



This article is published under the Creative Commons CC-BY-ND License
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>)

Aesthetic and Cultural Dimensions of Manipur Society: A Study on Pung Drumming

Dr. W.M.H.G.U. Indika Tikiri Bandara Weerakoon

University of the Visual & Performing Arts, Sri Lanka

Correspondence:- indikatikiri@gmail.com

Submitted: October, 07, 2025; Revised: November, 03, 2025; Accepted: November, 25, 2025

Abstract: This study explores the cultural significance and contemporary challenges of Pung drumming in Manipuri society. As an essential element of religious rituals, dance, and social gatherings, Pung drumming serves as a bridge between spiritual devotion, artistic expression, and social cohesion. The research highlights the drum's central role in community events such as weddings, funerals, and festivals, where it communicates cultural narratives and emotions through its rhythmic patterns. Despite its cultural importance, the study identifies several challenges threatening the survival of Pung drumming, including declining interest among younger generations, commercialization of traditional arts, and limited formal training opportunities. To address these issues, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating Pung drumming into formal education, promoting digital documentation, and providing financial support for artists. Additionally, the study reveals a generational divide in the perception of Pung drumming, with older practitioners viewing it as a spiritual and cultural obligation, while younger generations often regard it as an optional art form. The findings suggest that culturally responsive educational approaches are essential to making Pung drumming relevant to contemporary youth and ensuring its sustainability. The study calls for collaborative efforts involving practitioners, educators, and policymakers to preserve and promote this important cultural tradition for future generations.

Key Words: Pung drumming, Manipur society, Meitei culture, Sankirtana, cultural heritage, Manipuri dance.

1. Introduction

Manipur, located in the northeastern region of India, is renowned for its vibrant cultural heritage, which reflects the region's rich history and traditions. Among the many cultural symbols of Manipur, the *Pung* drum holds a significant place, representing the spiritual, social, and artistic heritage of Manipuri society (Devi R. , 2015) The *Pung*, a barrel-shaped percussion instrument, transcends its role as a mere musical accompaniment, emerging as a cultural symbol that fosters communal solidarity and preserves the region's unique identity (Devi L. , Cultural Practices in Manipur: A Historical Perspective., 2018).

The *Pung* drum plays an integral role in religious practices, particularly within Vaishnava rituals. It is prominently featured in *Nata Sankirtana*, a UNESCO-recognized cultural heritage that combines drumming, devotional singing, and dancing in praise of Lord Krishna (UNESCO, 2013). These performances, often held in temples and community spaces, not only express spiritual devotion but also reinforce cultural unity within the region. Additionally, the *Pung* is essential in classical dance forms such as the *Ras Leela*, which narrates the divine love story of Krishna and Radha through intricate rhythms and expressive movements (Laishram, 2017).

Beyond religious and artistic contexts, the *Pung* holds significant social value in Manipuri culture. It is performed during life-cycle events such as weddings, funerals, and community gatherings, where the drum's rhythmic patterns convey cultural narratives and emotional expressions (Kshetrimayum, 2014). The practice of *Pung* drumming is traditionally passed down through the *Gurushishya Parampara* (teacher-student tradition), ensuring the continuity of skills and knowledge across generations (Sharma H. , 2016).

The cultural landscape of Manipur has been shaped by a blend of indigenous Meitei traditions and external influences, particularly from Hinduism and Vaishnavism. Historically, the Meitei community practiced indigenous customs, with music and dance playing central roles in social and spiritual life. However, a significant cultural transformation occurred during the 18th century under the reign of King Garibnawaz, who embraced Vaishnavism and promoted its practices throughout the region (Singh R. , 2012). This religious shift profoundly impacted Manipuri society, elevating *Pung* drumming to a prominent cultural practice, particularly within *Sankirtana* performances (Devi R. , 2015).

While the *Pung* has historically flourished, it now faces challenges in the modern era. These include declining interest among younger

generations, the commercialization of traditional arts, and the lack of comprehensive documentation (Kshetrimayum, 2019). However, various preservation efforts by cultural organizations, educational institutions, and government initiatives seek to sustain this tradition. Programs promoting *Pung* drumming in school curricula, community workshops, and digital platforms for documentation play vital roles in preserving this heritage (Culture, 2020).

