



CULTURAL APPROPRIATION WITH REFERENCE TO TEXTILES HANDWOVEN IN NAGALAND, INDIA

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra11686>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra11686

ABSTRACT

With their geometric and frequently minimalistic designs, the captivating indigenous textiles of the Naga community, provides a unique exemption in India's textiles, and has a growing demand worldwide. (Wettstein, 2014). Each design within a textile carries importance and the finished piece can be studied like a story (Adangla, 2017). With a history as interesting and captivating as its geography, Nagaland is however yet to be further explored. The state, with its assorted tribal culture, is a region of festivals and exceptionally abundant textile traditions. Within the handloom history of India, the warrior body cloths or shawls of Nagaland have a special place and are required to be documented accurately (Prakash, 2014). This study aims to understand the textiles of Nagaland and analyse the views of the original users on contemporisation and cultural re-appropriation of textiles. Cultural appropriation of traditional textiles is a major offence, according to the Nagas. Cases of cultural appropriation have happened in the past due to lack of awareness. Therefore, the study is additionally an attempt at identifying appropriate methods for contemporisation of Naga textiles while still retaining the cultural essence of the handloom pieces. The methods used for this study are in-depth interviews with local experts, Photo elicitation discussion with the weavers, Mind-mapping and feedback surveys with the original users (people belonging to the Naga tribe). Previously, existing information on Naga textiles has revealed knowledge regarding the designs, the cultural status of the wearer of some of these textiles and the usage of these textiles in the past as well as present. However, as the social status of the wearer has changed over the years, this has resulted in socio-cultural re-appropriation of these Naga textiles. The information regarding the customs and appropriate methods to avoid cultural appropriation are identified, compiled and discussed. It involves detailed observation, description of the original users and understanding cultural appropriation from their perspective. The research is directly concerned with the significance that the textiles play in the lives of the Nagas.

KEYWORDS: *Contemporisation, Cultural appropriation, Handloom, Nagaland, Textiles.*

INTRODUCTION

“It is well known that textiles have a utilitarian as well as symbolic function. The kind of cloth worn is reflective of social relations and of the expression of social identities and values. The cloth worn by a person is also suggestive of the power relationship he/ she may have with other members of the community. “ (Joshi, 2000, pg. 378).

Kuriakose., et.al (2010) explains how the Naga shawls are a thing of historic value and eternal appeal with ancestral superstitions. Even within the same clan, not everybody is allowed to wear just any shawl as each pattern signifies the social standing of a person. Each shawl has its own distinct patterns varying in colour and motifs. He stated that superstition and beliefs also dictate the selection of these particular shawls.

Naga handloom encapsulates particular traditional meanings symbolising status, identity and accomplishment; rather than being just a piece of fabric, it carries traditional information.

These textiles are treated as modes of communication and have always been passed down from one generation to another and are shared by the tribe especially in a society like the Nagas who have no script or written history. Textile pieces have an emotional connection that tribal societies still cling to. Indigenous shawls express volumes of their status and their tribal identity (Adangla, 2017).

Cultural appropriation is a term used when aspects of culture are taken from minority groups or groups that have been oppressed or marginalised, converting culturally significant artefacts, and beliefs into general/pop culture and giving them a significance that is completely different than they would originally have. Those who take, borrow, or ‘exploit’ these aspects of culture benefit from them in terms of capital, prestige, and popularity.

Cultural appropriation within the arts is an assorted and global phenomenon. It might conceivably be thought to include various occurrences such as 1) the representation of social practises or encounters by social “outsiders” (in some cases called “voice appropriation”); 2) the utilisation of aesthetic styles particular of social communities by non-members; and, 3) the obtainment or continued ownership of cultural items by non-members or socially distant institutions (Matthes, 2016).

One would often find deception, misuse, and theft of the stories, designs, and cultural heritage of people who have been historically ruled over and remain socially marginalised (Matthes, 2016).

Protests against offensive cultural appropriation are recurrent and have to be taken seriously. It is easy to understand the offended parties, particularly when they are members of a minority community that has been the casualty of countless other attacks and real harm.

