Here is a release by Mising Agom Kébang (also referred to popularly in Assam, India, as Mising Sahitya Sabha), the highest linguistic and literary body of the Mising people of Assam, India, dedicated to the cause of the preservation and development of the Mising language.

1. This release by the Mising Agom Kébang (MAK, for short, also referred to below as MAK) purports to draw the attention of the world community to the name of the community, called 'Mising', and its orthographic form.

2. The MISINGs are one of the numerous indigenous ethnic groups inhabiting the north-eastern part of India. Socio-culturally and linguistically, they are close cognates of the Adi people of Arunachal. Presently they number around 0.7 million (0.68424 million as per the Census of India, 2011) in Assam and live chiefly in the riverine areas of its eight eastern districts, with concentrations in the districts of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur and a subdivision called Majuli in the district of Jorhat. A section of Misings still live in the hills of Arunachal, from where the rest of them migrated to the fertile plains of the Assam valley in the past.

3. In Assam the Assamese speaking neighbours used the name 'Miri' to refer to the Mising people and the word gained general currency, but the people call themselves 'Mising', not 'Miri'. In present-day terminology 'Mising' is an autonym, whereas 'Miri' is an exonym. The name 'Miri', however, still appears in the Constitutional list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam, which the Mising people want to be replaced with 'Mising'.

4. MAK was established by the Misings in 1972 as the central organization of the Mising people, dedicated to the cause of preservation and development of the Mising language. At present it has nearly 150 branches in different areas inhabited predominantly by Misings. Thanks to the efforts of MAK, the government in the State of Assam has introduced the teaching of the Mising language in many primary schools, located in areas inhabited by Misings. Efforts are continuing to extend its teaching, so as to cover the elementary stage as a whole for the time being. Its efforts have also seen the production, in the intervening years, of a fairly substantial body of written literature in Mising, both prose and poetry. More importantly, there is now significant awareness in the community about the need for the preservation and development of their mother tongue – an outlook that is almost sure to save their language from possible extinction in the future.

5. As Misings had no script of their own and no stable written tradition, the few native speakers of Mising who, before and after the Independence of India in 1947, published articles, booklets or small volumes in the Assamese language, used the Assamese script for writing Mising words, phrases or sentences, but such attempts never reflected the phonetic features of the Mising language. Christian missionaries used the roman script in the very small quantity of biblical literature they published in Mising, but their attempts never became popular amongst the Misings in general and soon died out. Thus when MAK set out to preserve and develop the Mising language – obviously in a written form – they studied scientifically the phonetic features of the language and, instead of designing a new script, which would not have had wide readability, they decided to use the most widely used script in the world, viz. the roman, for their language in an adapted form.

6. MAK identified the 15 consonant phonemes in their language and the 7 basic positions of vocalic articulation, each of the 7 positions, however, yielding two vowel phonemes – one short and the other long, the total number of phonemes in their language thus adding up to 29 (15+ 7x2). They used one grapheme (letter) each for the 29 phonemes and added the letters W(w) and H(h) to their alphabet to cater for the needs of common loan words. As the 5 vowel graphemes in roman (as used in English) were not enough to symbolize their 7 basic vowels , they had to use diacritical marks with two of the vowel letters to symbolize the two central vowels in the language. Moreover, they used the same 7 letters as used for the short vowels for the long vowels also and added the colon-like length mark used in IPA to mark vowel length. MAK further decided to segregate the vowels from the consonants and arrange the consonants according to their places of articulation (as far as practicable), as is done in the alphabets of New Indo-Aryan languages. Thus the roman alphabet, as adapted by MAK, reads:

Vowels – o o: a a: i i: u u: e e: é é: í í:
Consonants – k g ng // s j ny // t d n // p b m // r l y // w h

[and the 'capital' counterparts of the above 'small' letters for use according to conventions in English]

MAK considered replacing the digraphs 'ng' and 'ny' with the graphemes (single letters) used in the IPA, but refrained from doing so because of their general unfamiliarity.

7. MAK found that the Mising language has only one sibilant phoneme (described, phonetically, as voiceless alveolar fricative), which is symbolized in IPA, roman, and, generally, also in English, by the letter s, as in English *sing*, *song*, *six*, *gas*, *case*, *casing*, *casino*, etc., so the roman alphabet adapted by this apex body also reflects this phonetic feature by including only one letter, viz. the letter s, representing the single sibilant in the language. There is no sound in Mising corresponding to the sound of English 'sh' (described, phonetically, as 'voiceless palato-alveolar fricative'), as in *show*, *shame*, *ship*, *shine*, *shun*, etc. In fact, owing to the absence of this sound in their mother tongue, Misings, who have not learnt how to pronounce the speech sounds in English, fail to make a distinction between the sounds of 's' and 'sh' in English – between *so/sow* and *show*, *same* and *shame*, *sip* and *ship*, *sign* and *shine*, *sun* and *shun*, for instance. There are, therefore, no words in Mising, including the word 'Mising', which can be spelt with the digraph 'sh'.

8. Today anyone, who undertakes a study of the Mising language and who has even a rudimentary knowledge of phonetic science, can see that the Mising language, as spoken by Misings across the length and breadth of their habitation, and irrespective of dialectal varieties, has only one sibilant phoneme, namely the sound of the letter s as exemplified above. A small number of people in certain localities are found using in a small number of words a voiceless glottal fricative, symbolized by the letter h in IPA (and English), in place of the sibilant s, e.g. *supag* 'now' >*hupag*, *ka:so* 'wait a bit!' >*ka:ho*, *aso:pé* 'slowly, silently' >*aho:pé*, etc., but even such people know that the actual words corresponding to their *hupag*, *ka:ho*, *aho:pé*, etc. are *supag*, *ka:so*, *aso:pé*, etc. But the sound of the digraph sh is never pronounced by any Mising in any word. Precisely, therefore, when scholars from the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, India, undertook to study the grammar of the Mising language, they found a 'Mising' language, and not a 'Mishing' language, and they produced a MISING GRAMMAR, not a MISHING GRAMMAR (*MISING GRAMMAR*, published by the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, 570 006, September 1991).

