



IDU MISHMI CULTURAL & LITERARY SOCIETY (IMCLS)

Apex body of Mishmi (Idu) community

Roing - 792110, Lower Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh

Registration no: SR/ITA/122 dt. 27/10/1987

Unique identifier of NGO Darpan, NITI Aayog Portal: AR/2018/0218419

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PRESS NOTE/RELEASE:

IMCLS BLACKLISTS RESEARCHERS FROM NCBS, IFBT AND ATREE:

After careful deliberation and threadbare discussion, the Executive Governing Body of the **Idu Mishmi Cultural & Literary Society (IMCLS)**, the apex body of the Idu Mishmi community, has unanimously decided to blacklist four researchers for alleged breach of the **Idu Mishmi Community Research Code of Ethics (IMCRE)**.

The researchers blacklisted by IMCLS are **Dr. Krushnamegh Kunte**, researcher from the **National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS)**; **Mr. Fahim Khan** from the **Indian Foundation for Butterflies Trust (IFBT)**; **Mr. Rajkamal Goswami**, affiliated with the **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)**; and **Ms. Aavika Danda**, formerly affiliated with ATREE.

IMCLS has informed that, as a consequence of the blacklisting for alleged violation of the community's ethical research code, namely the **Idu Mishmi Community Research Code of Ethics (IMCRE)**, the above individuals shall not be permitted to undertake any kind of research activity in Idu Mishmi inhabited areas hereafter.

The Idu Mishmi community has its own community code of research ethics, the **Idu Mishmi Community Research Code of Ethics (IMCRE)**, framed in 2024 and launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Shri Pema Khandu. As provided under the IMCRE, a **Research Ethics Review Board (RERB)** has been constituted to review research proposals seeking permission to undertake research activities in all Idu Mishmi inhabited areas.

According to IMCLS, the objective of the IMCRE is to meaningfully engage with the wider research community while taking into consideration the concerns of the indigenous community through the basic principles of **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**, **data regulation**, **ethical research**, **doing away with parachute research** and **decolonising research methodologies** before research is undertaken in the indigenous community.

IMCLS has stated that, despite repeated communications, members of ATREE who worked in the **Mekola Community Conserved Area (CCA)** failed to obtain prior approval from IMCLS and did not seek the required consent from the RERB before undertaking what the Society describes as unethical research practices.

According to IMCLS, such activities included the use of **camera traps** and the sharing of community-related data with the Forest Department and placing such data in the wider public domain without proper community consent. The Society has further alleged that such actions contributed to complications relating to land matters in the **Hunli-Desali Circle**, without the researchers fully understanding the legal landscape surrounding the issue.

IMCLS alleged that these activities were undertaken by Mr. Rajkamal Goswami and Ms. Aavika Danda without prior informed consent, in what the Society described as a race to complete their tasks and enhance their academic credibility.



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IMCLS further stated that Ms. Aavika Danda was called in writing for a meeting with the Society but did not attend the meeting and subsequently left ATREE after completing the work, including collection of data, which the Society alleges was undertaken through unethical means.

The Society stated that **many villagers have complained about the issue** and that the matter is currently pending before the appropriate district-level competent authority

IMCLS stated that the members associated with NCBS and IFBT were also blacklisted because, while their research permission was still pending before the RERB, they proceeded to a **sensitive border area in Dibang Valley** for their research work.

According to IMCLS, when its members interacted with the researchers in Dibang Valley and requested them to obtain prior permission from the RERB, the researchers initially agreed to do so. However, the Society stated that they subsequently did not appear before the RERB despite the Board waiting for them at Roing for more than two hours.

IMCLS further alleged that the team thereafter left **Lower Dibang Valley directly from Dibang Valley** without appearing before the RERB or obtaining the required permission

IMCLS stated that this is not the first occasion on which it has blacklisted researchers for alleged violation of the community's research ethics framework. The Society said that, in the past, **a researcher from Germany and a researcher from IIT Gandhinagar** had also been blacklisted despite repeated requests and written communications asking them to comply with the community's research ethics requirements.

IMCLS conveyed that it is taking the matter of alleged breach of the IMCRE very seriously. In order to meaningfully engage with researchers and clarify any confusion regarding the community's research ethics requirements, the Society has organised several internal meetings, shared written representations and copies of the IMCRE with competent district authorities and the **PCCF, Itanagar**, held meetings with community stakeholders, and placed details of the matter and the community's research ethics framework on its website.

The Society reiterated that its objective is not to oppose genuine scientific research, but to ensure that research undertaken in Idu Mishmi areas respects the rights, consent, knowledge systems, customary institutions and data sovereignty of the indigenous community.

IMCLS further stated that villagers across **Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**, are supporting its efforts through **Gram Sabha resolutions** to establish reasonable regulation of research practices and to oppose, in particular, extraction-based research in Dibang Valley undertaken without the informed participation and consent of the community.

The Society said that the IMCRE is intended to ensure that research in Idu Mishmi areas is conducted in a transparent, ethical and responsible manner and that researchers meaningfully engage with the community before undertaking research, collecting data or disseminating community-related information.



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IMCLS reiterated its commitment to constructive engagement with the wider research community while insisting that all research activities in Idu Mishmi inhabited areas must comply with the **Idu Mishmi Community Research Code of Ethics (IMCRE)** and the procedures of the **Research Ethics Review Board (RERB)**.

Sincerely

PRESIDENT
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Shri Tamune Miso
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