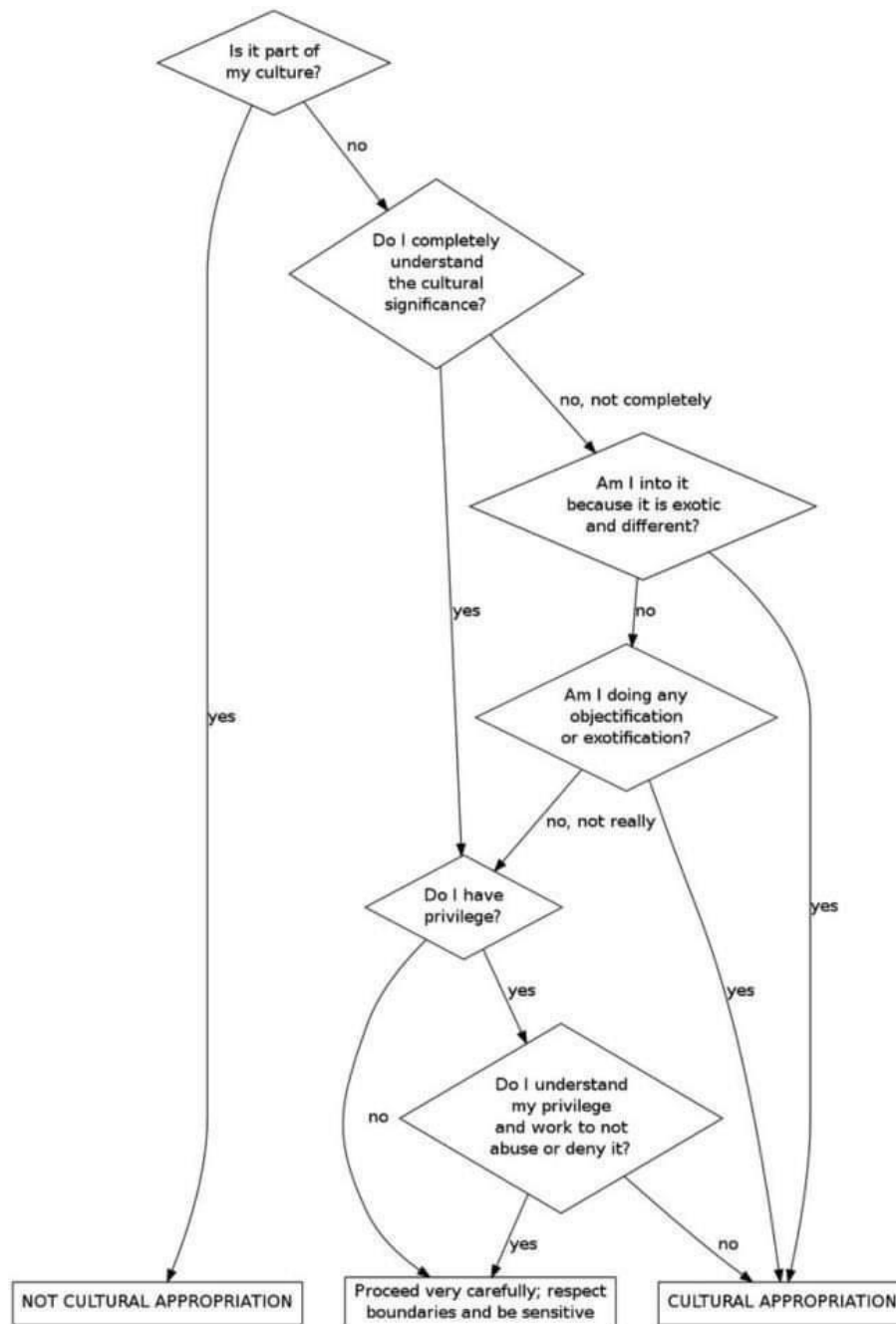


Figure 1: A flowchart explaining principles of cultural appropriation (Source: The sociological cinema)

(Young, 2005). Cultural appropriation as a notion comes down to the utilisation of cultural artefacts without understanding the traditional significance of it or inappropriate representation (Parisi, 1991).

METHODOLOGY

The research aimed to study the status of handwoven textiles and cultural appropriation in Nagaland. Multiple methods were employed during the research to study cultural appropriation first hand from the original users and the importance of appropriate methods of contemporisation.



The study is descriptive and narrative following suitable methodology. Descriptive study is a powerful way to understand subjective experience and to gain insights around people’s actions and motivations, cutting through long-held assumptions and challenging conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999). Typically, research is conducted with a sample of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience.

The research focuses on the process of modernisation of textiles. “The development paths and models of classic cultural modernisation feature diversity and path dependence and are influenced by historical and objective conditions.” (CCMR, 2015)

TOOLS AND SAMPLE SIZE

Method	Sampling
In-depth Interview	<p>In-depth interviews are generally long, face-to-face, discussions conducted to attain desired objectives. In-depth interview also known as one-on-one is a technique of obtaining more detailed data or profound understanding of a topic or concept. (Showkat, 2017).</p> <p>Interviews were conducted with the local experts (Entrepreneurs, historians, master weavers and traders). An inflated sample size of 10 was taken after connecting with the experts through snowball sampling. However, as expected due to the covid19 lockdown, a total of 7 local experts have been approached.</p> <p>The expert panel also includes craft revivalists and traders. The connection between trade and environmental and cultural issues has profound historical roots, having been manifested ever since the primary industrial revolution (Brunette, 2015). Traders and exporters were interviewed to understand the change in economic growth, raw materials, quality, motifs, etc. Traders play a vital role in building extensive networks of exchange of goods, knowledge, ideas, cultures and beliefs. Traders have observed the changes through the years and have introduced ideas based on orders they have received as well as their interaction with the buyers.</p>
Photo elicitation	<p>The technique of photo-elicitation interview may be characterised as an interviewing procedure in which researchers evoke information from participants by utilising images. (Blinn, 1991). Photo elicitation is the use of photos to create verbal discussion (Thomas, 2009).</p> <p>The visual pictures can be created by a creator or by the researcher. Photo elicitation is presently a broadly known and a regularly used method which involves utilising one or more visual photographs in an interview and thereafter, inquiring participants to comment on the visual photographs used. (Bigante, 2010).</p> <p>A total sample of 15 weavers was fixed, with the inflated total of 20 weavers using snowball sampling, in order to maintain a fixed total of 15 participants. Photo elicitation was conducted with 15 weavers from the community.</p>
Feedback survey	<p>Survey research is defined as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 160).</p> <p>A feedback survey was conducted on appropriate methods of contemporisation of textiles of Nagaland. Stratified sampling was used, involving subjects (original users) from the Naga tribe. The sample size was 328 respondents.</p>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussing local customs on the subject of cultural appropriation and identifying appropriate methods for contemporisation of Naga textiles.

Findings drawn from photo elicitation method.

Photo Elicitation was carried out with a sample size of 15 weavers. The participants were selected using snowball sampling. For the same, the researcher had approached Antaran Artisan connect (under TATA Trusts) and conducted photo elicitation with weavers working under the supervision of the organisation.

Audio recording and photography were the tools used for recording the discussion and information collected during the activity. The weavers were shown a series of a set of 10 product pictures, each product illustrated with two different types of textiles. Each set shows a product made with two different textiles.

The weavers were asked to have a discussion and give their opinion on the traditional textile products and why they would pick one over the other. Opinions on ethical use, colour, style, contemporisation were observed. The discussion also provided an idea of the ideal type of products to be made while contemporising these textiles.

Products were numbered as follows and the following points were discussed during the session:

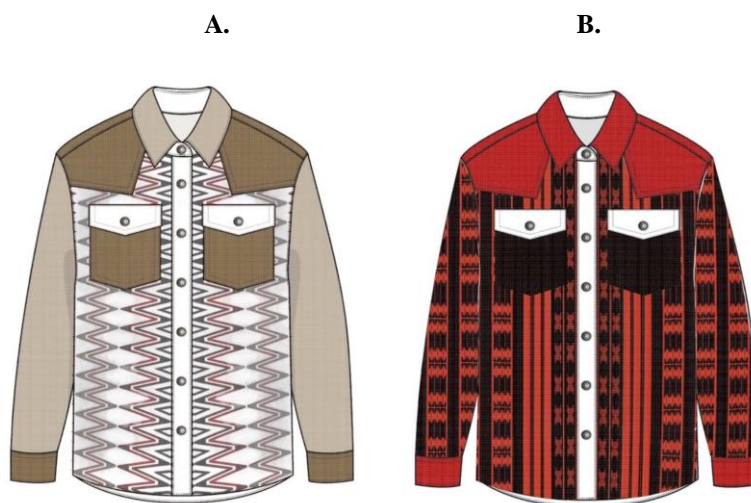
Product set 1



Product set 1: While observing product set 1, the first thing pointed out by the weavers is the traditional textile used on product A. The textile seen on Product A is a popular Chakhesang shawl called ‘Thupikhü’, a shawl of merit among the tribe. The weavers explained that the shawl is the ultimate symbol of privilege and honour. In the olden days, the shawl could not be worn by just anyone. At present, it is still revered as a symbol of distinguished achievement.

