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Textile Heritage: Cultural Identity and Symbolism in the Pheiso of the Kabui Community.

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Abstract

The textiles of the Kabui community carry deep cultural meanings and stand as powerful expressions of identity and tradition. This paper focuses on the Pheiso, exploring its motifs, colours, and weaving patterns that mirror the community's social structure, cultural beliefs, and worldview. Using an ethnographic approach, the study draws on field observations and interviews with traditional weavers from the valley regions of Manipur. Findings reveal that every aspect of the Pheiso, from its intricate geometric motifs to its symbolic use of colour, holds cultural significance rooted in myths, rituals, and social hierarchy. Weaving, a craft largely practiced by women, serves not only as a creative pursuit but also as a vital means of passing down traditional knowledge and skills through generations. The Pheiso, therefore, represents far more than a garment. It is a cultural artefact that embodies the Kabui community's identity, resilience, and continuity. Preserving its unique designs and weaving techniques is crucial for sustaining this rich textile heritage against the forces of modernization.

Key words: Symbol, Textile, Motif, Colour, Culture