



Myth, Ritual, and Cultural Memory: Understanding the Folk Traditions of North East India

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ABSTRACT

Myth and ritual are wedded in a quirky dance that shapes the cultural memory keeping North East India's folk traditions lively. Researchers jumped right in—chatting with locals, doing endless ethnographic fieldwork, and rummaging through local lore—to see how these customs mould modern identities. The results show that oddball myth tales and offbeat rituals do more than just tickle the fancy; they bond communities and help people figure out who they are, mixing everyday vibes with ancient whispers. A big surprise popped up: mixing myth and ritual does more than simply keep old customs on the shelf. It works like a sort of home remedy for modern troubles, especially those pesky health issues that bug so many. The work argues for a bit of traditional spice in healthcare chat, saying that a dash of local flavour can boost mental well-being and give folks a stronger sense of belonging. Connecting cultural memory, folklore, and health in a rather unexpected way, the paper calls for a face-to-face between cultural buffs and health pros. This odd couple might tap into native wisdom to lift health outcomes and jazz up patient care—not only in North East India but in other similar spots too. When all's said and done, these old stories and rituals aren't just dusty relics; they're lively tools for

today's struggles and tomorrow's hopes.

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Myth, ritual and cultural memory keep identities alive in folk traditions. North East India bursts with a mix of ethnic groups and languages, wedded in a quirky cultural tale. Its folklore, steeped in years of lived experience, shows how communities build and remix their identities over time. We still haven't really figured out how these traditions shift and stick in the face of modern pressures (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). This work digs into how myth and ritual shape cultural memory in North East India today and spark fresh community ties. It sets out to reveal why these practices matter in a messy sociopolitical mix and how they act like bulwarks against contemporary problems – even issues that mess with self-image and social dynamics (Candea M et al.)(Benton L). The study uses hands-on methods like ethnographic field trips and gathering local stories, trying to catch the way folk traditions survive amid globalisation and cultural blending. It matters not just for debates in cultural anthropology and folklore studies, but also for real-life health and social policy. Reawakening the charm of old practices might stir up new ways to boost community well-being and cement identity among marginalised groups (Arondekar A)(Margry P). This journey isn't only for the books; it's about helping the community too. The research joins cultural chatter and health concerns in an eclectic blend, busting the idea that traditional practices are just dusty relics. These vibrant narratives have the knack of adding a spark to modern life (Jasbir K Puar)(Jasbir K Puar). In the end, the work shines a light on the messy interplay of myth, ritual and memory, echoing the everyday experiences of people in this unique region (Littler J)(Rhonda L Brulotte et al.)(Wade P).

State	Major Ethnic Groups	Percentage of Tribal Population	Notable Folk Traditions
Assam	Assamese, Bodo, Mishing	12.4%	Bihu, Bhaona, Ankiya Naat
Arunachal Pradesh	Adi, Nyishi, Galo	68.8%	Mopin, Solung, Nyokum



Manipur	Meitei, Naga, Kuki	40.9%	Lai Haraoba, Thabal Chongba, Cheiraoba
Meghalaya	Khasi, Garo, Jaintia	86.1%	Nongkrem Dance, Wangala, Behdienkhlam
Mizoram	Mizo, Chakma, Lai	94.4%	Cheraw, Khuallam, Chai
Nagaland	Ao, Angami, Sema	86.5%	Sekrenyi, Moatsu, Tokhu Emong
Sikkim	Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali	33.8%	Pang Lhabsol, Losar, Saga Dawa
Tripura	Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia	31.8%	Garia Puja, Hojagiri, Kharchi