The weavers had mentioned that while making contemporary products, they usually refrain from using traditional pieces but instead weave inspired textile pieces woven specifically for the product. They mentioned that Naga traditional textiles are considered sacred and are respected by the whole society which is why usage of traditional textiles on modern products is usually avoided by the people. It was noted that due to this reason majorly, all the weavers had agreed to choose product B over A. The weavers also mentioned that the embroidery done on product A are traditional ‘embroidered’ motifs. Such types of textiles would take longer to produce as they are not only just woven but also embroidered hence, embroidery addition would slow up the production process. Additionally, due to this reason, the weavers avoid using symbolic textiles for making contemporised products.

Product set 2

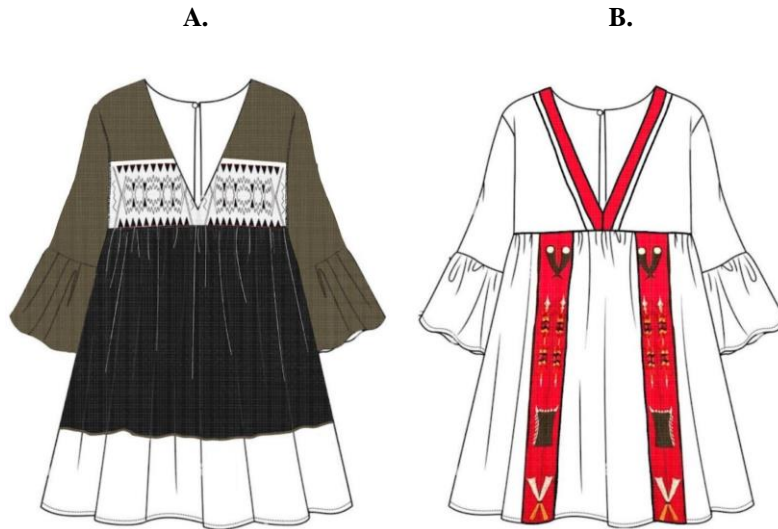


Product set 2: While observing Product set 2, the participants specified that the colour story of product A is more appropriate when it comes to contemporary products. They also mentioned that many of the products made by them in the past, followed a neutral colour story as they have found them to be more acceptable and popular all over India as well as globally.

The weavers expressed that symbolic textile colours are hardly used on their products so as to avoid any conflict. The textile used on product B is a ceremonial wraparound used by women of the Sangtam tribe. This reason alone would compel the weavers to pick product A. It would be considered an offence to make a man’s garment out of a woman’s textile.

The weavers mentioned that many traditions have changed over the years. A few traditional rules have become more lenient but gender identity in traditional textiles is an important aspect in the society. The Naga people keep gender identity in textiles in high regard.

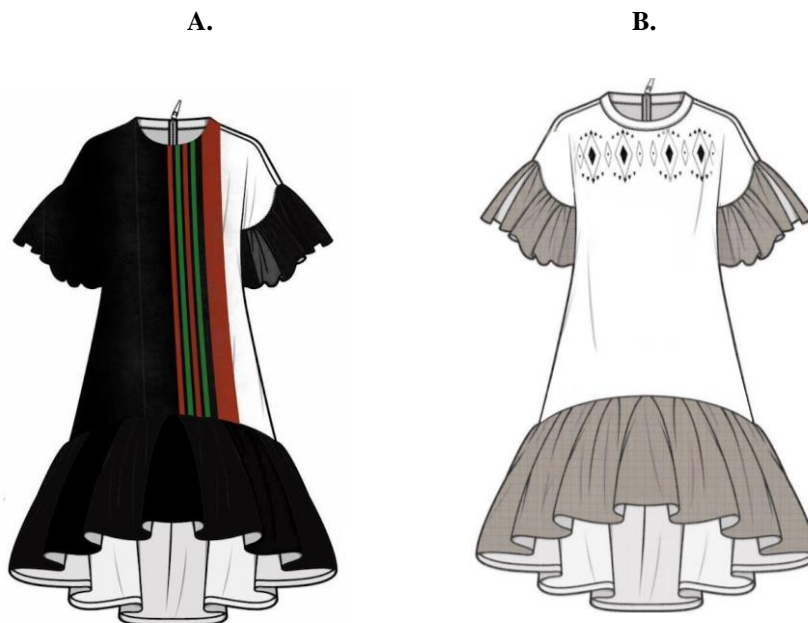
Product set 3



Product set 3: While observing Product set 3, the motifs on Product B immediately stood out to the weavers. They discussed how motifs used on product B are motifs that usually belong on a man's shawl or waistcoat. Furthermore, many expressed that the motifs, specifically the "Spears and Daos" are usually seen on warrior shawls which were regarded as high status textiles meant to be used only by men who have earned the right.

At present such motifs are also seen on other garments such as waistcoats and neckties but are always worn only by men. The colours on products B further brought out discussion among the weavers as red and white are the most general, common or 'standard' traditional textile colours of most Naga tribes.

Product set 4



Product set 4: While observing Product set 4, the weavers pointed out that Product A is a dress made from the Angami 'Lohe pfhe' textile. Although the shawl is understood to have become a genderless textile piece, the weavers expressed that the local people would still be hesitant and scared to slash the textile fabric and turn it into a dress.

