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The Traditional Attire, Culture, and Ornaments of the Kokborok-Speaking Nine Communities of Tripura

Usha Rani Tripura*[1]

[1] Guest Lecture, Department of Kokborok, Bir Bikram Memorial College, Pratapgarh, Agartala - 799 004, Tripura, India

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Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between identity and traditional aesthetics within the Khwlaimungo Tripura Hani Kokborok Kok Sanai community of Northeast India. Historically rooted in the "Hukumu-Mukumu" (culture and heritage) of Tripura, this community along with 19 other indigenous groups preserves its legacy through the meticulous crafting of Rigwnai, Risa, and various traditional ornaments. Drawing parallels to the ancient attire and jewelry found in the Indus Valley Civilization by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the research highlights the deep historical lineage of Borok craftsmanship. The study further examines the geographical spread of these traditions across Assam, Mizoram, and Bangladesh, emphasizing the technical processes involved in textile production. Central to this is the traditional pit loom, requiring the use of the Chokha (spindle) and Lubo (shuttle). A significant focus is placed on the indigenous "Pali" (coloring) method, where vibrant dyes are extracted from natural flora to create the distinct red, black, and yellow hues of Borok attire. Ultimately, this paper illustrates how clothing and ornaments serve as a living archive of the history, resilience, and cultural heritage of the Borok people.

***Key words*:** Kokborok, Rigwnai Risa, Tripura Hani, Borok culture, Traditional ornaments, Indigenous weaving, Pit loom

Tripura is a state located in the northeastern part of India, a land blessed with abundant flora and fauna (trees and bamboo) and a rich cultural heritage [1]. For many years, the Kings (Bubagwra Rok) have looked after this land by upholding its traditions and culture. The history of Tripura is found recorded in the Rajmala Puthi, which was written during the reign of King Dharma Manikya II. In this paper, one can find the history of the Tripuri royal lineage and the extent of the kingdom's ancient boundaries. This historical chronicle also offers valuable insights into the socio-political structure, cultural practices, and governance systems that shaped Tripura's identity over centuries. Before the British East India Company took control of India, the Mughal Dynasty was seen holding powerful sway over the land. The East India Company was established in 1599. Following this, in 1600, Queen Elizabeth of England granted the company permission to trade in India. During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, an English captain named William Hawkins received a Farman (royal decree) of approval. From that time on, the English began to bring India under their control. In 1757, a war broke out between the East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daulah, known as the 'Battle of Plassey.'

In the history of India, the English emerged as a powerful force from that moment. However, neither the Mughal Dynasty nor the British could ever make the kings of Tripura bow their heads in submission. The kings of Tripura are seen to have governed the land with great strength. During that era, the boundaries of Tripura extended across much of present-day Cachar (Assam), Sylhet (Bangladesh), Meghalaya, and Mizoram, all of which were under the control and administration of the Tripuri Kings. It can be said that Tripura's borders once reached as far as Arakan in Myanmar.

The early identity of the Tripura Kings was known as the 'Fa' or 'Pha' lineage. Later, in the 12th Century, the Manikya Dynasty was established, and they continued to rule Tripura with power until 1947. After being under British rule for 200 years, India gained independence in 1947. Following India's independence, the last ruling king of Tripura, Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya, passed away in 1947. At that time, his son could not become king because he was a minor (underage). This period marked the beginning of a 'dark era' for Tripura. Consequently, Regent Queen Kanchan Prabha Devi signed the Merger Agreement with the Indian government in 1949. Through this agreement, Tripura officially became a part of India, and its territory was redefined to its current size of 10,491.69 km^2. Despite these changes, we continue to preserve and protect our identity, our traditional attire, and our culture.

From that time onward, Tripura transitioned into being a part of a democratic country. Today, in addition to the 19 recognized indigenous communities, people from various other backgrounds reside in Tripura. According to the 2011 Census, the population was 3,671,032. Projections related to the 2021 Census period indicate an urban population of 960,921 and a rural population of 2,710,051. Within this total, there are 1,871,867 males and 1,799,165 females. The 2011 data show a population density of 350 km^2, with a high literacy rate of

***Correspondence to:** Usha Rani Tripura, E-mail: sumantadebbarma83@gmail.com

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87.75% (male: 92.18%, female: 83.15%). Geographically, Tripura is largely surrounded by Bangladesh, sharing an 856 km border, while sharing 109 km with Mizoram and 53 km with Assam. By 2019-2020, the estimated population reached approximately 4,011,000.

