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Euro) as a lifeline to salvage the priests' sinking motion picture company "Sampari Pictures", riddled with huge debts.

Six years on, the priests' second film 'Yarwng' (Roots) received Tripura's first national film award from the President of India, Mrs. Pratibha Patil, 19 March 2010, in Delhi.

### **Evangelization through culture promotion**

"See, cinema is a lot about images and no image is neutral. The very process of engaging oneself dynamically against these images can be enriching individually and collectively. They challenge, criticize, uplift. Our effort has not been to make a film that people will necessarily like but to make a film that will hopefully excite," clarifies Pulinthanath.

Besides, these two films have helped to remove much of the mistaken notion that the State's 2 per cent of Christians are not rooted in the local culture.

The numerous works of evangelization, development and social service that the Church in Tripura and the whole of North East India carry out, at times to heroic degrees, will be most effectively enhanced by the present project as it focuses on culture and its crisis in a changing society.

When it comes to the oft-heard accusation that the Church is destroying the culture and language of peoples in Northeast India, Tripura Church

spokesman Pulinthanath casts aside his usual reticence and finds eloquence.

Stoutly refuting the accusation he says, "It is not true! People who say this presume that the Church sees no merit in local cultures. Perhaps they are basing themselves on some archaic, outdated perceptions of isolated instances. Over the last 50 years (since Vatican II) the Church has been the outspoken champion of the promotion of indigenous culture..."

If one seriously investigates, one would find that church has contributed to culture through mother tongue education, script evolution, local festivals, cultural and linguistic research centres, art academies and anthropological museums: the list is only indicative, not exhaustive.

