



NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

on

THREADS OF HERITAGE: EXPLORING TRADITIONAL TEXTILES AND NATURAL FIBRES

27th - 29th January 2025

College of Community Science, CAU (Imphal), Tura, Meghalaya

In Collaboration With

ICAR-National Institute of Natural Fibre and Engineering Technology, Kolkata

ICAR-Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur

Deendayal Research Institute

ICAR-Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibres, Barrackpore, Kolkata

Venue:

College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences, Umiam, Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya- 793103



About the Symposium

The Traditional Textile Symposium, “Threads of Heritage: Exploring Traditional Textiles and Natural Fibres,” serves as a dynamic platform dedicated to the celebration, preservation, and promotion of India's rich textile heritage. The symposium brings together a diverse group of experts, artisans, researchers, designers, and policymakers to delve into the historical significance and contemporary relevance of traditional textiles, while highlighting the vital role of sustainable natural Fibres in today's textile industry.

Natural Fibres have been interwoven into the spiritual, cultural, and social fabric of Indian society for generations, embodying purity, sustainability, and a deep-rooted connection to nature. The symposium aims to preserve these traditional textile techniques and promote sustainable practices through the use of natural Fibres. It will underscore the importance of natural Fibres and sustainability in textile production and provide a collaborative platform for stakeholders to network, share ideas, and empower rural communities.

The event will explore contemporary innovations that seamlessly integrate traditional folklore and art with modern design and technology, enhancing the visibility of India's textile crafts on the global stage. It will focus on non-conventional natural Fibres such as banana, pineapple, arecanut, ramie, flax, and hemp, which have garnered attention for their eco-friendly nature, sustainable cultivation, and potential to serve as alternatives to synthetic Fibres. These Fibres offer several benefits, including biodegradability, lower carbon footprints, and the ability to be sourced from agricultural by-products.

India's natural fibres have deep historical roots and hold immense potential for driving the country's textile industry forward in an eco-friendly direction. With around 30 million tons of bananas produced annually, there is significant potential for Fibre extraction from banana plants. In the North-East, over 1.2 million metric tons of pineapple are cultivated, providing ample leaves for Fibre production. Similarly, arecanut cultivation, producing approximately 6 lakh tons per year, offers a sustainable source of Fibres from its husks. Other Fibres such as ramie, primarily grown in Assam and Nagaland, and industrial hemp, which is gaining traction in Uttarakhand and the North-East, also present promising opportunities.

The symposium will address ways to harness these fibres' potential to drive rural economic growth, promote traditional weaving techniques, and overcome challenges like limited extraction technology and market awareness. Aligned with government initiatives like “Make in India” and “Atmanirbhar Bharat,” this symposium is poised to play a key role in strengthening indigenous Fibre industries and driving the shift towards sustainable textile practices.



Weaving Legacy: Economic, Cultural and Spiritual Impact of India's Heritage Textiles

India's heritage textiles, rooted in natural Fibres like cotton, silk, and jute, have been central to its economy since ancient times. Cotton textiles such as muslin and chintz, and luxurious silk varieties like Tussar and Muga, were prized globally and formed a substantial part of India's exports, especially along trade routes like the Silk Road. During the Mughal period, textiles contributed up to 20% of India's GDP due to booming global demand. However, under British colonial rule, the focus shifted to raw Fibre exports, leading to a decline in local textile production and its contribution to GDP, which fell to around 5%–10%. Today, though textiles contribute about 2.3% to India's GDP, their export legacy remains strong, particularly through handlooms and sustainable fabrics. Heritage textiles embody not only the craftsmanship of generations but also the cultural identity of a nation, reminding us that "textiles are the soul of traditions woven into the fabric of time.