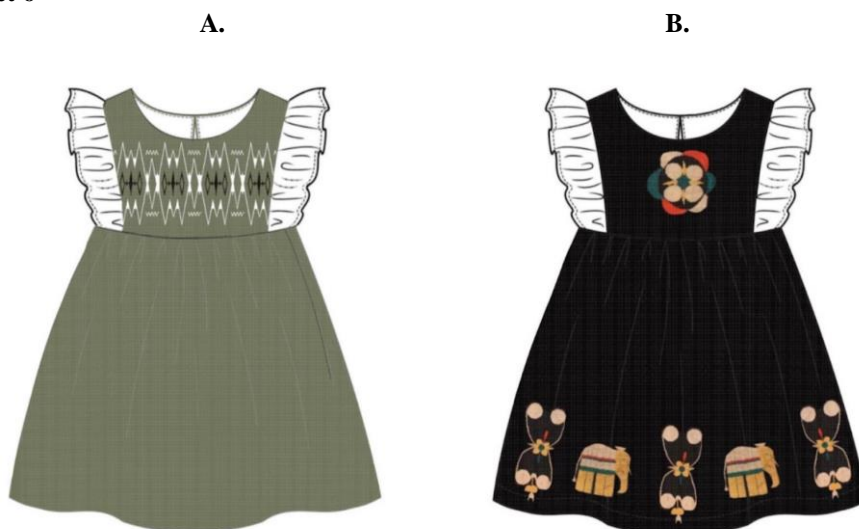
Not all the rules are clear in the Naga society when it comes to textiles. The laws regarding textiles can be considered to be quite unorganised and are ever-changing, therefore guidance and in-depth studies are required each time a person plans to make a collection out of Naga textiles. The weavers expressed that they would never make product A as it may offend the tribe or village associations. Because of such reasons the weavers said that they would rather create product B. This fact reveals how strict the Naga society and associations are when it comes to their traditional textiles.

Product set 5



Product set 5: While observing product set 5, the weavers without hesitation pointed to product B and said that the panel used is a shawl known as Tsungkoteptsu shawl which is a highly respected and popular warrior shawl belonging to the Ao tribe. According to the weavers, a shawl of such importance should never be used to make a women's bag. The first reason was the gender identification of the shawl; a shawl known to be worn by men of the tribe. The second reason is that during the olden times, the shawl was worn by men who have earned the right to wear it and not just worn by any man. The Tsungkoteptsu shawl was meant to signify achievements of the warriors of the tribe in head hunting. Presently, the shawl continues to hold an important place within the tribe. Using the Tsungkoteptsu shawl to make a women's bag is considered offensive to the tribe and their ancestors.

Product set 6



Product set 6: While observing Product set 6, the weavers discussed how dress B is made using the Thupikhü Shawl. This shawl belongs to the Chakhesang tribe is also popularly known as 'Elephant cloth' due to the many elephant motifs embroidered on it. It

was mainly worn by the men of the tribe. Presently it is seen that this particular shawl is worn by women especially those who are well known; for example, 'The Tetseo sisters' who are world renowned folk music artists from Nagaland. The shawl however is not seen to be worn by children and therefore, would not be a fitting choice to be made into a dress for young girls.

The embroidered motifs are time consuming to make. This would increase the production time, labour as well as making costs of the product. It is a known fact in the community that the tribes find offence in turning warrior shawls; especially those with symbolic motifs into dresses.

Product set 7



Product set 7: While observing product set 7, the weavers could recall reading a news article on cultural appropriation of a Sangtam male shawl while incorporating it onto a Bollywood star's dress. Additionally, there was another incident where garments made from Chakhesang textiles were being showcased at Surajkund Mela without prior permission from the tribe or associations. Both incidents had faced negative reaction from the original users and various associations. The designers who had presented the designs, were demanded to deliver a public apology for misusing the shawls. The associations denounced the 'misuse and distortion' of the shawls stating that the shawls wrongly represented the actual concepts as well as their depictions which in this case, is the use of the warrior textile for product A.

Product set 8



Product set 8: While observing product set 7, the weavers mentioned that product B is a men's vest made from the warrior shawl which is a common and popular item in the region. Because these shawls were used by men previously and specifically, the ones who have earned the right to wear them, it is a common sight to see men wearing them in the shape of a waistcoat/ vest or even as neckties especially during big occasions, graduation ceremonies and even at weddings. When attending a wedding today, men are seen donning the traditional neck ties while others wear the waistcoat. The same can be observed during college graduations as well. Product A however, did not receive such a positive reaction as the weavers stated that a woman's Sangtam shawl was made into a waistcoat for men. This reason itself, makes it impossible for the weavers to even consider making such a product.

Product set 9



Product set 9: While observing product set 9, the weavers immediately pointed out that product A is very similar to the Angami Lorha Mhoshü; a women's textile. Additionally, the motifs on the table cloth are motifs taken directly from the shawl. Red, white and black are common colours seen on women's traditional textile of the Angami tribe as well as other naga tribes. Such colour combinations are usually avoided when it comes to contemporary products.

An interesting piece of information that the researcher came across was the fact that gender identity is not strictly considered when it comes to household textiles which are known to be genderless. Home textile items are easier to work with according to the weavers as there is no gender constrict however, even with that concept in mind, the weavers tend to avoid gender based motifs for contemporary products. The weavers would weave such textiles strictly only in the form of the conventional wraparounds or shawls.

Product set 10

A.

B.



Product set 10: While observing product set 10, the weavers clearly stated that they would be willing and comfortable to make product B, as the motifs seen on the bag as inspired, contemporary motifs which are perfect for making modern products. The colours are more subtle than the usual traditional colours and would be suitable and popular even on the global market. For product A however, the weavers pointed out that the textile known as ‘Pphemhou’ is used as a wraparound and is worn by women of the Angami tribe. Since the textile is used by women, it would be appropriate to use it on a women’s bag. Even then, the weavers stated that they would prefer making product B in order to avoid any type of inconvenience because of the use of a traditional textile.

Mind-Mapping

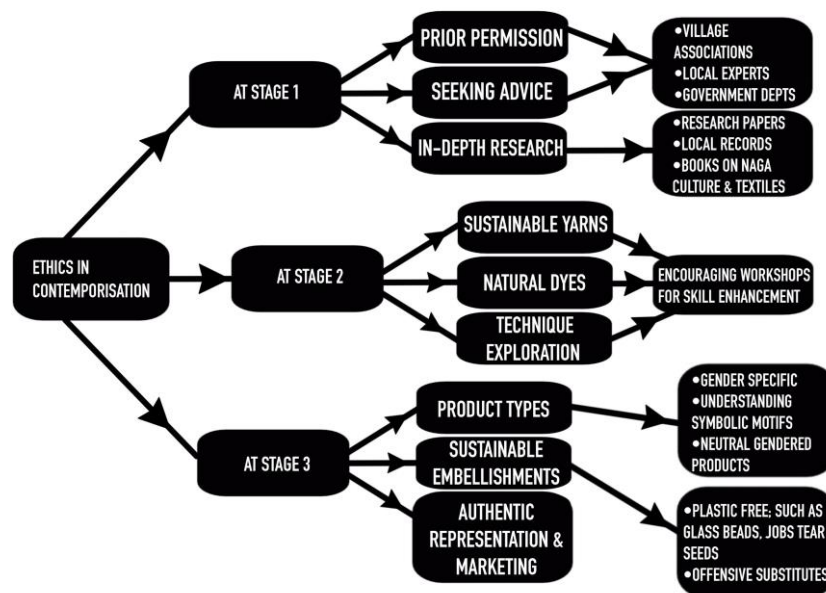


Figure 2: Ethical process of contemporisation of Naga textiles.