Amidst the forests, hills, and rivers of the state, the traditional attire and culture (Kanmung-Chummung) remain beautifully preserved. Within the Kokborok-speaking community of Tripura [2], there are nine (9) primary clans, and their styles of dress do not differ drastically. Their ornaments and clothing are widely accepted and cherished across these nine clans and even extend to ten (10) other social groups. The women of Tripura have been skilled in crafting and wearing these traditional garments and jewelry since the very beginning of the Borok lineage. They continue to weave and wear the Rigwnai, Risa, and Ritwrak Kamchwlwi (traditional tops/wraps) as a mark of their identity. To weave the Rigwnai, Risa, and Ritwrak, the Borok people have, since the beginning of creation, cultivated cotton in their Huk (shifting cultivation/Jhum fields). It can be said that the Huk is the very root and foundation of Borok culture, heritage, and attire. After planting and harvesting the cotton from the fields, the raw fibers are processed and spun into thread using the Chokha (spinning wheel). Once the thread is ready, if coloring (Pali) is required, natural dyes are extracted from the earth and various plants. Leaves and tree bark are used to create these dyes - for example, Kwchak (Red), Kwkhwrang (Yellow), and Koromo (Black/Dark) are used to dye the threads before weaving the Rigwnai and Risa [3-4].

However, the discussion of Tripura's attire is incomplete without mentioning traditional ornaments. To understand these, one must look toward ancient history. It can be observed that the ancestors of the Borok lineage wore similar ornaments during the era of the Harappa and Indus Valley civilizations. When archaeologists excavated sites like Mohenjodaro and Lothal, they discovered buried ornaments that reflect this ancient tradition. The Harappa site was first excavated in 1921 by the archaeologist Dayaram Sahni, who discovered various ornaments; similarly, R.D. Banerji discovered Mohenjodaro in 1922 [5-6]. These findings date the culture of wearing such ornaments back to the period between 2500 BC and 1750 BC. The objective of the study is to know the traditional attire, culture, and ornaments of the Kokborok-speaking Kaichuku community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study employed a qualitative, descriptive, and ethnographic research approach to document and analyze the historical evolution of clothing, weaving practices, and ornamentation among the Kokborok-speaking communities of Tripura, including the Debbarma, Rupini, Jamatia, Reang, Uchoi, Murasing, Kalai, and Noatia clans. Data were generated through purposive field-based inquiry in selected indigenous settlements where traditional textile production and ornament use remain actively practiced. Primary data collection involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with elderly knowledge holders, women weavers, traditional silversmiths, and community leaders, complemented by participant observation of cotton cultivation in Huk (jhum fields), spinning using Chokha, natural dye extraction (Pali), and weaving processes employing indigenous tools such as Sobam, Bangkho, Sindi, and Nal. Focus group discussions facilitated the validation of clan-specific terminology, patterns (Bumul), and ornament typologies (Goina-Ganthi), while visual documentation was used to record garments, motifs, tools, and jewellery forms with prior community consent. Secondary sources including ethnographic literature, census records, government and cultural heritage portals were consulted to corroborate oral narratives and ensure historical accuracy. The collected qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify shared cultural continuities and distinct clan-based variations in attire, ornamentation, and symbolic meanings, with due ethical consideration given to informed consent, cultural sensitivity, and respect for indigenous knowledge systems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of clothing, culture, and ornaments

India is home to many ethnic groups. Among them, in the northeastern state of Tripura, reside the 9 (Kaichuku) the nine clans of the Kokborok-speaking community. These nine clans are Tripura, Debbarma, Reang, Jamatia, Kalai, Rupini, Noatia, Uchoi, and Murasing. While there are minor variations in the phonetics and accents of their speech, their cultural similarities far outweigh their differences. Without these specific clans, the identity of the Tipra (Tripuri) people would be incomplete; thus, they are collectively recognized as 'Tipra.'

