

Ningol chakkouba: A festival of Manipur

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Abstract

Festivals are considered as the sector of cultural and traditional heritage. People around the world do celebrate festivals irrespective of caste, region, Religion and bring joy and prosperity. Festivals are celebrated monthly, seasonally and annually. In spite of bringing joy and prosperity, celebrating festival bring various impacts (social, Economical & environmental) to the host community or region. Nowadays scholar gives important to study more about the impacts cause by festivals celebration. Many scholars published various types of articles based on positive and negative impacts given by the festival celebration around the world. The paper also aim to study about Ningol Chakkouba festival of Manipur and the significant impact to the Manipur society from celebrating it.

Keywords: Manipur, festival, culture and tradition and integrity

Introduction

India is a land of cultural diversity. Every year, India celebrates various types of festivals. Though the origins and themes of festivals are different. Likewise the small state, Manipur is a land with various types of festivals. This land can be considered as a land which celebrates festival every month. From the Royal Chronicle and historical records of Manipur, we can able to know that most festivals celebrate in Manipur state was started since early age. Some festivals are instinct but many festivals are celebrating continuously showing cultural and traditional values of the state. Among the festivals performing until today's generation, "Ningol Chakkouba" festival also can be mentioned.

Methodology

The methodology taken for making this paper is based on qualitative explanation. For the purpose of data and information collection secondary resources like books, magazines, research papers and newspapers are use.

Objectives

- A. To study the aspect of Ningol Chakkouba.
- B. To discuss the significant impacts from celebrating this festival.

Ningol Chakkouba

Ningol chakkouba is one of the popular festivals of Manipur. It is celebrated on the second of Hiyangei. On this day, parents and brothers invite and enjoy a joyous meal with their daughter or sister who has taken different surname after marriage. It has been celebrating since early days. Earlier, like this practice of married daughters coming to her parental and enjoying meal, there was the custom of piba chakkouba (brothers being invited for meal by their married sisters).

It is believed that the tradition of piba chakkouba came into practice from the time of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba who ruled in 33AD. His consort Laisana was the sister of Poireiton who sprang from khamnung. The account of brother Poireiton giving edible things to Laisana expressing

joy in meeting her after a long time is mentioned in "*Harao Kummeising Amasung Bratasing*".

"Later, after becoming the queen of Kanglei, Poireiton's sister Laisana came to see the harvesting of her brother's field. After a long time when they met unexpectedly, the brother gave his sister some white rice, some black rice and bananas. When the rice was cooked and served to Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. It turned out to be a sweet scented one." Expressing gratitude and happiness for the warm reception she received at her brother's house, Laisana invited Poireiton for a meal at her house and thus the custom of piba chakkouba began in Manipur.

The custom of piba chakkouba which had been in vogue since the time of Pakhangba has gone through much changes from the time of king Chandrakirti. It is mentioned in Khulem Chandrashekhar's "*Harao Kummei sing Amasung Bratasing*" that the tradition of piba chakkouba was changed to ningol chakkouba by the time of King Chandra kirti. It further mentioned that in the earlier days, Manipuri kings married their daughters to kings of far off places. The king and his family went for piba chakkouba to their married daughter's place. At times, there arose much difficulty as the king and his family could not leave the palace to go and enjoy piba chakkouba. To overcome this inconvenience, king Chandrakirti introduced ningol chakkouba. Where married daughters came to their parent's house and enjoy joyous meal with parents and brothers.

Since the time of Chandrakirti it has been celebrating in Manipur on the second of Hiyangei. It is however mentioned in the manuscript "*Tharon*" that it was celebrated in the lunar month of Mera. When did the custom of celebrating ningol chakkouba in Hiyangei evolved cannot exactly be located till now and the reason why it is celebrated on this day is not yet ascertained. It is however believed that it might be celebrated expressing joy on the harvest of new crop in month of Mera or Hiyangei.

Ningol chakkouba is of the most joyous and significant one among the festivals celebrated in Manipur. On this day, married women adorn themselves with the best of traditional dresses and go to their parental house with sweets

to enjoy a happy meal with their parents and brothers. Prior to the day of ningol chakkouba, a male member from the married woman's parental family would go on an auspicious day to the sister's place to invite her for the ningol chakkouba. As per invitation, daughters come to chakkouba, however without any formal invitation, they do go for chakkouba. As a common practice, sweets brought by the married daughter share normally shared to her brothers and to the older members of the nearby or adjacent families. Then they enjoy a happy meal prepared by her parents or brothers. After the meal, brothers present gifts to the sisters which are called dakshina. Dakshina can also be presented by neighbors apart from the family members. At the time of giving dakshina, the younger sisters bow to their elder brothers and seek blessing especially the blessing to be able to attend and join ningol chakkouba every year. In case, if younger brothers bow to their sisters, they bless the brothers a prosperous life and to be able to organize chakkouba every year. After the dakshina part, women return to their house with the gifts. Thus ends the celebration of ningol chakkouba.

Significant impact

Outwardly the festival may be seen as mere enjoyment of a happy meal but in deeper sense it shows the inseparable family bond. Thus the festival has been celebrating with earnestness ever since. Daughters who had married and settled in far off places make sure to come and join ningol chakkouba at their parental home. This festival gives a chance to mingle with the distanced married daughters and the members of her paternal family even if once a year. Even if the parents of married lady were dead, the brothers of the lady will invite her and celebrate the festival. It shows that brother and sister are inseparable and also tighten the bond of love. The deeper sense of this festival is very vast and good. Not only showing inseparable family bond, this festival also preserved culture and tradition of Meitei community. On this auspicious day of Ningol Chakkouba, all family members do wear traditional costumes and eat traditional foods which indicate continuity of the forefather's doing. Besides, celebrating this festival every year, one can teach younger generation about their culture, tradition and inseparable bond of a family. So, this festival can be said as a festival that brings many significant impacts to the community or society of Meitei and Manipur state.

Conclusion

There are many festivals in Manipur. They have reflection of culture and tradition as well as internal bond. From celebrating festivals, people can learn both extrinsically and intrinsically. Extrinsically people can learn about their culture and tradition. Intrinsically they can learn about internal inseparable bond among them. By understanding the deepest meaning of Ningol Chakkouba festival, different organization of Manipur tries to keep eye on this festival every year. The quantity of celebrating Ningol Chakkouba is increased. Many organizations invite the ladies from different communities serve them with traditional foods and present simple gifts. Mainly, the organization aimed on inseparable bond among people. In this, I would like to add something that festival like Ningol Chakkouba must do celebrate ceaselessly and must do expose this deepest meaning to the society people. So, this Ningol Chakkouba festival might take a great role to the people's integrity.

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