

Name of the Element: Bala- The Labour-Sharing System of Harvesting in Manipuri Communities

Domain 3: Social practices, rituals and festive events

Name of Inventory: Pilot Inventory 1

Serial No: P1-D3-003

Brief Description

During the time of the new harvest the Manipuri communities engage in many different festivals and events which communalizes the practice of harvesting and also the idea of common land and shared agriculture, which leads to a broader understanding of the unity of the community with nature and sustenance. During the time of the new harvest (*nobanno*), the younger ones engage in what they call '*bala*', which is a form of communal labor whereby members from other households helps a family to harvest their rice from the fields. In return, during that time, the laborers are provided with meals from the new rice as a gratitude for their work. This enforces community bonds and creates an idea of unity with nature and the community. At the end of the '*bala*' period, the Manipuris hold the *Chanong Tangpa* festival to celebrate the new harvest. It is celebrated by the performance of Ras-leela such as *Beni Ras and Nitya Ras*.

State of the element: Due to the complex nature of the agricultural political economy of the country, labour-sharing practices are becoming obsolete. Without assistance from state-led bodies to preserve this practice as a heritage of Manipuri philosophy on labour and nature, this practice will not be prevalent for long.

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

Photographs: Video: Consent:

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