To speak of the history of their clothing and ornaments, one must first look at their ancient way of life. Since the earliest times, these communities have practiced Huk (Jhum cultivation) for survival. The Huk is recognized as the very 'life' of the people. Just as they gained their identity through Huk farming, they also developed their unique attire and jewelry through it. The clothing and ornaments of the Kokborok-speaking Tipra people are diverse and vast. Distinct from others, their identity is defined by silver jewelry (Ruphai) and beautifully handwoven Rigwnai-Risa, colored with natural dyes (Pali) from the earth [7].

Since the beginning of their history, they have hand-spun their own thread. Cotton planted in the Huk is harvested at the right time and dried in the sun. Once thoroughly dried, the cotton is carefully cleaned and sorted to ensure no impurities remain. This cleaned cotton is then placed on the Chokha (spinning wheel) and processed using the Lubo (shuttle/spindle tools). Through this traditional spinning process, the raw cotton is transformed into Khwtwng (thread). This thread is the foundation of the Ri-Borok (traditional cloth) worn by the community [8].

Debbarma

When writing about the clothing, culture, and ornaments of the Debbarma community, it is impossible not to mention the history of Tripura. According to historical records, the Royal Lineage of Tripura belongs to the Debbarma clan. During the reign of King Trilochan, they were recognized as the *Kshatriya Rajvongsho* (Royal Warrior Lineage). In his time, the Tripura Kshatriyas became known as followers of Baba Goria. The Tripura Kshatriya descent is categorized into five groups: Puran-Tripura, Deshi-Tripura, Jamatia, Reang, and Noatia. Additionally, during the king's era, the Halam community was recognized as a group consisting of twelve sub-clans. Since the beginning of time, the Debbarma people have preserved their heritage by wearing traditional attire and ornaments [9-10].

The Debbarma community continues to blend their ancient *Hukumu-Mukumu* (culture and heritage) with modern times. They speak Kokborok, which belongs to the broader Bodo-Garo language family. During religious festivals and ceremonies (*Ter Banik*), they specifically wear the Rigwnai, Risa, and traditional ornaments to honour their deities and traditions. These traditional garments and ornaments not only symbolize religious devotion but also serve as markers of

identity, continuity, and collective memory within the Debbarma community [11].

Rigwnai-Risa (Traditional textiles)

To weave the traditional Rigwnai and Risa, the process begins in the *Huk* (Jhum field), where cotton is cultivated. Once the cotton is harvested, it is spun into thread using a Chokha (spinning wheel). This thread is then dyed with various *Pali* (natural colors) before the weaving begins.

Tools for weaving

To weave these garments, several traditional wooden and bamboo tools are required, including

Sobam, Rwsami, Thuri, Suri, Sorok, Bangkhok, Besko, Takduk, Sorokni Wasa, Khandai, Nal Wasa, Yakhotom, and Sindhi.

Traditional patterns (Bumul): The Debbarma people incorporate intricate patterns into their weaving. Popular designs for the Rigwnai include:

Khamchang, Chamathwi, Mereng, Hengwra Bubar (Hengwra flower), *Athukiri, Muikhunchok,* and *Jaroi Bubar*. For the Risa, specific symbolic patterns are used, such as

Toksa Mokol (Bird's eye), *Muikhumu Athukiri*, and *Muikhunchok Bwlai*.

Rignai

Risa

Ornaments (Goina-Ganthi)

The ornaments worn by the Debbarma community since ancient times include the Surang (hairpin), which is worn in the hair bun (*Khaju*) and is crafted from both gold (Rangchak) and silver (Ruphai). The Ganthi is a specific ornament worn around the neck (*Totwra*). The Chandrahar (moon-necklace) is a distinctive piece of jewelry for the Debbarma people, also fashioned from gold or silver.

Another significant ornament is the Rangbwtang (coin necklace); in making the *Rangbwtang*, traditional coins are used along with colorful threads - red (*kwchak*), yellow (*kwkhwrang*), and black (*kosom*) - to create various patterns. The Chambi is another item worn by the community, while the Jhuma (earrings) is worn in the ears (*Khunju*) and is made of gold or silver. In addition to these, the Debbarma people wear various other ornaments such as Mathia (heavy bangles), Bala (bracelets), Toya**,** Wakhum Kali**,** Balik (earrings/rings), and Nakphul (nose stud).