The aim of this study is to explore the socio-cultural significance of the *Pung* drum in Manipuri society and examine how it has evolved over time. This research investigates the drum's role in religious practices, dance traditions, and community life while analyzing the challenges faced in preserving this art form amidst modernization. By highlighting the enduring cultural value of *Pung* drumming, the study underscores its importance in maintaining Manipuri identity and advocates for sustained preservation efforts to ensure that future generations can continue to engage with this rich cultural tradition.

Research Objectives

The study of *Pung* drumming in Manipur aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of its historical, cultural, and social importance. To achieve this, the research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To Explore the Historical and Cultural Significance of *Pung* Drumming in Manipur Society: This objective seeks to trace the origins of *Pung* drumming, examining its development from ancient Meitei traditions to its current status as an integral part of Manipuri culture. It explores how the introduction of Vaishnavism in the 18th century further elevated the role of *Pung* drumming, embedding it into religious, social, and artistic practices. The study also investigates how this rhythmic art form reflects the cultural identity and heritage of the Manipuri people.
2. To Analyze the Social and Religious Roles of *Pung* Drumming in Traditional Practices: *Pung* drumming extends beyond musical expression, serving as a cultural marker in both religious and social contexts. This objective focuses on its role in traditional practices, such as *Sankirtana*, temple rituals, and classical dance performances like the *Ras Lila*. It also examines how *Pung* drumming accompanies life cycle events, including births, weddings, and funerals, symbolizing the cultural continuity of Manipuri society.

3. To Identify Challenges and Preservation Efforts for This Cultural Heritage:

Despite its cultural significance, *Pung* drumming faces several challenges, including declining interest among younger generations, modernization, and the commercialization of traditional arts. This objective explores these challenges while highlighting the efforts undertaken by cultural organizations, educational institutions, and government initiatives to preserve and promote this heritage. It also examines how mentorship programs, documentation projects, and performances contribute to the sustainability of this art form.

Through these objectives, the study aims to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of *Pung* drumming and emphasize its importance as both a cultural treasure and a living tradition within Manipuri society.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the socio-cultural significance of *Pung* drumming in Manipuri society. The approach focused on understanding the historical context, cultural practices, and challenges associated with *Pung* drumming through ethnographic observations, interviews, and content analysis. This method was appropriate for capturing the nuanced cultural and social dimensions of this traditional art form.

2.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in the state of Manipur, India, with a primary focus on communities actively practicing *Pung* drumming. Fieldwork was concentrated in Imphal, the cultural hub of Manipur, where major temples, cultural centers, and educational institutions engage in *Pung* performances (Sharma K., 2016).

2.3 Participants

The study involved 25 participants, including *Pung* drumming practitioners, dance performers, cultural historians, and community elders. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from both experienced practitioners and younger learners. The sample included:

- 10 senior *Pung* drummers (over 20 years of experience)
- 8 emerging practitioners (5–10 years of experience)
- 4 cultural scholars and historians

- 3 community leaders involved in cultural preservation

2.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using multiple qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of *Pung* drumming's cultural significance.

2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with *Pung* drummers, cultural experts, and community leaders. The interviews covered topics such as the historical background of *Pung*, its role in religious and social settings, transmission practices, and perceived challenges. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent. (salgamuwa, 2022)

2.4.2 Participant Observation:

Field observations were conducted during *Pung* performances in temples, community celebrations, and cultural festivals. Detailed field notes documented the context, performance style, dress culture, and audience engagement.

2.4.3 Focus Group Discussions:

Two focus group discussions were organized one with senior practitioners and another with younger learners. These discussions encouraged participants to share personal experiences, views on gender inclusion, and thoughts on modernization's impact on *Pung* drumming.

2.4.4 Archival Research and Secondary Sources:

The study also utilized archival materials, including historical documents, cultural publications, and audio-visual recordings of *Pung* performances. Secondary sources, such as academic books, journal articles, and reports from cultural organizations, provided contextual background (Singh R. , 2012).

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding the qualitative data into themes and sub-themes. The process included the following steps:

1. **Data Familiarization:** Transcribing interviews and reviewing field notes.