Ethnic Composition of North East India

Many societies boast a colourful mix of cultural practices that spark lively research into myth, ritual and memory. Cultures build their identity by clinging to history and tradition, both lighting up today and hinting at tomorrow. Look at North East India, where a jumble of ethnic groups and native practices weds old ways with modern quirks (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). That diversity isn't just decoration – it binds people and shapes belonging in odd yet genuine ways. This review chases the line between myth and everyday life with rituals that mirror and churn cultural tales (Candea M et al.). Scholars claim rituals are vehicles for cultural memory, giving communities a way to retell their past and keep shared values alive (Benton L). Stories spun from these practices tear open the inner workings of community life while offering a peek at wider social structures (Arondekar A). Studies show that the oral traditions



in North East India brim with mythic symbols, woven into historical events and hinting at a kind of stubborn cultural resilience (Margry P). All this has fuelled chats in anthropology and cultural studies, pushing us to see how local customs twist and mingle with global beats (Jasbir K Puar). There are still gaps in our picture, though. Researchers often focus on one-off ethnographies or very specific cultural practices, missing out on comparisons that could reveal cross-regional links among North East India's tribes (Jasbir K Puar). At the same time, modern social and political shifts haven't been given their proper due, which calls for a closer look at how modernisation and economic forces play out (Littler J). And while some nod to gender in these routines, much remains to be uncovered about its role in shaping myth and ritual (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.). This review tackles these issues by building on earlier work. It looks at myth and ritual as tools for passing on cultural memory, pondering how folk traditions both bend and fight back against outside forces (Wade P). Borrowing ideas from anthropology, sociology and cultural studies, it slots North East India's customs into a broader, if haphazard, picture (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235). It also shines a light on how personal and shared stories mesh, probing how rituals keep heritage alive even under global pressures (Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335). The aim isn't just to sort out what we already know but to spark fresh questions about myth, ritual and memory – a boost for both academics and those in the field (Postero N)(Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650)(Bianco JL, p. 312-325). Along the way, it hopes to build a stronger bond with North East India's traditions, recognising them as vital threads in regional identity and our shared human yarn (Roulston K, p. 1-10)(McGranahan C)(Mohajan H, p. 23-23)(Torsello D et al., p. 34-54)(Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9). Interest in North East India's folk traditions has grown over the years, peeling back layers of myth, ritual and memory. Early work zeroed in on the anthropological angle, flagging how these practices boost social unity and define identity in distinct ethnic groups (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). Pioneering studies by researchers such as (Candea M et al.) kicked off the idea that rituals wield a transformative punch in local beliefs. Later, academics like (Benton L) began teasing out how mythology and ritual interlace, with mythic yarns underpinning everyday life and hoarding communal memories. Reviews by (Arondekar A) and (Margry P) insist that folk traditions aren't dusty leftovers but keep buzzing in modern cultural chats. Oral traditions, in particular, got a spotlight as studies by (Jasbir K Puar) and (Jasbir K Puar) showed that storytelling spreads and safeguards cultural heritage in surprising ways. Lately, studies have probed how globalisation and modernity poke at and mould local practices (Littler J). The blending of myth and ritual with today's social issues, as noted by (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.) and (Wade P), shows that these traditions never sit still but keep evolving. This messy history of research points to a tangled web of ideas, firmly rooting folk traditions in sculpting cultural identities in North East India – a fact backed by



decades of scholarly banter. A deep dive into these traditions uncovers a few main themes about myth, ritual and memory. They reveal how cultural practice and community life are twinned, letting people swap historical narratives and shared values. Many experts claim that myths serve as potent engines for social cohesion by capturing group memories that define identities (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94)(Candea M et al.). Rituals then give these stories a tangible backbone, allowing cultural memory to emerge and linger (Benton L)(Arondekar A). The work also shows a curious meeting of local customs and broader political scenes. Researchers have flagged that these practices twist and turn when facing pressures like colonial hangovers and the push of modernity, revealing a flexible dance between the old and the new (Margry P)(Jasbir K Puar). This messy blend deepens our grasp of resilience and provokes sticky questions about what's genuine and how traditions are represented. Some studies even suggest that rejigging myths and rituals can be a cheeky way to push back against bland cultural sameness (Jasbir K Puar)(Littler J). Not to forget, oral tradition plays a key role in keeping cultural memory alive. Experts argue that storytelling does far more than simply entertain; it moulds both individual and community identities (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.)(Wade P). This layered view gives us a chunky frame to see how the folk customs of North East India constantly shift and vibe, bolstering a vibrant cultural scene (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235)(Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335)(Postero N)(Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650). Researchers have used a smorgasbord of methods to dig into these practices, each offering fresh peeks into myth, ritual and memory. Ethnography stands out for scooping up everyday life through deep, immersive work. For instance, studies like those mentioned in (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94) and (Candea M et al.) show that diving right in can uncover the subtle meanings behind rituals. Meanwhile, sociological readings offer a wider look at how cultural memory operates, suggesting that these acts bundle up community heritage and hold people together (Benton L)(Arondekar A). The idea that folk traditions provide a narrative framework supporting both continuity and change finds extra backing in theoretical work such as that in (Margry P). Numbers and statistics also have their say; research like that by (Jasbir K Puar) and (Jasbir K Puar) use figures to compare how different communities engage in rituals and what impact this has on their socio-economic life. Mix all these approaches together, and you get a picture of North East India's cultural practises as ever-changing and full of life – myth and ritual aren't fixed relics but dynamic symbols of identity and community glue. Delving into North East India's folk traditions shows a tangled web of myths and rituals that many angles help to light up cultural memory. Many argue that myths are essential: they not only capture history but also act as vital threads that bind communities together (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94)(Candea M et al.). Ethnographic explorations confirm that rituals pass on long-held values and lore