Bala/Mathia

Rupini Rigwnai, Risa (Ekwnai and Isa)

The Rupini community, the *Rigwnai* is known as Ekwnai while the *Risa* is referred to as Isa. For men, the traditional loincloth or lower garment is called Pundiri or Oti. The handwoven shirt worn by the people is known as Kanchwlwi**,** and the wrap used for protection during the cold season, the *Ritwrak*, is called Itwrak.

In the weaving of *Rigwnai* and *Risa*, various Bwthai or Bumul (patterns/designs) are utilized. Among these traditional Rupini patterns are the Sorbangi**,** Jongkotok, and Muphukhitung. The traditional attire and culture of the Rupini clan are distinctively showcased from the lower body to the upper profile [12].

Ornaments of the Rupini community (Goina-Ganthi)

Since ancient times, the women of the Rupini community have worn a variety of traditional ornaments. For the nose (*Bukung*), they wear the Bitwn (also known as Naphul), along with silver-crafted Bailik. In the ears (*Khunju*), they wear Wathong or Wakhum (traditionally bamboo-based or inspired shapes), as well as Oyathrang. Other ear ornaments include the Toiya and Borjung Bwthai.

For the neck (*Totwra*), their traditional jewelry includes the Lairop Kuphut**,** Changke Bwchwlwi**,** Rangbwtang (coin necklace), and the Chandrahar, all of which are still prominently seen in the modern era. The traditional ornaments of the Rupini people are a vital part of their visual identity, displayed from head to toe.

Jamatia

The traditional attire (Kanmung-Chummung) and ornaments of the Jamatia people, it is impossible to describe them completely in words. Like other communities, they have a rich variety of clothing and styles. Distinctive traditional dress is made for both men and women.

The attire of the Jamatias is traditionally hand-woven (yakbai takjak). Long ago, like other, Kokborok speaking communities, they would first clear land for cotton cultivation. After harvesting the cotton, it was brought home to be processed into yarn. To ensure high-quality thread, the cotton

was dried thoroughly in the sun; this prevented any difficulties during the spinning process. Once spun, the yarn was used for weaving.

Jamatia: Rigwnai tei Risa

Ornaments and jewellery

The traditional jewellery of the Jamatia people, it is impossible to describe them all. These ornaments have been worn since the beginning of their history; they have traditionally worn the Rangbwtang around the neck, the Surang in the hair, the Mathiya on the wrists, and the Bala on the ankles.

Since ancient times, the Rangbwtang has been crafted using silver coins. Among the ornaments made of silver, the Rangbwtang is worn hanging over the chest, the Wakhum is worn in the ears, and the Surang is used for the hair. For the hands, Mathiya and Bala are worn. Besides these, many other ornaments can be found, but these are the ones the people are seen wearing most commonly in their daily lives [13].

Rangbwtang, Bala tei Chandrahar | Kharuk tei Mathiya

Reang clothing and attire (Rignai and Risa)

Since ancient times, the Reang community has traditionally cleared land for cotton cultivation (Huk) to weave their own Rignai and Risa. They process the raw cotton into yarn using a spinning wheel (Chokha). Once the yarn is ready, it is used to weave Kutai Takbwrwi (traditional shirts) and Kamsoi for men, typically in white. After the cloth is woven, the shirts are stitched by hand.

For women, the Kutai Takbwrwi is an essential garment made from white cloth. However, when weaving the Risa, a wide variety of colorful threads are used. The primary garments for Reang women include the Rignai, Rwisa, Kutai, Kamsei, Kholja, Kamsa, and Pandri. These are woven with various intricate patterns (Bumul), such as Wamul, Kolkhu, Mophabohok, Yongsa, Motai Saksonai, and Thaipholoiba. Below, the Rignai and Risa of the Reang community are beautifully displayed.

Rinai

Reang Dophani Borok

Ornaments and jewellery

Since the dawn of their history, the men and women of the Reang community have worn various types of ornaments. These include the Rangbau (coin necklace), Chandrahan, Sangai, Naubaux, Tar, Kanthi, Nabang, Beijan, Wakhum (earrings), Warik, Rukui, Yakshoh, Chambui, Bengi, Tangpelkoi, and Owareh. These items are crafted from various forms of gold and silver. In the Reang community, women especially wear and adorn themselves with a wide array of these ornaments. Below, the visual heritage of the Reang community's jewelry is displayed.