For generations, Indian families have passed down the art of cultivating and weaving natural fibre textiles, seeing the process as both a craft and a spiritual practice. Hand-woven garments, often passed through families, carry cultural significance and religious blessings. Wearing these garments honours ancestors, preserves familial heritage, and expresses reverence for nature. Traditional textiles made from natural Fibres embody purity, sustainability, and a sacred connection to nature, health, and spirituality

The Significance of Natural Fibres

Natural Fibres, such as Cotton, Silk, Jute, Banana, Arecanut, Pineapple, Ramie, Flax, and Hemp, have held sacred connotations in religious rituals and traditional attire for centuries. In Indian culture, these fibres are considered gifts from nature, carrying deep spiritual meaning. For example, cotton (*Karpasa*) and banana (*Abaca*) Fibres are used in religious garments, signifying purity and a connection to the divine. Ayurveda also views Fibres like cotton and linen as sattvic (pure), promoting spiritual and physical well-being.

Non-conventional natural fibres are biodegradable and require fewer chemical inputs compared to synthetic Fibres like polyester and nylon. Their cultivation also often involves using agricultural residues, reducing waste and promoting sustainable farming practices. These fibres are predominantly cultivated in rural areas, particularly in the North East, where traditional practices of hand-weaving and small-scale farming prevail. Promoting the use of these Fibres in the textile industry can provide livelihood opportunities for rural communities, especially women, who are often involved in handloom weaving.

These fibres play a crucial role in religious rituals, from sacred poojas to everyday life. Cotton threads, for instance, are commonly tied around deities or sacred objects in poojas, symbolizing protection, unity, and a bond with the divine. The sacred thread (*Yajnopavita*) worn during the Hindu Upanayana ceremony is made of cotton, representing spiritual awakening. Additionally, Fibres like jute and hemp are sometimes incorporated into sacred architecture, symbolizing tradition, strength, and resilience.



Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme I: Sustainable Cultivation and Production of Natural Fibres

- Genetic Improvement of Natural Fibre Crops for Higher Yield and Quality
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for natural fibre cultivation
- Traditional knowledge in natural fibre production
- Exploring Underutilized Fibres for Sustainable Production

Theme II: Natural Fibres for Health and Wellness

- Ayurveda: Healing Textiles in Indian Medicine (AYUSH)
- Role of natural fibres Traditional uses of plant-based fibres in spiritual and ritual practices
- Spiritual and cultural symbolism related to fibres, Colours, and Motifs
- Sustainable Textiles and Finishes for Technical end-uses (Medi-tech, Build-tech, Cloth-tech etc.)

Theme III: Innovation and Technology using Non-conventional Fibres

- Advances in natural fibre processing and product development
- Product diversification from Non-conventional sources viz., Bamboo, Banana, Lotus, Ramie, Pineapple Leaf fibres, etc
- Cost efficient technologies for fibre extraction, Processing and Value addition
- Newer fibres and sustainable material for functional and technical applications
- Application of AI, Simulation techniques in Textile processing and designing

Theme IV: Socioeconomic and Circular Economy models in Textiles & Handicrafts

- Economic contribution of Textiles & Handicrafts
- Adoption of circular economy models in Natural fibre product development
- Revival of Non-conventional/ Under-utilized fibre sources for Livelihood
- Market challenges, Opportunities, and Future trends for Handloom and Handicraft sector
- Success stories on Natural fibre based enterprises

Theme V: History, Mythology, Culture and Spiritual aspects of Natural Fibres and Heritage Textiles

- Symbolism and Spiritual Significance of Textiles in Indian Mythology
- Traditional Weaving Techniques and Their Socio-Cultural Impact
- Artisan Communities: Guardians of Heritage Textile Traditions
- Sustainable and Ethical Perspectives in Indian Heritage Textiles
- Influence of Invasions on Indian Textile and Heritage

THE MANIPURI WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR WHO TURNS LOTUS INTO SILK YARN



#POSITIVESTORY

Tongbram Bijiyashanti makes silk yarn from lotus stalks, turning waste into wealth

