



## TRIBAL JEWELLERY OF NORTHEAST INDIA

People use jewelry to define themselves. They are an extension of a people's culture and often, on close observation, one can see links between the jewelry and the historical past of the society they come from. By looking at how people choose to adorn themselves, one can get interesting insights about their culture.

### Naga Jewellery:

The tribes of Nagaland have had a **martial past**: each village would be located on a hilltop and the tribesmen would raid the plains below. The jewellery of Naga tribes has been influenced by their warrior traditions and this can be seen by the **weapon-like structure** of the jewelry.

- Easily found material such as stones, shells, coins, animal bones and goat hair are used to make the jewellery. The jewellery is **brightly coloured**.





Jewellery sometimes symbolizes social status in the tribe. For example, the **angh**, or the head of a village, wears blue beads on the calves as a symbol of leadership.



## Apatani Nose Plugs:

The Apatani, also known as the **Tanni**, are a tribal group of approximately 26,000 people, who live in the Apatani Plateau of Arunachal Pradesh. The women of the tribe traditionally wore nose-plugs, called the **Yaping Hurlo**, but there are very few today who still wear them. The wearing of nose plugs amongst the Apatani is a quickly disappearing custom.



## *The Story about Losing Beauty*

*It is said that the women of the Apatani tribe were the most beautiful in the land. Due to the beauty of the Apatani women, the neighbouring tribes would often raid the Apatani villages and kidnap the women. Therefore, the Apatani women began to wear nose plugs so that they would become less beautiful and the neighboring tribes would stop raiding their villages .*



Describe the jewellery that you see in the picture. Can you create a story (like that of the Apatani women) about the earrings that the woman is wearing?

## Khasi Jewellery:

The Khasis are a tribal group indigenous to Meghalaya. Their jewellery is largely made of coral and gold. Due to the geographical proximity to the Bay of Bengal and the availability of the coral, the stone is used widely in their traditional jewellery.

- The thick string of red coral beads worn during festive occasions is called the **Paila**
- The pendant made of 24-carat gold is called the **Kynjri Ksiar**.
- The men also wear similar coral and gold necklaces.



Young girl wearing the Paila



## Rheang Jewellery:

The **Rheang** tribe is one of the 21 scheduled tribes of **Tripura**. Though their dress is simple, their ornaments are elaborate.

- The women wear layers of silver and bead necklaces. The men and women both wear crescent shaped earrings. The women wear necklaces made of beads, shells and silver. They also wear ornaments in their hair, neck, wrist and ankles.
- It is also common for women to have ear lobe plugs in which they wear a second pair of ear ornaments.
- A necklace called **Rangbaugh**, which is made of coins as shown in the picture, signifies high status. It is passed down from generations to generations.



Wearing the Rangbaugh



Rheang woman with crescent earrings



Ear lobe plugs with arrow shaped earrings

# DIY Jewellery Making Activity using old Newspapers

## What you will need:

- Old newspapers
- Glue
- Craft paint
- Ribbon or string

## HERE'S HOW

1. Tear the newspaper into equal sized strips.
2. Roll the paper strips into cylindrical shaped beads- stick the end of the strip to the bead with glue.
3. Make as many beads as you want for your necklaces. Let them dry.
4. Paint the beads in any way you want.
5. After paint dries, string a ribbon through the beads.
6. You have a necklace!!



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