Attire of the Uchoi community

The Uchoi people do not typically buy their clothes from the market; instead, they weave and create their own traditional garments. Just as they practice Huk (shifting cultivation) to grow their own vegetables, fruits, and grains, they also grow cotton to produce yarn. The process of making yarn involves harvesting the cotton, drying it thoroughly in the courtyard under the sun, and then spinning it using a Chokha (spinning wheel) to turn it into thread.

With this handmade thread, they weave their essential garments like Ri, Rignai, Risa, and Kanchwlwi (shirts). The men of this community wear a Gamcha or (loincloth), tie a Pakri (turban) on their heads, and wear a traditional shirt. The women wear the Rignai from the waist down to the ankles and wrap a Risa (Risa) around the chest.

In the Uchoi community, the Rignai is typically woven with black and white threads, while the Risa is predominantly woven with red thread. For the men, the Kanchwlwi, Gamcha, or Duti are generally made from white thread. In this manner, the Uchoi people have maintained their traditional dressing style since ancient times. The traditional attire of the Uchoi community is illustrated below:

Ornaments of the Uchoi community

According to the 2011 Census, the population of the Uchoi community stands at approximately 2,447. They speak the Kokborok language, which belongs to the Bodo-Garo branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Among the twelve Indigenous tribes of Tripura who speak Kokborok, the

Uchoi are one. These twelve tribes Debbarma, Reang, Tripura, Jamatia, Noatia, Kalai, Murasing, Rupini, and Uchoi, among others—share many cultural similarities.

When examining the ornaments of the Uchoi people, it is observed that the women adorn their hair with Khumbar (flower pins) and wear necklaces like Ganthi, Rangbwtang, and Chambi around their necks. On their wrists, they wear Mathiya (bangles), and in their ears, they wear Nabag and Wakhum. Similarly, some men also wear Bala (anklets/rings). They traditionally prefer the Rangbwtang, which is crafted from old silver coins. The traditional jewelry of the Uchoi community is displayed in the images below:

Ornaments of the Murasing community

The traditional jewellery of the Murasing people, both men and women have a deep love for wearing ornaments. Men traditionally wear an item called Cheruai in their earlobes, which consists of three small, finely crafted pieces made of either silver or gold.

The women possess a wide variety of jewelry. For the ears, they wear Kanphul, Towa, Wakhum, and Ring. For the nose, they adorn themselves with Nakphul, Koli, and Bali. To decorate their hair, they use Sangeng and Surang. Around their necks, they wear a necklace called Mala, made of tiny red and black beads. However, they wear the Rangbwtang, made by stringing together silver coins. For the wrists, they use Bala, Churi, Mathiya, and Boliya. On the chest, they wear a coin-based necklace known as Chanduk. For the ankles, they wear Paliya and Kharuk. The visual heritage of Murasing ornaments is categorized below:

Hair: Sangeng / Surang
Neck / Chest: Mala / Rangbwtang / Chanduk
Hands / Wrists: Bala / Churi / Mathiya / Boliya
Feet / Ankles: Paliya / Kharuk

Jewellery of the Tripura tribes

When discussing the traditional jewellery of the indigenous tribes of Tripura, it is noted that these communities possess a vast variety of ornaments.
Rangbatang: A long, beautiful necklace worn around the neck by Tripuri women in Tripura.
Mala: Another type of necklace also worn around the neck.
Tal: To enhance the beauty of the hands or to display elegance, this ornament is worn on the wrists (bangles).
Bengki: An ornament worn specifically around the waist.
Suram: A piece of jewelry worn on the nose (nose ring).
Bagu: An ornament worn on the upper arm, known as an armlet

Attire and weaving of the Tripura tribes

When discussing the traditional clothing of the Tripura tribes, it is essential to mention that these communities are self-reliant, weaving their own garments. The process of making clothes begins with the traditional method of producing yarn from cotton. Adivasi Lives Matter.

Cotton cultivation: Since ancient times, people have practiced Huk (shifting/jhum cultivation) for their livelihood, where they also grow cotton (Khul). Once the cotton is harvested, it is cleaned, dried in the sun, and spun into yarn (Khwtwng) using traditional tools.