Dr. W.M.H.G.U. Indika Tikiri Bandara Weerakoon

2. **Initial Coding:** Identifying recurring patterns related to *Pung* drumming's cultural, religious, and social significance.
3. **Theme Development:** Organizing codes into themes such as "Religious Significance," "Social Integration," "Transmission Practices," and "Challenges and Preservation."
4. **Interpretation:** Analyzing themes in relation to the study's objectives and existing literature.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants provided informed consent before participating in interviews and observations. They were informed about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses.

2.7 Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights into the cultural significance of *Pung* drumming, it is limited by its geographic scope, as fieldwork was primarily conducted in Imphal. Further research involving other regions of Manipur could provide a more comprehensive understanding of regional variations in *Pung* drumming practices.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study, organized thematically based on the socio-cultural significance of *Pung* drumming, its role in religious and social contexts, challenges faced, and ongoing preservation efforts.

3.1 Socio-Cultural Significance of *Pung* Drumming

The findings revealed that *Pung* drumming remains a cornerstone of Manipuri culture, symbolizing both spiritual devotion and community identity. Participants emphasized that the *Pung* is more than just a musical instrument; it embodies cultural narratives, historical continuity, and spiritual expression. Elderly practitioners often referred to the *Pung* as a "sacred sound" that connects individuals to their heritage and spirituality (Sharma K. , 2016). The rhythmic patterns produced by the drum are not merely for entertainment but serve as a medium for storytelling, reflecting the values, traditions, and collective memory of the Manipuri people.

3.2 Role in Religious Practices and Dance Traditions

Findings confirmed that *Pung* drumming plays a vital role in Vaishnava rituals, particularly in *Sankirtana* performances, which are central to Manipuri religious practices. *Sankirtana*, a devotional art form combining singing, dancing, and drumming in praise of Lord Krishna, relies heavily on the rhythmic patterns of the *Pung*. In temples, *Pung* drumming accompanies these devotional acts, guiding ritual sequences and enhancing the emotional depth of worship. The beats of the drum are carefully structured to reflect the mood of the prayers, from slow, meditative rhythms during introspective moments to energetic beats during celebratory phases (Sharma K. , 2016).

Temple Rituals and Spiritual Significance

In Manipuri Vaishnava temples, the *Pung* is not merely an accompaniment but a guiding force in religious ceremonies. Devotees described how the *Pung* sets the pace for chanting and dancing, ensuring harmony among performers. During the morning and evening temple rituals, the rhythmic patterns of the *Pung* mark transitions between prayer segments, symbolizing the progression from worldly concerns to spiritual focus (Bhattacharya, 2013). Elder practitioners often referred to the drum's sound as "divine vibrations," believed to purify the environment and elevate the consciousness of participants.

Role in *Sankirtana*

Sankirtana performances, recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, highlight the spiritual importance of *Pung* drumming. Male performers, traditionally dressed in white attire, form a circle while singing and dancing, with *Pung* players at the center, leading the rhythm. The drum's beats guide the dancers' footwork and hand gestures, creating a seamless blend of sound and movement. This synchronization symbolizes spiritual unity, reflecting the Vaishnava philosophy of collective devotion (UNESCO, 2013).

According to Meitei (2017), the *Pung*'s rhythms are carefully structured into specific tala (rhythmic cycles), each associated with different ritualistic moods. For instance, the Chatura Tala, characterized by four beats, often accompanies slow, prayerful chanting, while the Rupaka Tala, with its seven-beat cycle, is used

This perspective aligns with Singh's (2012) observation that *Pung* drumming is deeply integrated into Manipuri cultural practices, reflecting the community's shared identity and cultural resilience. The drum's presence in religious ceremonies, such as *Sankirtana* performances and temple rituals, highlights its role in reinforcing spiritual devotion and community cohesion. The *Sankirtana* tradition, recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, showcases how *Pung* drumming, alongside singing and dancing, strengthens communal ties while serving as an expression of faith and cultural pride (UNESCO, 2013).

Beyond religious contexts, *Pung* drumming plays a significant role in social gatherings, festivals, and life cycle events, such as weddings and funerals. During these occasions, the drum serves as both a celebratory and ceremonial instrument, marking important moments in community life. According to Devi (2018), the rhythmic patterns of the *Pung* are often customized to reflect the mood and purpose of specific events, illustrating its adaptability across cultural settings.

