

# GOVERNMENT GIRLS COLLEGE, BETUL

## EBSB monthly Report

October2022

Name of event- Ningol Chakouba

No. of student – 25

### **Ningol Chakouba – The festival of family reunion that signifies Manipur’s rich cultural heritage**

Manipur is a place of abundant natural beauty and a colourful society of multiple ethnic communities living together since time immemorial with their variety of cultures. Numerous social festivals and ceremonies have been witnessed by the Manipuri peoples throughout their history keeping them united with a bond of love and responsibility.



Ningol Chakouba is one of the popularly celebrated festivals in the state which falls on the second lunar day of the Manipuri calendar’s Hiyangei month. Ningol means ‘married woman’ and Chakouba means ‘invitation for feast’; so the festival is the one where the married women are invited to their parents’ home for a feast. The invitation comes from the son(s) of the parental family of the ningols, generally a week in advance; it strengthens the bond of affections among the brothers and sisters, daughters and parents of a family.

The history of Ningol Chakouba dates back to the time when King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba ruled in Manipur. The Queen Laisana used to invite her brother Poireiton to the King’s palace for a feast once in a year. So, it was known as Piba (brother/son) Chakouba rather than Ningol Chakouba. But the tradition changed during the time of King Chadrakirti Singh (1831-1886) in the 19th century. He invited his sisters for the feast as it was difficult for him to visit their places in one day. Thus, the tradition changed to Ningol Chakouba since then and continued to become an integral part of Manipur’s rich culture and heritage.

On this joyous day of Ningol Chakouba, along with the kids the married daughters of every family come to their parental home with a festive mood and much of emotions to be reunited with other members of the family. Every woman wears the finest of traditional and ethnic clothes, bring fruits and sweets to be shared with the family and cherish the beautiful moments of the childhood that she once lived with her brothers, sisters and parents.

The preparation of Ningol Chakouba begins in fact days ahead; the members of every family wait the whole year eagerly for this day to meet and greet their daughters and sisters with joy and excitement. They go the market to buy necessary things, especially food products for the preparation of the feast and clothes to be presented to their beloved sisters and daughters. They prepare a lot of tasty and healthy cuisines with much care and effort for the grand feast. The menu serves variety of dishes like Nga-Thongba (Fish Curry) made from Sareng (an expensive fish), Rohu, etc, Nga-Agouba (a mixed fried item of potatoes and fish pieces), Eromba (Manipuri Chutney) are a must. Other food items include Laphu Eromba (a banana stem preparation), Chamfut (boiled vegetables), Soibam Thongba (a fermented bamboo shoot curry), Uti (classic Manipuri vegetarian dish) etc.

Everyone is happy at such a family reunion, especially the kids of the ningols as they get to wear new clothes and meet their grandparents and receive gifts from them. After the feast is over, brothers and parents of the family present gifts to their sisters and daughters and wish for a happy and prosperous life. In return, ningols show respect and usher blessings on them and pray for their happiness and longevity. The day ends at a happy note that signifies and strengthens the bond of love among the family members.

The festival is mainly celebrated by the Meiteis but nowadays many other communities also have started to celebrate it as it emphasises the importance of happiness and reunion of a family in bringing peace and harmony in a society. The State government has declared Ningol Chakouba as a State holiday as the spirit of the festival encourages unity and prosperity in the society and lives of Manipuri people.