Natural dyeing (Pali): To color the yarn, natural dyes called Pali are extracted from the bark of specific forest trees and various other natural sources. Tripura Tourism.

Women's attire: Using this hand-spun yarn, women weave the Rignai (lower garment) and Risa (chest wrap). Specific traditional patterns of the Risa include Yongsa and Kerangsa Tripura State Portal. In this community, the Rinai, or Rignai, is also referred to as 'Naitong.'

Men's attire: For men, they weave garments such as the Guwai-borok / Kamchulwi borok (traditional shirts/tops) and Gamcha (hand-woven towels/wraps).

These traditional garments of the Tripura tribes are displayed as a symbol of their rich cultural identity and heritage.

Rignai, Risa and Kamchwlwi borok tei Duti borok

Jewellery of the Noatia tribe

The tradition of wearing jewellery among the Noatia community has been passed down since ancient times. These ornaments, made of gold or silver, are distinct and vary slightly from other tribes in the Tripura State Portal.

Totra (Neck): Rangbwtang, Chen, and Chandrahar.
Yago (Wrist/Hand): Mathia.
Khajao (Nose): Surang.
Yakung (Waist): Bala and Kharuk.
Khunju (Ear): Toya and Wakhum.

The Noatia people have maintained these styles with very little outside influence, keeping their cultural authenticity alive. These ornaments are a vital part of their traditional identity, Tripura Tourism.

Traditional attire of the Noatia tribe: Rignai and Risa

The traditional attire of the Noatia community does not differ significantly from other tribes, yet it holds its own cultural essence. The process begins with harvesting cotton (Khul) from the Huk (jhum fields). This cotton is then spun into yarn (Khwtwng) using a traditional spinning tool called a Chokha.

Once the yarn is ready, it is dyed with various natural colors (Pali) before being woven into the Rignai (lower garment) and Risa (chest wrap). To weave these garments, specific traditional wooden tools are required, such as:

- Bangkho (the main tension rod/loom bar)
- Sindi (the reed/beater)
- Rwsami
- Sorok
- Nal (the shuttle)
- Sobam
- Yakhotom

Rignai, Risa and Kamchwlwi borok tei Duti borok

Traditional jewellery of the Kalai tribe

The Kalai community possesses a rich variety of traditional ornaments. Women wear the Rangbwtang, a necklace meticulously crafted from silver coins (*puisa sikini*). For the ears, they use pieces called Wakhom and Toya. To enhance the beauty of the neck or chest area, they wear ornaments known as Lulu and Koilik Tripura State Portal [14].

The wrists are adorned with bangles called Mathiya. Among all these, the most beloved and cherished ornament worn around the neck is the Chandrahar and Ganthi**.** However, they wear the Kharuk around the waist and the Surang.

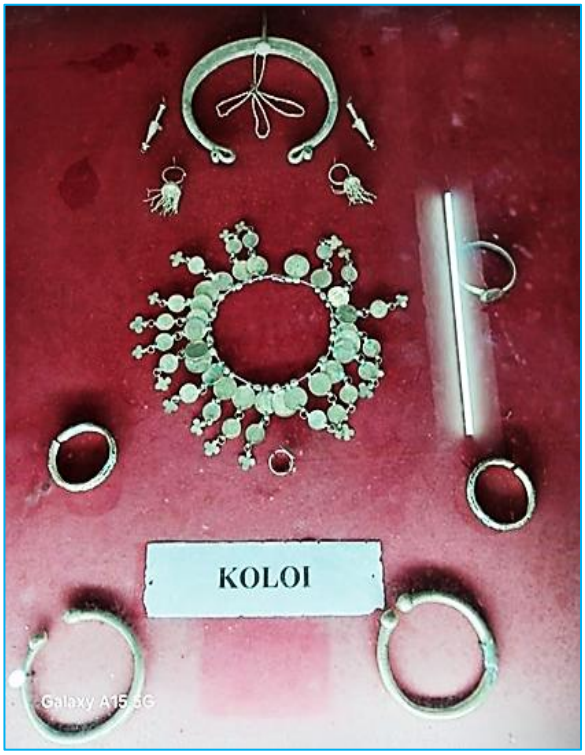
These traditional ornaments serve as a visual representation of the Kalai people's cultural heritage.