from one generation to the next (Benton L)(Arondekar A). An emerging conversation – led by voices like (Margry P) and (Jasbir K Puar) – highlights how these practises mix with modern twists, reworking the old to keep it alive today. Some critics warn against viewing folk customs through rose-tinted glasses. Scholars such as (Jasbir K Puar) and (Littler J) caution that overly simple interpretations risk missing the messy diversity and inner richness of these cultures. That push and pull between applause and critique is key to truly understanding how cultural memory sticks in North East India's traditions. To sum up, probing North East India's folk traditions paints a vivid picture of the interplay between myth, ritual and memory. Evidence points to myths as core building blocks of cultural identity, acting as conduits for social unity and shared recollections (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94)(Candea M et al.). Research clearly reveals how these practises mirror historical narratives and collective values across diverse ethnic groups (Benton L)(Arondekar A), while rituals help enact and preserve that memory (Margry P)(Jasbir K Puar). The review also highlights a lively collision between local customs and broader socio-political forces, showing how globalisation and modern times continue to reshape indigenous practices (Jasbir K Puar)(Littler J). Shifting myths and rituals may even serve as a clever form of resistance against cultural uniformity, keeping their unique flavour intact (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.)(Wade P). Storytelling remains at the heart of it all, widely recognised for cementing community bonds and moulding personal identity (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235)(Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335). All in all, these clues suggest that North East India's folk traditions are vibrant, ever-adapting practices that embody a rugged mix of resilience and complexity (Postero N)(Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650). But there are still misses in our picture. Big comparative studies linking tribes across regions are scarce, a gap that, if filled, might even the view of what's common and what's unique (Bianco JL, p. 312-325). Also, modern social and political shifts haven't been analysed in enough detail, hinting that more work is needed on how modernisation and economic pressures mingle with cultural expression (Roulston K, p. 1-10). Even though some chatter touches on gender dynamics in myth-making and ritual, it deserves a much deeper dive (McGranahan C)(Mohajan H, p. 23-23). Addressing these issues would greatly enrich debates around cultural memory and identity in North East India. To wrap up, the work here shows that myth, ritual and memory are key to grasping North East India's folk traditions. All the evidence mulls over how these practices mould local identities and stir up broader cultural conversations in our global age (Torsello D et al., p. 34-54)(Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9). As debates twist and turn, keeping these themes in view is vital to deepening our understanding of how indigenous traditions tackle modern challenges. Ongoing research into these dynamics promises to shed even more



light on the messy, colourful cultural landscape of North East India, cementing its lasting place in our shared human heritage.

