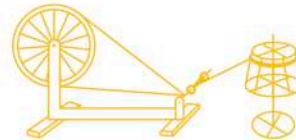
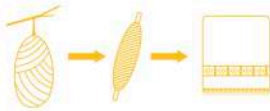
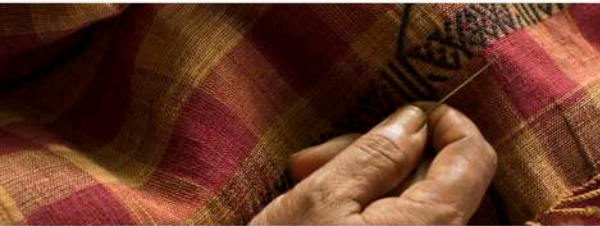


# Traditional Weaves and Embroidery of Meghalaya



WEAVING A TRADITION





# **NORTH EAST SLOW FOOD & AGROBIODIVERSITY SOCIETY (NESFAS)**

NESFAS is a platform that connects people to the pleasure and importance of local foods and in the process, links them to its journey from farm to fork. It is a journey that generates awareness and responsibility towards the environment and at the same time, preserves the indigenous cultures and traditions. Working as a regional reflection of The Indigenous Partnership (TIP), the organisation works towards offering a singular platform for traditional knowledge systems and modern science as equal partners to charter the course of the “Future We Want” for the well being of indigenous communities. As an outcome of the discussions and resolutions of International Terra Madre (ITM) 2015, NESFAS has embraced the framework of agroecology- as a science, a practice and a social movement, to explore it’s expanded mission.

NESFAS works closely with community members, farmers, local health workers, artisans, beekeepers, traditional knowledge holders and more, to work on revitalizing the Indigenous Food System and achieve sustainable agroecology-based livelihoods.

One of the organization’s initiatives to promote local livelihoods includes value addition and increase market demand for local Eri weaves through its brand Mei-Ramew Weaves.

A value chain study on Eri Weaves (Value-Chain-of-Eri-Silk-Ryndia-NESFAS) was conducted where it was found that the different actors in the Eri weaves work were not very well connected and also the market for traditional weaves was limited. This was a threat to the traditional art of weaving and to all other actors in the value chain like rearers, spinners and dyers that are interconnected. Efforts are underway to connect the rearers to the spinners. In every farmers’ market, under the brand Mei-Ramew Weaves, NESFAS has also given platform of sale to the weavers and Khneng embroiderers.





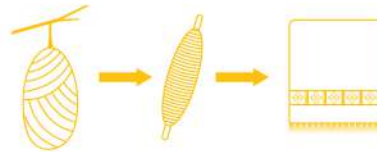






## Eri Silk, Ryndia

Eri silk weaving is a traditional art where the yarn is drawn out of the cocoon of the eri silkworm. Eri silk has a beautiful texture and flexibility; it remains cool in summer and warm in winter. For this art to continue, the preservation of the environment is essential as the yarn and dyes are sourced from silkworms and herbs in the local landscape.





## Khngng Embroidery

The art of Khngng embroidery can be traced back to around 200 years ago. The embroidery is stitched on the Eri fabric (a silk locally known as *jaiñryndia*) to decorate the border of their traditional garments. Therefore, the genesis of the word 'Khngng' (a local Khasi word) basically means 'border'. The inspiration for the embroidery comes from a local insect in the surrounding called '*ktiar*', which resembles a centipede. On a daily basis, the artisans work 6 to 7 hours on the Khngng embroidery.





## Indigenous Natural Dyes

Dyes are extracted from roots, leaves, bark, flowers, and berries. These are crushed, pounded and boiled to extract the dye. The color is fixed with a natural mordant such as leaves. The concern is that some plants used for natural dyeing are becoming scarce. Preservation of these plants will secure a wide range of colors embedded in the culture of Meghalaya.





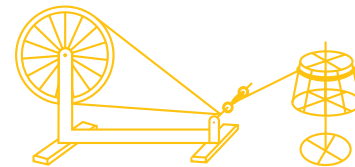


## Skilled Craftsmanship

Each process of creating eri silk requires great skill and understanding of the local environment. The equipment and the fabric are entirely made by hand resulting in the unique texture of eri silk.

Spinning is a time consuming process that requires great skill. A well spun thread is the key to creating fabrics that are treasured for generations.

Floor looms are typical to Meghalaya. Fabric woven following the traditional method can last for ages. Weaving is a very lengthy process. Two or three days are required to weave just one shawl.







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# Soap Nuts

Soap nuts (*Soh Pairah*) are native to India and Nepal. They are natural and organic nuts used for washing clothes. They have recently become a popular environmentally friendly alternative to chemical detergent. Soap nuts contain saponin, a chemical compound found in particular abundance in various plant species. They produce soap-like foam when shaken with water. Wash with cold, warm or hot water. Soap nuts may be used several times until the shell starts to become soft and grey.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour luke warm water in a tub
2. Scrap the soap nut and stir until it lathers
3. Sieve the filtrate and discard
4. Soak the clothes and scrub lightly (manually)
5. Rinse and dry.





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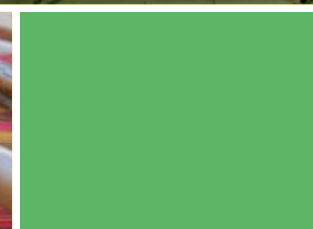
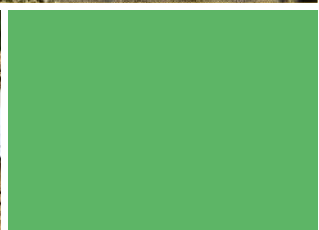
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**NORTH EAST SLOW FOOD & AGROBIODIVERSITY SOCIETY**

Kerie Ville, Arbuthnott Road, Laitumkhrach, Shillong 793003, Meghalaya, India

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

[infonesfas@gmail.com](mailto:infonesfas@gmail.com) | 97740 62558



[www.nesfas.in](http://www.nesfas.in)