Mind mapping was done after content analysis of interviews and photo elicitation. A flowchart is drafted to show the ethical methods of contemporisation. The information regarding the customs and etiquettes to avoid cultural appropriation are identified and discussed below.

From the above analysis, appropriate etiquettes or methods were identified for contemporisation of Naga textiles. They are as follows:

1. Understanding the meaning of ‘Ethical’ collaboration with The Naga tribes

To ensure that there are a variety of design options to explore with, designers and experts attempt to work with textiles and designs from various tribes. In some cases, local associations or village heads are not very keen with a designer working with textiles from another tribe other than the tribe that the designer belongs to. Nevertheless, it had never been pointed out as something which is strictly prohibited as the designers and experts state that various weavers from Nagaland have been extensively working with



designers and organisations from outside the state as well. A requirement from the designer or organisation's part would be to study the textiles of the tribes that they are working on as meticulously as possible with further in-depth discussion and guidance from local experts/associations.

The Naga tribes are known to have similarities but they could also vary greatly from one another in the matter of traditions and customs depending on the level of literacy or even migration patterns and location. Some tribes tend to be more strict with their traditions as compared to others.

2. Engaging in considerate collaboration And co-designing

Collaborations with entrepreneurs, designers and weavers are important to help the craft grow and develop. It was observed that in the region, many are not open to collaborating at times because they are afraid that their work would be copied, duplicated, sold under someone else's name and damage the reputation of the original creator.

The Naga textile market has undoubtedly become very commercial. Whilst participating in workshops, some of the weavers themselves are not as keen in uplifting their culture and heritage and are more interested in financial aid and gain out of it.

The importance of traditions, methods and techniques should be clearly explained to the weavers to encourage collaboration. Taking the first step towards a project after learning the proper ethics and carrying out accurate research is important, as weavers are at times not confident in taking the first step.

3. Understanding Appropriate Products Types

Designers and experts who are successful in creating Naga textile products for the contemporary market, tend to work with products that are not gender specific such as home furnishing textiles; cushion covers are a popular product type along with throws, wall hangings, wall frames, sofa mats, table runners and mats.

Bags, shawls, stoles and mufflers come in second while garments such as dresses and tops are the least worked upon products unless the local people are making them for themselves. Experts tend to make products that are not gender specific because the Nagas are strict with the gender identity of their textiles. Each motif has to be used in the appropriate category. It is a very sensitive subject in Nagaland and most of the local experts and weavers would avoid being involved in projects with such types of products.

4. A Focus On Techniques

According to experts, design intervention is still lacking while co-designing textiles in North East India. Before working with any craft, extensive study is required to understand the constraints, the sensitive points to stay clear off and the strengths of a craft to focus on. Such strength in the case of Naga textiles, are techniques.

At present, the experts tend to focus on exploring with techniques and methods of weaving rather than just on the motifs alone. Experimenting with techniques is important in order to grow as a creative and would allow the experts/designers and weavers to make unique, never-done-before products.

a) Methods and techniques of weaving have differed greatly from old vintage pieces. Studying old pieces and attempting to replicate them is a way of working on new pieces while retaining the cultural essence. This practice would bring about revival of old methods and techniques which in turn would add to the sustainability factor of a product (hand spinning, natural dyes). From surveys and focus group discussions, the weavers had shared that they have tried replicating older textiles belonging to their parents or grandparents and have successfully been able to do so.

b) Attempts at reviving natural dyes in Nagaland is one related to the above paragraph. A majority of the weavers do not dye or spin their own yarns anymore and have resorted to buying readymade, pre-dyed yarns from the market. Synthetic pre-dyed yarns are easily available and extensively used for weaving textiles in Nagaland today. In the olden days, Naga textiles were naturally dyed with organic materials that were readily available around them or at times grown by the weavers themselves. Although some raw materials may not be available in abundance as they were in the olden days, attempts at reviving natural dyes can be brought about by borrowing knowledge from other communities. According to the weavers, workshops on natural dyes had been conducted earlier in the past by organisations and government departments. These workshops have benefited weavers by sharing knowledge on natural dyes from other communities as well. Some weavers and designers practise natural dyeing of yarn today with materials that are available in neighbouring regions if not in Nagaland itself.

c) Textural exploration- Textural exploration is another option of experimenting with techniques. A handful of experts and weavers are keen to make weaves that have dimensional textures instead of the usual textiles that were flat by design. Weaving is a very tactile medium and can be easily manipulated by hand. Exploration, paired with choices of yarn creates the ability to add volume. Flat designs also have texture which may seem playful to the eye (for eg; griddle effect; an effect extensively used when weaving contemporary Naga textiles) or felt on the tip of the hand. This is something that people may not think about often. Mixing the flat weaves with the dimensional textures (for eg; Rya loops, pile weave, Soumak weave) or weaving sections with heavy texture; and others with flat textures could create unique pieces. Weaving irregular lines and diverse-sized shapes are also contemporary weaving techniques observed to be done by one of the Experts.



d) Patchwork/ collage look- Designers and experts have started reimagining textile pieces such as wall hangings or frames that are woven to emanate the look of patchwork or collage work. The textile piece is divided into sections with different types of supplement weft patterns, woven on different sections; giving it a contemporary look. Such types of pieces are woven keeping a neutral colour story which has great capability for the global market.

5. Understanding The Weight Of Symbolic Textiles

The Nagas have shawls that are considered to be sacred and can only be used by people who have earned it or men with high status in society. The experts would usually keep away from working with these sacred textiles as it is a sensitive issue among the tribe. Instead they would use the motifs and designs that have been considered to be more lenient and free for contemporisation. According to the weaver's experiences, it is said that the main, unique traditional motifs cannot go through even minute changes or get customised as it is frowned upon and at most times prohibited by village associations. Additionally, swapping genders when it comes to the traditional textiles is still considered an offence unless the textile pieces are meant for unisex use. Even a tiny motif from a men's shawl or warrior shawl should not be used for women's products. Before co-creating with Naga weavers, it is important to inform and seek proper permission from village associations so that products can be made with proper knowledge and guidance.

