

PREFACE

Traditional knowledge, even until a decade ago, did not assume such great importance as it has acquired today. It was taken for granted as an *a priori* knowledge base of the indigenous people. That India will be dispossessed of that knowledge or that people will lose their age old wisdom to unscrupulous knowledge pirates of the world was unthinkable. Today, India and nations like India that are rich in traditional knowledge are threatened by the fact that their antique knowledge is stolen and patented by the rich and developed nations by disregarding the relevant legal restrictions on one hand and taking advantage of the lack of law. Traditional knowledge forms a part of the eco-soc rights of a community which is an integral part of their human rights. Traditional knowledge is also a component of the right to life and livelihood of the people of the community. The present research work is a result of the researcher's anxiety lack of legal framework to deal with the issue.

When I had to collect the information for the medicinal plants in Cooch Behar I was at wits end and felt as if I was looking for a needle in a hay stack. It was Prof. Soumen Moitra, UBKB, came forward with invaluable suggestions. Kabiraj Sri Tuhin Sensharma and Sri Bhabendra Chandra Barman helped me with more information regarding medicinal plants. I express my deep and sincere gratitude to them.

I express my profound sense of gratitude to my teacher and supervisor, respected Professor (Dr.) Gangotri Chakraborty for giving her precious time, suggestion and guidance while I was researching on the topic of "Medicinal Plants and Their Protection as Traditional Knowledge: A Study of the Legal Framework with Special Reference to Cooch Behar District of West Bengal". Her valuable and meticulous care, intense thought has helped me to do this piece of research work, which I believe to be something fundamental and contributing. This work is immensely enriched by her scholarly advice and critical analysis. She has been a persistent source of inspiration for me all through my life and I am fortunate to have got a supervisor like her. Working under her has been joyful and exciting. The lessons which I have learnt from her will lead me in my life forever. I thank her so much.

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I sincerely acknowledge my respect and gratitude to Dr. Rathin Bandopadhyya, Associate Professor, for his whole hearted support and valuable academic guidance and suggestions whenever I needed for my research.

I also acknowledge to Dr. Sujit Kumar Biswas, Assistant Professor, who is like my friend and brother, for his cooperation and timely help without which it would not be possible for me to do the research work. I convey warm and sincere thanks to him.

In joy and in sorrow one cannot forget the root of one's existence. I am indebted to my mother for all the sacrifices she may have made for me. She rocked me when I cried and wiped my tears, she held me in her lap and comforted me but unfortunately I am not able to remember her face, is my biological mother late Purnima Paul. She would have been so happy to see me with this achievement and accomplishment of dreams. My shasroddho pronam to her departed soul.

My school teacher father Sri Haripada Paul has had a profound influence over me and he has sculpted a part of what I am today. It is said that father's should not be "thanked", so I only express my joyfulness for him. I am thankful to my mother Gita Paul who after the demise of my biological mother, partnered with my father in my upbringing.

I am indebted to my parents in law Sri Jnan Ranjan Paul and Smt Gita Paul who took all the responsibilities of my baby daughter while I was pursuing the research, so that I could study in peace. I sincerely thank them for encouraging me as well. I am also very much thankful to my wife Mili Paul, for her continuous encouragement and motivation for my study and research and for taking all the family responsibilities all alone. From the core of my heart I thank her for all sacrifices he did for my research.

My two year daughter Shrutakirti is a bundle of joy but I could not give her much attention during my research. I could not take out the time to be with her and watch her grow. I thank my baby for still loving me and for making this sacrifice for me in her infancy.

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Partha Pratim Paul
Assistant Professor
Department of Law
Assam University,
Silchar, Assam.