Totwra kanma (Neck): Rang bwtang / Ganthi
Yago kanma (Wrist/Arm): Mathia (Bangle) / Churi / Baju (Armlet)

Khunju kanma (Ear): Toya / Jhumka
Bukung kanma (Nose): Koli / Balik
Yakung kanma (Waist): Kharuk

Traditional attire of the Kalai tribe

The Kalai people are self-reliant, weaving their own clothes using traditional methods. Since ancient times, they have spun their own yarn and used a traditional loom known as Thanthi to weave their garments [15].



Men's attire: Historically, men wear the Duti Borok (dhoti) and Kanchwlwi Borok (traditional shirt). During ceremonies, they often carry a white hand-woven cloth (Ri Kuphur) over their shoulders.

Women's attire: Women wear the Rignai (lower garment) and Risa (chest wrap). The Rignai is typically woven with red, yellow, and white dyes, featuring white borders and traditional patterns (Takhumtwi). The Risa is often a combination of red and black dyes, crafted with meticulous detail. Tripura State Portal.

The weaving process: The process begins in the Huk (fields), where cotton (Khul) is grown. Once harvested, the cotton is dried in the sun and spun into yarn using a charkha.

Natural dyeing: To color the yarn, they use natural dyes found in the forest, specifically from the 'Asubwtw' (Wild Morinda/Mulberry) plant. Adivasi Lives Matter.

These garments are not just clothing but a symbol of the Kalai identity and their ancestral heritage.

Rignai, Risa and Kamchwlwi borok tei Duti borok

Attire as a cultural signature

The Kokborok-speaking tribes is intrinsically linked to their hand-woven garments. The Rignai (lower garment) and Risa (chest wrap) are the universal symbols of this identity, Tripura State Portal. While styles like the *Yongsa* and *Kerangsa* patterns are prominent, the Kalai tribe specifically distinguishes their weave with the *Takhumtwi* pattern [16].

Traditional craftsmanship and self-reliance

The entire production cycle - from growing cotton (Khul) in Huk (jhum fields) to spinning yarn (Khwtwng) and dyeing it with natural forest extracts like Asubwtw - is managed within the community.

Diversity in ornamentation

While silver is the common medium, each tribe maintains specific terminology and placements for jewellery:

Neck: All tribes share the Rangbatang (coin necklace), but the Kalai and Noatia specifically cherish the Chandrahar.

Unique items: The Noatia utilize specific ear ornaments like Wakhum and Toya, while the Kalai prioritize the Kharuk for the waist in Tripura Tourism.

Preservation vs. modernization

While there is a visible shift toward modern lifestyles, the indigenous communities continue to preserve their "grace and wisdom" through these traditional forms. The transition from purely hand-spun cotton to wider production is noted, yet the core motifs remain a vital link to their ancestral roots [17].

Technical weaving tools

The survival of this heritage depends on specific traditional tools. For the Noatia, tools such as the Bangkho (loom bar), Sindi (beater), and Nal (shuttle) remain essential to maintaining the authenticity of their textiles. The continued use of these indigenous implements ensures the preservation of traditional weaving techniques, motifs, and cultural values inherent in Noatia textile practices [18-19].

CONCLUSION

Since ancient times, the identity of our Kokborok-speaking indigenous communities has been clearly visible. Beyond the recognition of the tribes themselves, their traditional attire serves as a vital secondary form of identity. For the Borok people, this identity is found in the Rignai and Risa, as well as in their unique traditional jewelry. Even in the modern era, these identities persist through various weaving styles and distinct patterns that have been preserved over time. In this documentation of nine (9) specific tribes, we have highlighted the traditional garments that have defined our people since the beginning of Tripura Tourism. It must be noted that our indigenous people are spread across many regions. Wherever they reside, they can be seen protecting and preserving their unique identity. For the Borok people, traditional attire is essential for a dignified existence; without it, one's personality and wisdom appear incomplete - a fact visible through our cultural observations. Historical records show that most of our traditional garments were originally woven by our own people using hand-spun cotton yarn. Adivasi Lives Matter. Although production has expanded to many places today, and some fear the loss of our distinct identity in the modern age, we are gradually stepping forward. Through advanced thinking, preservation efforts, and a clear vision, we are striving to earn the highest level of recognition for our heritage.

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