6. Retaining Sustainability Of Products Woven In Nagaland

To retain sustainability while contemporising Naga textiles, one must use genuine sustainable raw materials. Today, weavers use polyester and acrylic yarns but experts have been pushing original and genuine products made from Cotton yarn, Eri silk. In theory, bamboo should be one of the most sustainable and is usually labelled as eco friendly; but the multi-step process of making it is not. This could at times lead customers into believing that they are supporting sustainable products. Experimenting with new sustainable yarn is also another way to retain the essence of the craft. During the year 2018-2019 the researcher had studied designers (such as Heirloom Naga and Woven trends) as well as weavers experimenting with Eri silk, Linen and have managed to create beautiful products. This concept along with natural dyeing of yarns would retain the sustainability factor in Naga textile products.

7. Understanding present-day customs

Customs have arisen in recent years, which are now accepted in the present by the Naga communities. During the olden days, certain shawls were earned by warriors after a successful headhunt or after giving a big feast. On the other hand, the youth today, would wear these shawls when they graduate or when they have completed a significant chapter in their life. According to the weavers, Christianity does not affect the designs they weave or the attire they wear at present; unlike in the late 1840s, when the British restricted the Nagas from wearing their textiles, as they were considered to be related to their animistic beliefs. The Nagas have learned to accept Christianity hand in hand with their traditional customs. Today, Nagas are known to be proud of their traditional attire and textiles and wear them irrespective of their religious beliefs. At present, traditional wraparounds and shawls are observed to be extensively worn while attending church, during festivals and other special occasions. At times designers also create runway collections out of these textiles with some collections being appropriate and some unfortunately labelled as cultural appropriation.

8. Documentation of Naga textiles

Traditions in Nagaland have at all times been passed down by word of mouth, folk stories or "oral traditions" and have almost never been documented until the arrival of the British. According to the experts, even if these traditions were shared only through word of mouth, there are certain values and customs that have to be respected and protected.

There are pros and cons with the conversion to Christianity. During this time, a number of the village elders started burning or burying their old textiles and sold off their ornaments as a sign of being converted from animistic to Christianity.

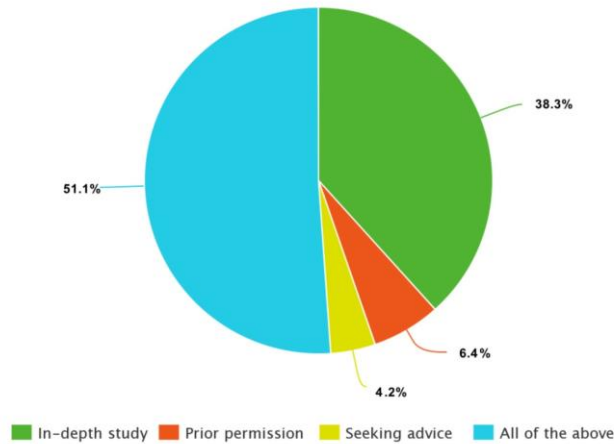
A large amount of genuine textiles and ornaments were lost in the process. The only sources of knowledge available on tradition and methods were the stories passed down from the older generations and additionally old textile pieces that had survived through the conversion. Studies conducted by various anthropologists and ethnographers have shed some light on the authentic traditions of the Nagas. With the coming of Christianity, in the 19th century (1846-1847) the traditional motifs also began to change. There seemed to be lesser use of animistic motifs not only in their textiles but also on their wooden crafts, gates etc. When discussing colours, the weavers had mentioned that the elders would share what each colour signified. According to the elders, red signifies bloodshed as a tribute to their ancestors. Black is usually associated with hardships and green for victory. White signifies bone or peace which differs from shawl to shawl. This according to the elders was the belief among most of the Naga tribes

Limited old pieces of textiles are available with the weavers and locals due to the fact that they would weave the textiles in order to gift or sell them away. In some instances weavers have also lost old textile pieces, some have had the unfortunate incident such as accidentally having their house burned down around 1994/1995, which ultimately lead to loss of authentic traditional items and textiles. Therefore, documentation in all states is important to assimilate authentic knowledge.

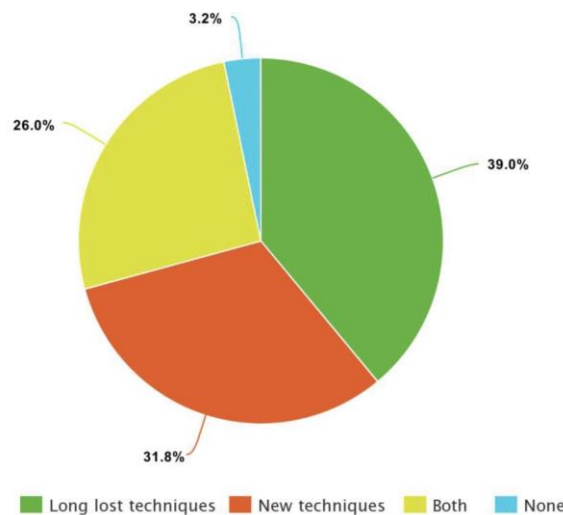
DATA ANALYSIS - FEEDBACK SURVEY

A feedback survey was conducted with a sample size of 328 respondents in order to test the original users' attitude towards the etiquettes/ methods identified after the entire research was complete. The level of importance of some methods over others, are highlighted in this section. The information regarding the methods/ etiquettes to avoid cultural appropriation were identified, compiled and discussed.

