

**Name of the Element:** The Birthing Tradition of Manipuri Families  
**Domain 3:** Social practices, rituals and festive events  
**Name of Inventory:** Pilot Inventory 1  
**Serial No:** P1-D3-005

### **Brief Description**

The birthing traditions and rituals maintained by Manipuri families are oriented towards the well-being of the mother and the child. As soon as a woman is expecting a child, she is relieved from carrying out strenuous activities such as cleaning, farming, carrying heavy loads etc. The woman is also provided a special diet to ease her period of pregnancy. Three days after the child is born, the family carries out a ritual called *Chipar Bhat Khana* which involves inviting an uneven number of children from the surrounding village and feeding them a meal. Afterwards they are all bathed in a pond. The children and the midwives are all paid a ceremonial amount of money on that day. On the sixth day they observe a tradition known as *Joshthi* where the entire house is cleaned and ceremonial items such as incense and other things are burned. The mother's family also gathers at the house and one of her brothers has to shoot arrows at each corner of the house on the priest's (*Purohit*) orders. During this time the priest recites many verses and blessings for the newborn. On the twelfth day, they observe a ritual known as *Sengpa* where the household is cleaned again and a barber is summoned to shave the head of the newborn and some members of the family. The mother is not required to carry out household chores for three months after giving birth, as the community considers this a time for the formation of a special bond between mother and child. Only after three months is the mother allowed to begin carrying out regular household chores.

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

**Photographs: Video: Consent:**

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