The symposium is expected to foster

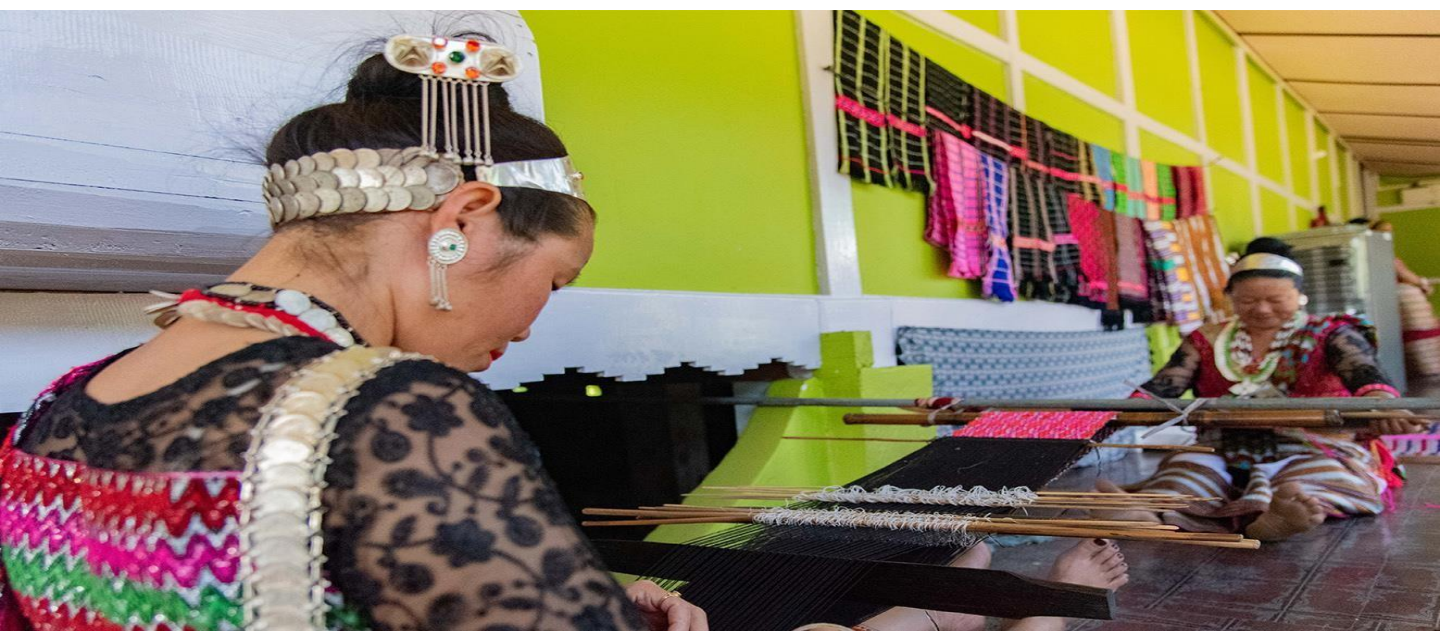
- ❖ A deeper understanding of traditional textiles and natural Fibres among participants
- ❖ Insights into the health benefits of natural fibres and their role in *Ayurveda/Ayurveda*
- ❖ Documentation of traditional knowledge and cultural stories surrounding natural Fibres
- ❖ Strategies for the conservation and revival of traditional textile crafts
- ❖ Knowledge sharing among experts, artisans, researchers, and policymakers
- ❖ The identification of contemporary innovations in Natural Fibre processing and textile production
- ❖ Collaborative frameworks that empower rural artisans and weavers
- ❖ Exploration of future trends in natural fibre markets, with an emphasis on sustainability

Who can Participate?

- ❖ Artisans, craftsmen, and weavers
- ❖ Textile designers and entrepreneurs
- ❖ Agricultural researchers, plant breeders, and academics in textile and fashion studies
- ❖ Sustainability and environmental experts
- ❖ Policymakers and government officials
- ❖ NGOs and social enterprises
- ❖ Students and educators in textile and fashion disciplines

Submit your work...

- ❖ Contributory papers for oral and poster presentations are invited on the above themes and sub-themes.
- ❖ Abstracts with title, author(s) name, e-mail, name of the institution, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions (not exceeding 300 words) in MS Word, Arial font (Font size 12 in double space) shall be submitted before 31 December, 2024 online to tnfcau@gmail.com only.
- ❖ Abstract of paper should be based on the original work/concept of the author(s) and must not have been published anywhere. Name of the presenting author should be underlined. Reviewed papers will be selected for oral or poster presentations in the relevant technical sessions. Submitted abstracts will be evaluated and decision regarding acceptance/rejection will be communicated to the corresponding authors by the scientific committee members.
- ❖ Poster size-120cm height and 90cm width



Central Agricultural University, Imphal

The University was established in the year 1992. The jurisdiction of the University extends to seven North Eastern Hill States viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland and Tripura, with headquarters at Imphal in Manipur. The university has total 13 constituent colleges scattered all over seven NEH states. Since its establishment, besides high standards of education in agriculture and allied fields and human resource development, university proactively involved in research and innovation and development of cutting-edge technologies that suites to farming community of NEH region.