The feedback survey is an attempt at understanding the authenticity of these etiquettes as well as to understand whether there is a common understanding of cultural appropriation among the original users, local experts and the weavers. Data analysis of the feedback survey is discussed below:

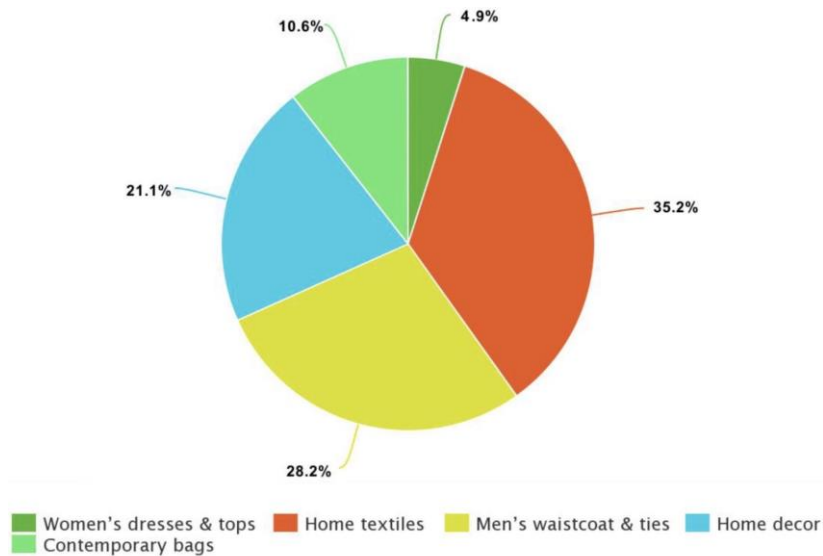


1. 51.1% of original users that the ethical methods to avoid cultural appropriation include not only doing an in-depth study of the culture and textiles of the community but also seeking prior permission from village associations before starting a project and seeking advice from experts. 38.3% say that doing an in depth study is the best way to avoid cultural appropriation.
2. 39.0% expressed interest in handloom pieces woven by reviving long-lost methods and techniques as they agreed that old textiles were a lot more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Another common reason was the fact that there would be more awareness regarding the authentic and traditional methods.
31.8% expressed interest in textiles woven using new techniques stating that they believed that there would be more options and weavers would be able to explore extensively.

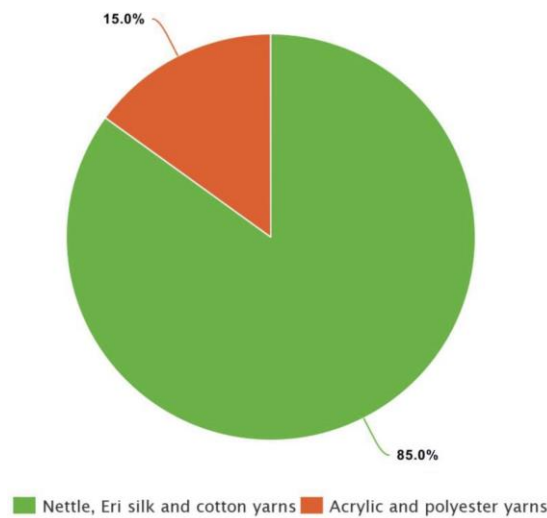


3. According to the respondents, Home textiles at 35.2% and Men's accessories at 28.2% are the most appropriate product categories for the contemporary Naga textile market. Home textile is the safest option as it does not involve gender. Men's

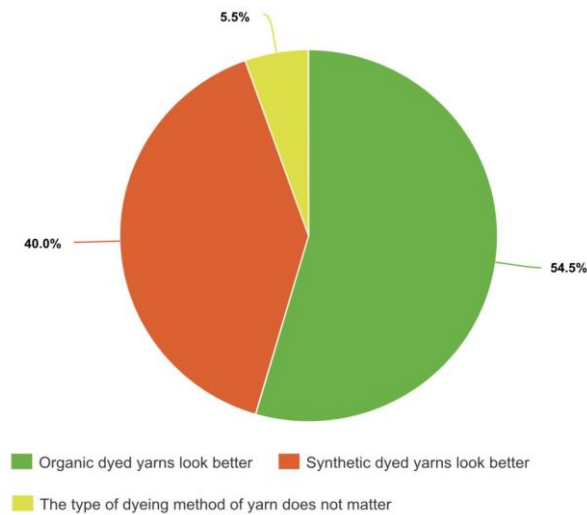
accessories however, are pieces that have been made for years therefore, it is an appropriate category as long as the gender is not swapped. Women's dresses and tops (4.9%) are the least appropriate category as it is very easy to cause offence while designing them.



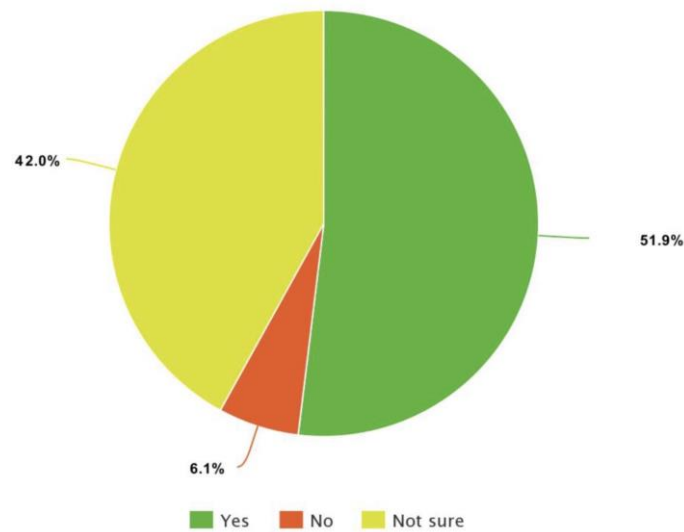
- 85.0% respondents expressed interest in textiles woven using sustainable yarns, stating that the textile pieces would have overall more authenticity the second reason was that they are more environmentally friendly. 15.0% stated that they were interested in textiles woven using yarns such as Acrylic and polyester as these yarns have been used extensively in the past years therefore, some respondents have gotten used to textiles woven from these yarns.



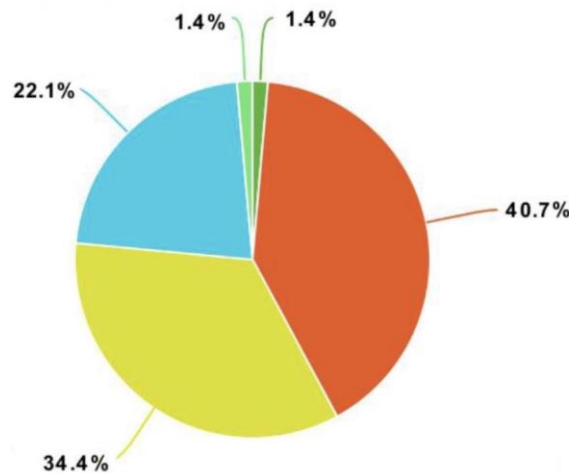
- A booming 54.5% preferred handloom textiles that are organic/ naturally dyed. 40.0% preferred synthetic pre-dyed yarns because of the variety of colours available and 5.5% stated that the dyeing method was either not an important factor to them or is something that they are not aware of.