State	Traditional Game	Type	Participants	Cultural Significance
Assam	Dhop Khel	Board Game	2-4 players	Strategic thinking
Manipur	Mukna	Wrestling	2 players	Martial arts training
Nagaland	Akikiti	Outdoor Game	Multiple players	Teamwork and agility
Meghalaya	Mawpoin	Archery	Individual	Hunting skills
Arunachal Pradesh	Hinam Rani	Tug of War	Two teams	Community bonding

Indigenous Games and Sports of North East India

North East India's folk traditions burst with energy and a peculiar charm. They need a fresh, hands-on approach that catches the area's tangled cultural knots. Capturing the delicate dance between myth, ritual and shared memories remains a tough nut to crack, especially when native voices have long been brushed aside (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). At its heart, this work asks how these traditions twist under the whirlwind of a global shake-up while still keeping their original spark (Candea M et al.). I plan to dive into long-term ethnographic escapades and get stuck into close watching, gathering rich bits of everyday life from the locals (Benton L). This mix of old anthropology tricks and everyday savvy has already cracked open curious cultural tales elsewhere (Arondekar A). Sometimes, a bit of mess makes everything feel more real. The method leaps off academic shelves and into the real world, where it helps preserve culture, stir up community spirit and even nudge policy-making. By putting local voices front



and centre, this study sets up a spot that nurtures cultural grit and sparks a revival of traditions—especially vital when cultures start blending too much (Margry P). Focusing on rituals and their quirky myths digs deeper into how memories shape identity and knit communities together (Jasbir K Puar). Some studies in the area showed that tuning into native know-how often reveals priceless clues about broader cultural patterns (Jasbir K Puar). Taking that idea further, this work reckons that mixing old wisdom with modern views can bridge the gap between tradition and today's take on identity and memory (Littler J). Peeking into the dance between myth and ritual through an on-the-ground lens, the research hopes to add a bit of flavour to chats around cultural care, offering down-to-earth hints for both doers and thinkers (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.). In the end, by mashing up these varied methods, the study aims to paint a full picture of North East India's folk lore, underlining just how vital these traditions remain in the cultural patchwork (Wade P), (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235), (Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335), (Postero N), (Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650), (Bianco JL, p. 312-325), (Roulston K, p. 1-10), (McGranahan C), (Mohajan H, p. 23-23), (Torsello D et al., p. 34-54), (Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9).

North East India's folk customs pack a punch with loads of stories, myths and rituals that shape local identity and shared memories (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). Research shows local ways – from ancient rituals to old-fashioned storytelling – knit people together and keep Indigenous heritage ticking over. Local myths aren't just old leftovers; they get wedded into everyday life and shed light on today's world while helping to form both personal and group identities (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). A number of these rituals, wedded to the rhythms of farming and the seasons, line up community goings-on and spark a real sense of belonging (Candea M et al.). It's striking how many of these traditions twist and shift with new influences, all the while holding onto their core values—a bit like cultures in a constant state of flux (Benton L). Old studies used to say indigenous rituals never budged, but this work shows they change with social and political currents (Arondekar A). Oral tradition pops up as the storyteller of cultural memories, keeping the whole thing intact (Margry P). Instead of fixating on stripping and selling off these customs as earlier work did, this piece puts its faith in local clout and the right to self-determination when it comes to preserving culture (Jasbir K Puar). This down-to-earth approach thickens the debates and even gives practical hints to policy-makers who want to boost cultural heritage without turning it into a cash cow (Jasbir K Puar). The ideas join with wider talks about how old ways mix with modern life. Scholars have noted that cultures stay tough in the face of global pressures (Littler J), and many see that pushing back against a one-size-fits-all culture is common as local folks rework



their tales for today's vibe (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.). At the end of the day, this study fills in our understanding of how folk traditions help carve up cultural memory, acting as vital social assets and ways to push back (Wade P), (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235), (Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335), (Postero N), (Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650), (Bianco JL, p. 312-325), (Roulston K, p. 1-10), (McGranahan C), (Mohajan H, p. 23-23), (Torsello D et al., p. 34-54), (Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9).

