

# **ICHR Sponsored NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**On**

## ***“Perspectives on Material Cultures in Northeast India”***

**Organized by:**

**Department of History and Archaeology**

**North Eastern Hill University**

**Tura Campus, Meghalaya**

**February, 2018**

### **Concept Note:**

India's north-eastern region, comprising Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura, is inhabited by over 200 communities and has been an area of immense diversity, and cross-cultural and trans-ecological exchanges over centuries, firstly between India and its Asian neighbours in east and north of the Himalayas, and secondly, among the various tribes and communities residing in this region itself. This region is culturally and linguistically one of the most diverse regions and has been historically a bridge between South and Southeast Asia. At the same time, the region has archaeological evidence of prehistoric culture, similarity of archaeological culture with East and Southeast Asia. It was also a part of the ancient silk, wool and tea trade routes that linked the region to Tibet and Himalayan highlands in the North. These trade networks not only acted as arteries of commerce flows but also facilitated interactions and cultural flows among the people residing in this region.

In such a scenario, a dynamic material culture also emerged in this region since the prehistoric times. The aim of this conference would be to bring forth newer understandings of the region's socio-cultural and economic history through its material culture. The study of material culture not only centres upon objects and their properties, but also on the materials that they are made of, and the ways in which these material dimensions are central to an understanding of history, culture, economic and social relations. It brings together those areas of natural sciences that study the material aspects of the world with concepts from social sciences, whereby society and social relations can be understood. Culture and society are seen as being created and reproduced by the ways in which people make, design, and interact with objects.

Scholars working on and studying material culture are situated in a wide and diverse range of disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, history, geography, sociology, and design. Within this field, empirical research explores specific genres of material culture, such as food or clothing, and empirical and theoretical work extends this to consider categories of

objects, such as gifts and commodities, as situated within wider systems of exchange. There is also a concern with how objects “move” between domains and different value systems as the practices and meanings surrounding physically changing objects themselves change.

Northeast India has had a long standing inter-regional as well as intra-regional exchange network. This exchange saw not only essential commodities of subsistence being traded, but was also witness to an exchange of cultural capital, knowledge and customary practices, agrarian techniques, cultural symbolisms, amongst others. This conference hopes to bring to focus this region and its material culture(s), and study, analyze and contextualize the various aspects of materiality within the broader theoretical framework of material cultures.

### **Call for Papers (CFP):**

The conference would be primarily from a historical and archaeological standpoint towards understanding material cultures, but papers from related disciplines such as anthropology, geography, sociology, ethnology and ethnography are also welcome.

The broad sub-themes for the conference are-

- Methodological issues and practices concerning ‘Material Cultures’
- Materiality and Symbolism: Objects and their ‘meaning’
- Myth, Memory and History: Objects in the construction of memory
- Material Culture, Archaeology and Northeast India
- Evolution of Material Culture: Cultural Exchanges, Trade and Trade Networks, Movement and Circulation of Material
- Materiality and Ethnic Identity
- Materiality and Gender
- Cultures of gift giving: Diplomatic and Tribal practices

Research scholars and academicians working on the above mentioned themes and related fields are invited to submit full papers (not exceeding 5000 words) by 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018. Scholars are requested to include abstract along with the full paper. The submissions will go through the review committee and acceptance/rejection of the same shall be notified to the submitters by 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018. Please note that there are no separate dates for abstract and paper submission. Scholars are requested to adhere paper submission date strictly as committee has decided to release the seminar proceeding in the opening of the seminar.

The abstract and paper submission along with a CV should be mailed to: [materialcultures2018nehu@gmail.com](mailto:materialcultures2018nehu@gmail.com)

**Conference Dates:**

The conference is to be held in the month of February, 2018. However, at the moment, the organizers have not been able to fix dates for the conference as the dates for the upcoming Assembly Election in Meghalaya have not been announced yet. As soon as the election dates are announced, the organizers shall circulate an updated CFP for the benefit of participants.

**Funding and Accommodation:**

Due to paucity of funds, the organizers are currently unable to promise funding for participants travelling from other states to Tura, Meghalaya. However, if further funding is available at a later date, then research scholars without JRF shall be provided with train fare through the shortest route. Local travel by bus or shared cab (Xylo services from Guwahati to Tura) shall be reimbursed by the organizers.

Regarding accommodation, participants shall be provided with local accommodation by the organizers. Depending on availability of seats/rooms and funding, participants shall be provided with accommodation in University Guest House and/or University Hostels. Participants may arrange their own accommodation in hotels and guest houses in Tura and if needed committee members may extend help in booking hotels and guest houses.

**Publication:**

The organizers are in talks with publishers in order to bring out an edited volume out of the accepted papers presented in the conference. The aim is to release the book during the days of the conference itself. Hence, accepted papers will be passed through a peer-review process and the authors would be provided with a review of the same, so that they can make necessary changes to their papers if required.

Last date of submission of full paper with abstract: 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2018

Email: [materialcultures2018nehu@gmail.com](mailto:materialcultures2018nehu@gmail.com)

**Registration Fee:**

Scholars/ Academician	Rs. 700
Ph.D/M.Phil Scholars/ Students	Rs. 500
Foreign Shcolars/Academician	Rs. 1500