9. During the colonial days the Misings were regularly referred to as 'Miri'. An assistant Political Officer named J. F. Needham, based at Sadiya, a small town in present-day Tinsukia district of Assam bordering Arunachal, mentions at the beginning of the Preface to his book, *Outline Grammar of the Shaiyang Miri Language*, "as spoken by the Miris of that clan residing in the neighbourhood of Sadiya" (shillong 1886), that the Miris "call themselves Mishing" – his "Mishing" being spelt with 'sh'. The name of the Mising social subgroup, called 'Sa:yang' ('a:' representing a long vowel) was spelt "Shaiyang" – obviously erratic – in the book. Later Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, Volume III, 1909, in the section on 'The Tibeto-Burman Family: North Assam Group -- Abor-Miri and Dafla' makes use of Needham's information that the Miris call themselves "Mishing". A Christian Missionary, J. Herbert Lorrain, in his *A DICTIONARY OF THE ABOR-MIRI LANGUAGE* (Shillong, 1910), did not use the name "Mishing" but spelt some "Abor-Miri" (Adi-Mising) words with 's' and some others with 'sh'.

10. Since the *OUTLINE GRAMMAR* of Needham, who used "Mishing", apparently for the first time in print, dealt only with the speech of the "Shaiyang Miri"s (to be read 'Sa:yang Miri') "residing in the neighbourhood of Sadiya", it is clear that he did not concern himself with the varieties of the Mising language, spoken by the rest of the Misings. In fact, the Sa:yangs residing "in the neihbourhood of Sadiya" form only a small section of the Sa:yangs, which itself is only a section of the Mising community. It may also be mentioned here that the speech of the Sa:yangs of Sadiya is very similar to that of their Adi neighbours in Arunachal, and in the 19th century, when Needham was writing his book under reference, it was probably even more so. It is, therefore, very likely that the 'sh' in Needham's spelling 'Mishing' – assuming that he was making a correct transcription -- was a reflection of the Adi-Mising speech of the Sadiya locality only, as spoken in those times. Alternatively, Needham's 'Mishing' could have been a simple grafting of English orthographic conventions onto Mising, for someone,

accustomed to English spellings, would not like to write 'Mising', but 'Mising' is a Mising word, not an English one.

11. Today, however, NO MISING, irrespective of the dialect they speak and the locality they inhabit, would utter any Mising word, including the name 'Mising', with the sound of 'sh'. In fact, as already mentioned above, unless they learn to speak English properly, they cannot pronounce correctly English words containing the sound of 'sh'. The vowel in the second syllable of 'Mising', however, is pronounced in two slightly different ways. In a couple of Mising dialects it is pronounced as a 'high front' vowel, as in English *sing* (and, therefore, 'Mising'), while in a couple of other dialects it is pronounced as a 'high central' vowel, for which one will have to use the relevant phonetic symbol or some diacritical mark. When the Mising Agom Kébang was established, the form 'Mising' was used, because of its being the easier form to write and type.

12. It has come to the notice of MAK that a certain gentleman, based in Mumbai, who does not appear to have even a rudimentary idea of phonetic science – AND who is a persona non grata as far as the Mising Agom Kébang (MAK), the highest linguistic and literary body of the Mising people, is concerned, has been trying to mislead others by spelling the name 'Mising' as 'Mishing'. In doing so, he is obviously relying on old, secondary sources instead of the Mising language, as it is spoken today by Misings –which is the LIVING PRIMARY SOURCE. MAK and other apex organizations of the Mising people, viz. Mising Ba:né Kébang (MBK), Mising Mimé Kébang (MMK), and Takam Mising Porin Kébang (TMPK), have moved the Government of India to amend the Constitutional list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam -- correcting the present "(Miri) Miching" as only "Mising" – but the gentleman under reference is understood to have been meddling even in the matter of such amendment. MAK has been taking a tolerant view of this man's anti-MAK activities so far, but now that he is blatantly defying the authority of the representative apex bodies of the Mising people, MAK has no alternative but to condemn his anti-MAK activities and asks him to desist from such activities.

Resolution adopted in the Joint Meeting on 3/6/2012

Resolution No. 1.

Resolved that, in view of the feelings and sentiment of the Mising people the name "Miri" given to the Mising people and recorded accordingly in the constitution of India be changed by substituting with the name "Mising" in place of "Miri".

Resolution No. 2.

Resolved that, the Govt. of India be moved for rplacement of the name of "Miri by substituting it with the name "Mising" through an amendment of the related clause/section of the constitution of India at an early date.

Signatures of the members attending the meeting on 3/6/2012

Name & Designation	Signatures
Paramananda Chayengia, President, Mising Ba:né Ké bang	Prabhat Mili, Gen. Secretary Mising Ba:né Ké bang
Dr. Ranoj Pegu, President Mising Mimag Kébang	Premodhar Doley, Gen. Secretary Mising Mimag Kébang
Johan Doley, President Takam Mising Porin Kébang	Indra Kr. Chungkrang, Gen. Secretary Takam Mising Porin Kébang
Suroj Kr. Patiri, President Mising Dírbí Kébang	Hem. Ch. Doley, Gen. Secretary Mising Dírbí Kébang
Usharani Kumbang, President Takam Mising Mimé Kébang	Bisitra Doley, Gen. Secretary Takam Mising Mimé Kébang