Furthermore, *Pung* drumming has become an essential part of classical Manipuri dance forms, such as the Ras Leela, where its complex rhythms enhance the emotional expression and storytelling elements of the performance. In this context, the *Pung* not only provides musical accompaniment but also acts as a bridge between the performer and the audience, fostering a shared cultural experience.

The socio-cultural significance of *Pung* drumming extends to the educational sphere as well. Traditional training methods follow the *Gurushishya Parampara*, where knowledge is passed down from master to student, ensuring the preservation of authentic techniques and cultural practices (Meitei, 2017). This system not only imparts musical skills but also instills cultural values and historical awareness among younger generations.

In recent years, the increasing participation of women in *Pung* drumming has further enriched its socio-cultural relevance. Historically a male-dominated practice, the inclusion of women reflects broader social changes within Manipuri society, promoting gender inclusivity while preserving cultural heritage (Rajkumari, 2020).

Overall, *Pung* drumming continues to thrive as an essential cultural practice in Manipuri society, reflecting the enduring cultural identity, social fabric, and spiritual ethos of the community. Its role in religious ceremonies, social events, and artistic expressions

during energetic phases of *Sankirtana*. This rhythmic variation allows the *Pung* to mirror the emotional journey of devotees, from introspection to ecstatic devotion.



Playing *pung* in *Sankirtana* performance, Sree Sree Govindaji temple in Imphal, Manipur

Pung in Ras Lila Dance

Beyond temple rituals, *Pung* drumming is central to classical Manipuri dance traditions, particularly the Ras Lila, a dance drama depicting the divine love between Krishna and Radha. In Ras Lila performances, the *Pung* provides both rhythmic structure and emotional expression. Dancers synchronize their movements with the drum's intricate beats, using footwork and gestures to convey the narrative. One senior *Pung* drummer noted, "Without the *Pung*, the essence of Ras Lila is incomplete," emphasizing the drum's role in enhancing storytelling and dramatic expression. (Singh T. , 2024)



The *Lai Haraoba* festival, a pre-Hindu ritual celebrating the creation myth of the Meitei people, also features prominent *Pung* drumming. (Singh T. , 2024) During the festival, drummers perform specific bols (syllabic patterns) that correspond to different phases of the ritual, such as the invocation of deities, the enactment of mythological stories, and the final blessings. Participants described how the rhythmic intensity gradually builds, creating a spiritual

Dr. W.M.H.G.U. Indika Tikiri Bandara Weerakoon atmosphere that encourages communal participation and devotion (Rajkumari, 2020).

Training and Transmission

The role of the *Pung* extends to its transmission through traditional *Gurushishya Parampara* (master-disciple tradition). (Devi L. , 2023) In religious and dance training, students first learn basic rhythmic patterns, gradually advancing to complex compositions used in rituals and performances. This educational process not only preserves drumming techniques but also instills cultural values, ensuring continuity across generations (Meitei, 2017).

Contemporary Adaptations

While traditional practices remain strong, the role of *Pung* drumming has also expanded into contemporary settings. In modern Manipuri dance productions and cultural festivals, *Pung* drumming continues to bridge religious devotion with artistic expression. Performers often incorporate innovative rhythms while maintaining traditional structures, demonstrating the adaptability of this cultural practice. (Devi S. , 2023)

These findings are consistent with previous studies (Sharma K. , 2016), which highlight how *Pung* drumming enhances both religious and artistic experiences in Manipuri culture. The drum's rhythmic language not only enriches devotional practices but also strengthens communal bonds, preserving the region's cultural heritage.

3.3 Role in Social and Life Cycle Events

Beyond religious settings, *Pung* drumming plays an essential role in social gatherings, festivals, and life cycle ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. The rhythmic patterns of the drum communicate emotions and cultural narratives that are central to these events. For instance, joyful rhythms characterize weddings, where the beats of the *Pung* create an atmosphere of celebration and mark the auspiciousness of the occasion. Specific rhythms are chosen for various segments of the wedding, from the procession of the bride to the ceremonial exchanges, symbolizing the joy and importance of the union (Meitei, 2017).

