

Title: Developing an Alternative Access to Cultural Heritage: A Digital Archive of Naga Oral Heritage

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Guru Sangyusang Pongener performing a folksong using a traditional instrument called “Ku Kongki.”
Image credit: YouTube, “Ao Naga Folk Songs.”

Overview of the project:

Developing an Alternative Access to Cultural Heritage: A Digital Archive of Naga Oral Heritage seeks to establish a new method for documenting the oral artistic and cultural expressions of the Nagas, an indigenous group from Nagaland. The study posits that Naga folksongs hold significant community knowledge and historical insights, which have not yet been fully utilized as primary sources of information. By creating a digital archive using Digital Humanities techniques, this project seeks to underscore the significance of these folksongs as key cultural resources. Our goals include identifying, mapping, preserving, and protecting this oral heritage while creating an accessible space for the community and researchers.

Research Methodology:

The study will use a combination of qualitative, ethnographic, and participatory methods and digital humanities methods:

- Face-to-face interaction
- Interviews
- Participatory observation
- Interactive focus group discussions
- Snowball sampling method for identifying the folk artist

Deliverables:

Over the course of two years, our project will deliver several significant outcomes designed to enhance the preservation and accessibility of Naga oral heritage. These include the creation of an open-access digital web archive that will serve as a centralized repository for the collected folksongs. Accompanying this archive will be detailed metadata enriched with annotations that provide cultural, linguistic, musical, and historical context, ensuring a deeper understanding of the material. Our project will also contribute to academic scholarship through the publication of journal articles in reputed journals (preferably Scopus-indexed) and the organization of a workshop or seminar to disseminate findings and foster dialogue. We also plan to publish an anthology of translated folksongs, the first of its kind, aimed at reviving interest in these important cultural expressions and guiding scholars and academics toward further study and appreciation of Naga oral heritage.