

MANIPURI WOMEN ENTERPRENURS IN HISTORY LITERATURE AND COMMERCE

As part of this project we shot a documentary titled “JOY IN THE MARKET” in Imphal, Manipur during May, 2016. This innovation project was financed by Delhi University. The idea behind the project was to examine the lives of women in *Ema Keithal* or the women’s market in Imphal. This market is the second biggest market organized and run by women in Asia. Talking to the women in the market we ask them questions about their commercial enterprise as well as about their socio-cultural lives. These interviews were carried out by Rupalee Verma from the Department of History and Amit Kumar from the English Department of Vivekananda College.

Under the direction of Mrs. Radhika Srinivasan, a parallel project of similar nature was carried out by ten students belonging to the departments of Commerce, English and History. These students interviewed Manipuri Women Entrepreneurs in Delhi. These interviews were compiled to make a short film titled “MANIPUR MEETS DELHI”.

As a result of our research we came to the conclusion that most of the Manipuri Women Entrepreneurs perceived the market as not only the source of their livelihood but as an integral aspect of their lives. In fact their socio-cultural life revolves around the market.

There is a History behind the important role *Ema Keithal* has played in the struggle against the British colonial rule during the 20th century. The women in the market carried out movements known as *Nupi Lan 1* and *Nupi Lan 2* against oppressive British laws.

During our visit to Manipur in May 2016 we met many women traders making plans for the famous *Lai Haroba festival*. Women in the market were planning different aspects of the festival such as performative rituals and local dances.

Similarly during our interviews they explained how being an active participant in the market has helped them in organizing *Meira Paibi*, which a women’s organization is fighting against social evils and political oppression. This project has helped us understand the active role Manipuri women have been playing in all spheres of Manipuri society.