

Name of the Element: The Weaving Tradition of Manipuri Women
Domain 3: Social practices, rituals and festive events
Name of Inventory: Pilot Inventory 1
Serial No: P1-D3-002

Brief Description

The weaving tradition is one of the oldest forms of independent entrepreneurship of Manipuri women in the Indian subcontinent. Each Manipuri family has a weaving machine that they have made by themselves and all the women in a household know how to use the device in order to weave materials from cotton and wool. The items made include shawls, shirts, socks, towels etc. Due to the longstanding tradition of weaving, the methods applied during this process are also unique to the Manipuri women and therefore the items are more durable and valuable than industrial grade clothing produced around the country. The items woven by Manipuri women thus have an added value in the marketplace. These weavers however, have little linkages to larger markets and most of them have co-operative stores at the corners of their housing lanes. Three training institutes were opened in Madhobpur, Adampur and Tilokpur to preserve and continue this tradition in all Manipuri homes in 1976. Beyond their staple agrarian lifestyle, the weaving is looked upon as another source of income and also gainful employment for Manipuri women.

State of the element: Although the practice is still highly popular in Manipuri communities, many locals are afraid that it is slowly becoming obsolete for two reasons- i) lack of interest from the new generation and ii) their inability to be linked to large markets of buyers. Since it has been a relatively independent endeavor for many years, there has been little state-level facilitation in creating market for these products both nationally and internationally.

Region: Moulvibazar, Sylhet Sadar, Sunamgonj and Habigonj districts.

Photographs: Video: Consent:

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