

**One-Day National Seminar**  
**on**  
**“Oral Tradition of the Nagas and the Tangible Heritage, *the Makhel*”**

**Concept Note**

In today's world with its dependence on print and electronic media, it is worthwhile to ask ourselves what roles the oral tradition continues to play in our society and in our lives. In what ways do our oral traditions embedded in our community and the world around us. Many cultures, including First Nation and Aboriginal cultures, the oral tradition has been the primary form of knowledge transmission and has been the way to communicate complex information about culture, politics, the environment and economics (Chief Kerry's Moose). Of late, the study of oral tradition has gained momentum across scholars particularly in the disciplines of linguistics, history, literature, anthropology, cultural studies and communication. On the one hand the increase interest on oral tradition is due to cultural roots and historical materials, and on the other hand, it is uniquely an important factor of identity formation.

Oral tradition constitutes the body of knowledge and information about the people and every community across the world is intimately identified with and inherited it as legacy. This body of knowledge and information is an integral part of the community, from the most civilised down to the simplest one. People are identified and known based on the nature of appropriation and derivation from this of the body of knowledge. One community is differentiated from another depending on its tradition. The historicity of the community had its origin from nowhere other than its oral tradition. Identification with certain myths and legends is a universal feature across the community and human civilization is built and constructed from the traditional knowledge. The discourse of identity formation, consciousness of being “one” and “othering” has its foundation related to folklore and tradition. One may believe it or not, but without the tenet of oral tradition; the historicity of a community is incomplete.

The emergence of print culture and growth of modernity does not simply make orality redundant but appropriated the same to meet the need of the time. Orality continues to hold high even in the age of high modernity and mediated world. Along with the stages of modernity, orality continues to flourish as people cultivate the taste of recasting and retelling orally of what they have learned in different mediums. In most cases, values, beliefs and behaviours are transmitted orally with due consideration and the Nagas are no exceptional to it. They formed a community based on their distinct custom and tradition pass on through oral tradition. They are different group of people because their custom and tradition is not identical with other group. Of the many traditions, Makhel tradition is common to many Naga groups who inhabit in both within and across the Indian Union, where they share a common identity.

The proposed seminar aims to trace and interrogate the Makhel heritage of the Nagas from the perspective of oral tradition as exists among different

Naga tribes. It intends to draw attention on oral tradition of different Naga groups of how they are related to Makhel tradition and its antiquities. The seminar is expected to raise several questions, such as, What does their timeless folklore and oral tradition have to say about Makhel tradition?, Which is their identity, a common or individual and referring to a group?, In other words, it will be an attempt to find out the strength of how to reaffirm the popular Makhel tradition, to which different groups of Nagas have claimed as their common heritage.