6. 51.9% stated that texture is an important aspect of Naga textile as textural techniques such as tufting (done on spear motifs); had always been used since the olden days, to add to the aesthetic appeal of the finished textile. 42.0% respondents were not aware of textural techniques used in Naga textiles.

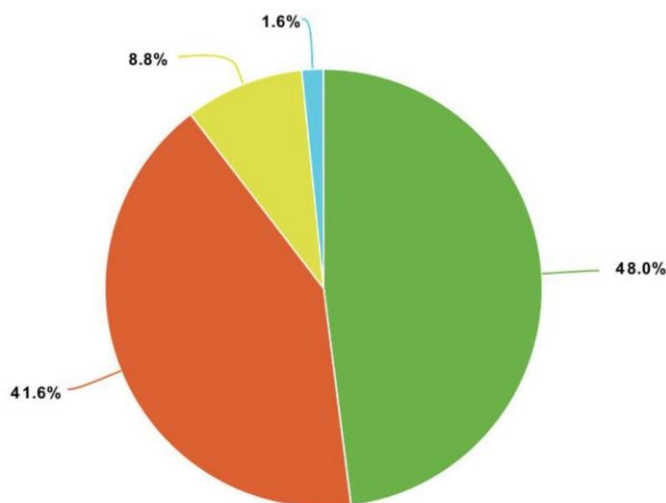


7. When asked to rank elements to avoid most when modernising Naga textiles, Gender swapping was ranked at number 1, as the most offensive followed by customising of sacred motifs and incorrect representation and marketing. Experimental silhouettes and changing of colours tied for the last rank.



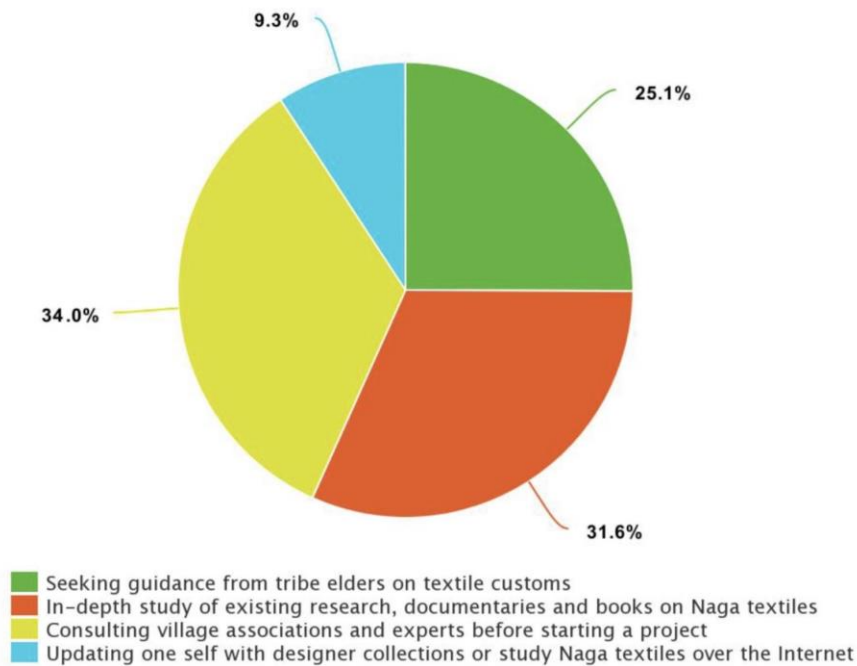
■ Experimental Silhouettes ■ Gender swapping textile products
■ Incorrect representation ■ Changing colours ■ Customising sacred motifs

8. When asked how important it is to document textiles and costumes of each Naga tribe, 48.0% said that it is extremely important, 41.6% stated that it is important, 8.8% did not have an opinion about it (most respondents were older people who were not literate). The 1.6% who said Not important were also people similar to the previous group.

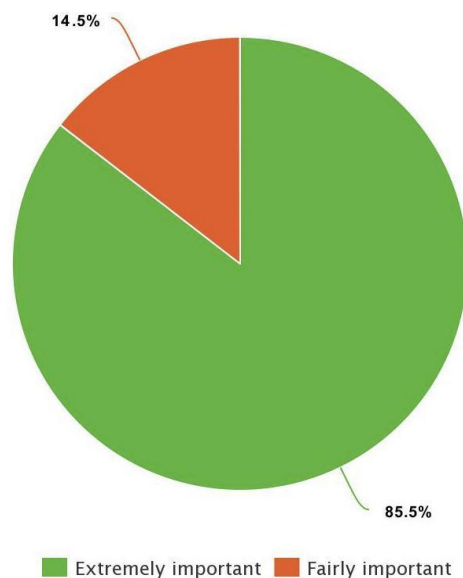


■ Extremely important ■ Important ■ Neutral ■ Not at all important

9. 34.0% respondents believe that the best way for people to avoid cultural appropriation would be by consulting village associations as well as in-depth study of existing documents. 25% said that seeking guidance from tribal elders would be the best way while 9.3% said one should update oneself over the Internet.



10. When asked how important it was for other people to represent the original users' textiles and costumes appropriately; 85.5% stated that appropriate representation is extremely important. 14.5% respondents said that it is fairly important. None of the respondents said that it was not at all important.



CONCLUSION

The documentation of textile crafts aids in preserving the stories, symbolism, and techniques of the craft. A historical and cultural study of the Naga tribes would be valuable to craft enthusiasts and historical academicians who are interested in the study of textile craft. The study on Naga textiles would certify transformative research that would assimilate appropriate knowledge on culture and ethical contemporisation of Naga textiles. Photo elicitation aided in understanding ethical methods of contemporisation of Naga textiles from the weavers themselves.

Brainstorming and mind-mapping was done and these ethical methods were recorded and presented in the form of a flowchart. The methods were then further discussed. The feedback survey regarding methods of contemporisation of Naga textiles revealed a sense of acceptance and confidence in the original users in terms of contemporisation of textiles, when the methods were applied. The idea



of appropriate contemporisation of the craft led to the acceptance of modernisation of Naga textiles by the original users. The findings of the study contribute to the idea of responsible designing, use of authentic or organic materials to retain the cultural essence, promotion of traditional techniques and assimilates knowledge on the symbolism of textiles woven in Nagaland.

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