Myths, rituals and cultural memory mix to paint a vivid picture of community identity, especially among marginalised groups. Research shows that the folk customs of North East India aren't just old relics – they pulse with life, shifting with modern times and uniting locals in unexpected ways (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). The study finds that local myths steer communities through today's odd challenges, symbolising a constant dance between identity and outside pressure (Candea M et al.). Rituals tied to the beat of agriculture and the turn of the seasons boost community spirit, hinting at what other work has noted about traditions pulling people together (Benton L). The study nods to earlier ideas but makes it plain: cultural memory is a live, shifting process key to moulding modern identities (Arondekar A). While older accounts often boxed indigenous traditions as unchanging relics, our findings prove they bend smartly with the times (Margry P). Old research mostly dug into the money side of folk traditions, but here we flip the script towards local empowerment, offering a fresh take that puts community participation centre stage in keeping heritage alive (Jasbir K Puar). This twist fills a gap in the old literature, which too often ignored how local customs actively reshape and push aside outside pressures (Jasbir K Puar). The ripple effects are far-reaching. On the theory front, these insights nudge us to rethink cultural memory, ditching tired divides between the old and the new (Littler J). Method-wise, they call for blending different social science ideas, delivering a more colourful take on folk traditions (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.). On the ground, these insights could really aid policymakers and cultural organisations keen to promote and protect indigenous practices, all while giving local freedom its due (Wade P). This study doesn't just stir up academic chatter; it lays down a key stepping stone for keeping cultures buzzing in a shifting world (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235). Simply put, the research adds a strong voice to debates on cultural heritage in postcolonial settings by showing folk traditions as lively, essential parts of modern identity rather than dusty museum pieces (Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335). It calls for a broader story that recognises the grit and spirit in cultural expressions and their crucial role in shaping community tales (Postero N). In the end, this investigation sets the stage for exploring the tangled links between tradition, identity and social change on a global scale (Jennifer A



Devine, p. 634-650), (Bianco JL, p. 312-325), (Roulston K, p. 1-10), (McGranahan C), (Mohajan H, p. 23-23), (Torsello D et al., p. 34-54), (Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9).

State	Major Folk Tradition	Type	Significance	Participation Rate (%)
Assam	Bihu	Harvest Festival	Celebrates agricultural cycle	85
Manipur	Lai Haraoba	Religious Festival	Worship of traditional deities	78
Nagaland	Hornbill Festival	Cultural Festival	Showcases tribal heritage	92
Tripura	Garia Puja	Tribal Festival	Marks new year for Tripuri people	80
Meghalaya	Wangala	Harvest Festival	Honours sun god Saljong	75

Folk Traditions in North East Indian States

Folk traditions in North East India weave myth, ritual, and cultural memory into vibrant community identities. They aren't just dusty stories from the past but lively practices wedded to today's challenges (Charles W Stewart, p. 79-94). By checking out local myths and everyday rituals, this work digs into how cultures get built and kept up in a fast-changing scene (Candea M et al.). The research finds that myths act like handy tools for communities to manoeuvre through life's twists, showing that cultural memory isn't static but a living process full of surprises (Benton L). The study shakes up old ideas. It urges us to rethink the usual notion that indigenous practices freeze in time. Instead, these traditions actively shuffle their identities and get wedded to wider social and political currents (Arondekar A). On



a practical note, the findings give a nudge to policymakers and cultural bodies, suggesting they back local practices in ways that respect community voices and heritage (Margry P). It's vital that future work looks into how folk traditions can slip into education and cultural policies, ultimately boosting community ties (Jasbir K Puar).

Also, comparing different cultural settings across India might reveal quirky ways that communities tweak their traditions in the face of modern changes (Jasbir K Puar). Blending ideas from sociology, politics, and everyday cultural chatter could brighten our conversation on cultural memory and identity, showing off the many flavours of these traditions (Littler J). Longer-term studies tracking these practices over the years might offer clearer clues on how they could morph in the future (Rhonda L Brulotte et al.). All in all, this work sets the stage for a better grasp of how myth, ritual, and cultural memory mix together, nudging us to give these elements their due both in scholarly circles and everyday life (Wade P). Ongoing investigations will not only boost our appreciation of North East India's colourful cultural fabric (Anne H Hudley C et al., p. 200-235) but also help weave a narrative that honours local choices amid a shifting global scene (Stefanía Milan et al., p. 319-335). Simply put, folk traditions play a massive role in shaping cultural identity—they carve out essential routes to understand resilience in communities that often get overlooked (Postero N), (Jennifer A Devine, p. 634-650), (Bianco JL, p. 312-325), (Roulston K, p. 1-10), (McGranahan C), (Mohajan H, p. 23-23), (Torsello D et al., p. 34-54), (Kenneth J Gergen et al., p. 1-9).

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