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Foundation stone for RIWATCH campus at Roing laid Indigenous languages need to be documented: Governor

ITANAGAR, Nov 7: To have a better understanding of the richness of age-old cultural assets of any region or state, it is very important that we initiate comparative and cross cultural studies of ethnic societies and I trust, once established, this institute will be the flag bearer of such endeavours covering different countries, and also with that of India in general, and north east in particular, said Arunachal Pradesh Governor Gen JJ Singh, while laying the foundation stone of the proposed campus of Research Institute of World's ancient traditions Cultures & Heritage at Iduli Village, near Roing in Lower Dibang Valley today. Noting that the institute will be providing professional guidance and facilitate research works, Gen Singh pointed student exchange programme will definitely help in enriching the quality efforts of the objective behind establishment of the institution.

MP Mukut Mithi, local MLA Laeta Umbrey, Deputy Commissioner Y W Ringu and SP Tojo Karga along with district heads of department were present on the occasion along with public and RIWATCH members.

Terming the establishment as historical step, the Governor expressed his hope that under the leadership of prominent academicians of the state, well wishers and enthusiastic research scholars, it will excel in its endeavours.

The Governor, who always advocates for preservation of indigenous dialect said, you have a huge canvas to work on and languages should be another area we need to do a lot. As I always said, to preserve our heritage, our mother tongue plays a strong role. As most of the tribes do not have written scripts, the indigenous language of each tribe needs to be documented. We need to collect and analyze information that can be used to draft a manuscript about the Tribe, including primary resources and oral histories.

Make videotape of the tribal elders pronouncing vocabulary words for the dictionary and sets of conversations. Through your work the concerned tribe can gain knowledge of their Tribe's history and ancestry, which I found very important in this part of the country, he stressed.

Another very wide subject is the studies on the Himalayan herbs and ethnic medicines. The age-old practices in this field by the indigenous people are very effective, authentic and organic. No contamination and no side-effect, Gen Singh said.

Recalling his earlier stint as Army Officer in the area, the Governor, who always is concerned about the environment and who have seen greenery at its heights some 27-28 years ago, appealed to the people of Roing, especially my Goan Burahs and Panchayat leaders for the preservation of the forests, the flora and fauna. The day, this pristine nature is lost, we will also lose our identity and we cannot allow this to happen, he pointed. Governor also educated the villagers on organic farming and on sanitation.

Congratulating the RIWATCH society, Roing and the International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS), USA for the important initiative, he felt it will have immense impact in the carrying forwards of our treasured age-old tradition, culture and heritage, the Governor appreciated Rajya Sabha MP Mukut Mithi, MLAs Laeta Umbrey and Jamin Tayeng for their political leadership and Dr. Zoram Begi, Director Higher and Technical Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Somu Linggi and Shri Vijay Swami for their personal contributions in realizing the necessity for such an institution at the present location in the State.

The Governor also congratulated villagers of Iduli village led by Dature Miuli for their far-sightedness of and their concern on the preservation of the tradition, culture and heritage. On behalf of all the likeminded people of the State, Nation and the world, I would like to convey our highest appreciation to Dature Miuli for donating such a vast and beautiful land free of cost to the society. Your name will always be written in golden letters for such a benevolent step, Gen Singh stated.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President of International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS), USA and representing the organization, Janardan Bhatt said, the institute aims to bring different ethnic groups and learn about them so that they do not wipe out due to on-slot of modern civilization. Bhatt, who is visiting Arunachal Pradesh for the first time said, people are losing their origin culture and this project has been established to counter it and expressed his hope that it come up with World repute.

Earlier, welcoming the dignitaries to the proposed campus, RIWATCH Executive Director Vijay Swami gave a brief on the background of the organization and its objectives. He informed that RIWATCH is an Affiliated unit of International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS), Pennsylvania, USA. The basic objective of RIWATCH is to cater to the needs of research scholars in studying different ethnic groups of North east India and initiate comparative and cross cultural studies of various ethnic groups of different countries with that of India in general and north east India in particular. It will also facilitate young scholars from North east India to have opportunities of cross cultural studies in foreign countries and vice versa. This will ultimately result in Scholar Exchange Programmes with different higher educational institutions of the world. Swami added Dature Miuli of Iduli Village has donated 10 hectors of land, free of cost for the proposed campus. RIWATCH member and social worker Sumo Linggi also spoke on the occasion.

Chairman, RIWATCH, Dr. Zoram Begi, Director Higher and Technical Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, who could not attend the programme in his message said, it is a unique initiative in cultural research to provide a platform for inter-cultural; studies for the scholars from the north east and to link them up with similar academic research centres from all over the world. He also expressed his confident that the institute will be making a path-breaking contribution to the educational environment of the NE region.

In his message, Advisor, RIWATCH, Swami Vishwatmananda, secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Itanagar said, it is a good fortune for entire Arunachalee society that the instate is being set up with the active patronage of ICCS, US and several intellectuals and spirited public leaders of Dibang Valley. And it is further befitting that a great friend of Arunachali people, Gen JJ Singh, the Governor is laying the foundation stone of the capus, he pointed.

Earlier, on his arrival to the district headquarter, he was received at the helipad by the MP Mukut Mithi, local MLA Laeta Umbrey, Deputy Commissioner Y W Ringu and SP Tojo Karga along with district heads of department and general public. A traditional reception by the cultural troupes and Guard Honour by the APP was accorded to the Governor. PRO to Governor