College of Community Science, Tura Meghalaya

College of Home Science was established on September 24th 2004 in Tura, West Garo Hills under CAU, Imphal, Manipur. The mandate of the college includes imparting education in different branches of Community Science and Allied sciences, to contribute to the advancement of learning and research in Community Science and its allied fields. The primary mission of the college is to impart quality education in all branches to create proficient manpower for catering the needs of the society.

The Venue...

College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences, Umiam, Meghalaya

College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences formerly known as College of Post-Graduate Studies, a constituent college of the Central Agricultural University, Imphal (CAU) was established in the year 2007 with the objective of training post graduate students of agriculture from the North Eastern Hill states and conduct research addressing issues of hill agro ecologies. It is expected that these students would eventually become the torch bearers for enhancing the agricultural growth and livelihood support for the farming and rural community in the region.

Registration Details

Category	Registration Fee (on or before 31.12.2024)	Registration Fee (After 31.12.2024)	Spot Registration
Delegates/ Exhibitors	4000/-	4500/-	5000/-
Accompanying Person	2500/-	-	-
Student	3000/-	3500/-	4000/-

Payment Details

Name : HSAI CCS TURA
Account Number : 42231295908
IFSC : SBIN0000198
Name of the Bank & Branch. : State Bank of India, Tura

Registration Link

<https://forms.gle/Wh8yrV1nVkcw3QF9>

Important Dates....

Abstract Submission	15 th December 2024
Intimation of Paper Acceptance	20 th December 2024
Registration	31 st December 2024



Accommodation

Accommodation in Guest Houses is limited and will be allotted on first come first basis. The delegates who register in advance will be given priority. Delegates from International as well as national organizations may book hotel in Umiam and Shillong themselves directly through travel/hotel websites. The symposium secretariat can assist delegates in booking hotel accommodation. We can also book hotel for the delegates if payment is made in advance. As Shillong and its vicinity area is famous for tourist places and symposium coincides with the peak tourism season, delegates are advised to book accommodation well in advance.

Travel

Nearest railway station is Guwahati (90Km) from where taxi/shared taxi and shared sumo service can be availed to reach Umiam. Nearest airport is at Shillong/Umroi (12 Km) which is connected through Kolkata. Guwahati airport is connected with all major cities of India and pre-paid taxi can be availed from the airport. The college is 1.2 km from Umiam lake on Guwahati-Shillong route (NH 40) and located nearby ICAR Research Complex for NEH region, Barapani and 22 km before reaching the Shillong city.

Meghalaya... Abode of Clouds

Meghalaya, is beautifully described as *alaya* ("abode") and *megha* ("of the clouds"), occupies a mountainous plateau of great scenic beauty. The state is an upland area formed by a detached block of the Deccan plateau. The climate of Meghalaya is generally mild. One of the world's wettest regions is found in Meghalaya, Sohra, which has an average annual precipitation of about 450 inches (11,430 mm) during monsoon season (from May to September).

Meghalaya is blanketed in lush forests with plentiful pines, sal and bamboo. Other species include oak, birch, beech and magnolia. Most of the inhabitants of Meghalaya are Tibeto- Burman (Garos) or Mon-Khmer (Khasis) in origin and their languages and dialects belong to these groups. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity of the state. The main crops grown in Meghalaya are rice, millet, corn (maize), potatoes, pepper, chillies, cotton, ginger, jute, betel nuts, fruits (including oranges and mangoes) and vegetables. Communal land ownership is common and jhum (shifting cultivation) is still practiced in some areas. Weather in Umiam and Shillong during February is quite cold with temperatures between 8°C and 18°C, warm clothes are necessary.



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