity.

Regarding the problems facing the tribal in connection with MFP collection, they said that the periodical control fire will promote the fresh growth of MFP like, Koova, many tubers and medicinal plants during next rain. So one reason for non availability of many items is the absence of fire, due to fire controlling activities of the forest department

They also presume that the lack of forest fire may be one of the reasons for the increase of the animal disturbance. The periodical control fire will promote the grass regeneration after rain, which will supplement the food availability of grazers and in such situation the wild animal damage is less.

Another problem is related to changes in flowering and fruiting seasons of many plants. Eg. Nelli

List of MFP

Nellikka

Karakka (not frequently available)

Koovayila

Kadukka poovu

Vayana poovu

Kudampuli

Punnam poovu

Naruneendi

Oorila

Moovila

Padakkizhangu
Padathali
Sathavari kizhangu
Cheruthen
Vanthen
Thoduthen
Pachotty patta
Kunthirakkam
Mara manjal
Ponkorandi

Based on the interaction, it is suggested that the format for collection shall be modified including more parameters which will be useful for the Local body for future planning: The parameters suggested are:

Name of Settlement/Area

Date of Documentation

Name of NWFP

Local name

Trade Name

Botanical name (If applicable)

Part of the plat used (If applicable)

Collection Area

Name

Distance from settlement

Period of collection

Collection mechanisms

Time required for collection (Per Kg, liter etc.)

Additional man power support required for collection (if any)

Technical skill required

Changes for damage to plant/ecosystem (Due to unscientific method, overexploitation etc)

Marketing strategies/ selling mechanisms

Average prize realized during last year

Value addition/ quality assurances etc

Issues related to

Collection

Selling and

Resource availability

Traditional knowledge related to collection/ processing etc.

Group 5: Forest Conservation

Team Members:

Dr. T Sabu, Program Director, CED (Group Leader)

Dr. A R R Menon, Mr. Vinod Kani, Mr. Suresh Kani, Mr. Surendran Kani,

Area Visited: 'Mancode tribal settlement' at Chonampara in Kuttichal Grama Panchayath

Mancode is a comparatively small settlement in the Chonampara area with only 8 houses. Due to 'sivaratri' festival, most of the houses were empty. However, the team had a group discussion with the participation of Mr. Ayyappankani, a 60 year old person of the settlement and other few members of the tribe including the team members.

The information received from the discussion is given below:

The settlement is situated in between two hills, with Paddy as main cultivation in the older days. Now it has been changed to Rubber and Tapioca.

The neighbouring areas were thick forest up to about 1985.

Illegal cutting of "Eetty" (*Dalbergia latifolia*) was common at that time and there was not much forest staff to check.

Clear felling done by the forest department in 1985 – the year to be confirmed- (by that time most of the valuable trees were removed) and the area was planted with Eucalyptus.

The clear felled areas included the Bamboo areas also an created much loss to the elephant's staple food and the human animal conflict in this area started by this time

The animal intervention created many problems to their traditional agricultural practices and famine was very common in 1995- 2000 period and from the support of tribal department they survived

With the help of Rubber Board tribal department started Rubber Plantation by 2000 and this according to them is the only viable economic activity now as the forest cleared and MFP reduced and wild animal attack increased

Now the climatic condition of the area is changed and it very hot in almost all months

The forest department is not allowing the controlled firing in grass land this according to them is one reason for animal to come out of the forest

Traditionally the tribal people always consider the forest as sacred areas and there are some rituals associated with this. The "Maladaivangal" they worshiped include "Kallattu Muthappan", "Muthiyamma" etc. They have festivals under trees for the existence of the forest

As there is not much time and not much knowledgeable people, the team could not able to collect the species conservation data. However, they pointed out that many of the Birds (*Erattathalachi, Parrot, Kuruvi etc.*) are now very rare in the area. Many medicinal plants traditionally used were also lost.

Suggestions:

The scientific aspect of grass land firing and its impact to Animal behavior requires a detailed study; Conservation and livelihood shall go hand in hand and local people's view in this regard has to considered but the present practice requires a re-visit by convincing on alternate "Green Methods"; a format for forest conservation data collection is suggested as follows:

1.	Name of the tribal settlements / forest area surveyed
2.	Date of documentation
3	Previous status of forest – Including the forest department strategy and efficiency in conservation (30-50 years before)
4	Present status of forest – Including the forest department strategy and efficiency in conservation
5	Traditional methods of conservation by the tribal people – Including conservation sites in the name of God and Goddesses (Maladaivangal)
6	Handling Human- Animal Conflicts (Past and present practices by the tribal community)
7.	Issues related to conservation and livelihood of local people and suggestions for

	improvement			
8	List of plants with high economic/conservation value and their present Status (Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Rare, Abundant etc)			
Sl. No	Local Name	Botanical Name	Economic/Conservation Value	Status
9	List of Animals with high economic/conservation value and their present Status (Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Rare, Abundant etc)			
Sl. No	Local Name	Zoological Name	Economic/Conservation Value	Status