In contrast, during funerals, the *Pung* assumes a somber role. The rhythms slow down, reflecting mourning and offering the community a collective outlet for grief. These somber beats accompany funeral processions, guiding participants through the emotional and ritualistic process of remembering the deceased (Sharma K. , 2016). The presence of the *Pung* in these significant

moments illustrates how the instrument adapts to different emotional contexts, reinforcing the bond between the individual, the community, and the shared cultural identity.

Krishnan (2018) asserts that traditional instruments like the *Pung* act as cultural markers that help maintain continuity across generations. By participating in these social and life cycle events, the *Pung* contributes to reinforcing communal ties, fostering emotional connections, and preserving cultural traditions. The rhythmic patterns of the *Pung* are not only learned by new generations but are also integral to ensuring the transmission of cultural values and stories. As such, the *Pung* serves as both a symbol and a vessel for cultural transmission, binding the community together through shared rituals.

Additionally, Rajkumari (2020) notes that the *Pung* drumming tradition has been crucial in breaking cultural barriers, especially in the context of gender, as more women have become involved in performing arts and traditional drumming. This evolving role further underscores the *Pung*'s importance in shaping social narratives and advancing cultural discourse.

3.4 Challenges and Preservation Efforts

Despite its deep cultural significance, the survival of *Pung* drumming faces several challenges. One of the primary concerns identified in the study is the declining interest among younger generations, who are increasingly drawn to contemporary music trends and global influences. As a result, the traditional practices associated with *Pung* drumming are at risk of being overshadowed by more popular, modern music styles. Furthermore, the commercialization of traditional arts has led to a shift in focus, where artistic expression is often driven by financial gain rather than cultural preservation. These trends contribute to a diminishing appreciation for the *Pung*'s role in cultural identity and heritage (Sharma K. , 2016).

Another major challenge is the limited opportunities for formal training in *Pung* drumming. While the instrument is passed down through informal means, such as community involvement and familial instruction, structured educational programs remain scarce. This gap in formal education poses a threat to the sustainability of the art form, as younger generations may not have access to comprehensive training that preserves the traditional methods of playing and understanding the drum's cultural significance.

Dr. W.M.H.G.U. Indika Tikiri Bandara Weerakoon

However, efforts to preserve *Pung* drumming are actively underway. Several cultural organizations, government initiatives, and community-driven programs have emerged to ensure the continuity of this important tradition. One key strategy involves the introduction of educational programs. Several schools in Manipur have incorporated *Pung* drumming into their cultural curricula, providing young learners with an opportunity to engage with this traditional art form in a structured setting. This initiative aims to instill a sense of pride and understanding of their cultural heritage among students (Devi L. , 2019).

Workshops and festivals also play an essential role in the preservation of *Pung* drumming. Annual *Sankirtana* festivals, which feature *Pung* performances, provide a platform for both seasoned drummers and new learners to showcase their skills, interact with experts, and deepen their connection to the tradition. These festivals, along with community-driven workshops, encourage youth participation and promote skill development, ensuring that the practice continues to thrive across generations.

In addition to these efforts, digital documentation has emerged as a powerful tool for preserving *Pung* drumming. Cultural organizations are creating digital archives that capture *Pung* performances, along with oral histories, ensuring that knowledge is stored for future generations. This initiative helps safeguard the intricate details of drumming techniques, the cultural narratives embedded in performances, and the broader context of *Pung* drumming within Manipuri culture (Rajkumari, 2020).

These preservation efforts are consistent with the observations of Devi (2019), who stressed the importance of integrating traditional arts into educational frameworks and community initiatives to ensure cultural sustainability. By combining formal education, community engagement, and modern technology, these efforts provide a holistic approach to preserving the rich heritage of *Pung* drumming for future generations.

3.5 Discussion and Interpretation

The results of this study highlight the multifaceted role of *Pung* drumming in Manipuri society, serving as a crucial bridge between religious devotion, artistic expression, and social cohesion. *Pung* drumming is deeply embedded in both religious rituals and community events, reflecting its enduring cultural value. In religious contexts, it is seen as a sacred instrument that facilitates communication with the divine, while in social settings, it plays a

significant role in reinforcing communal ties and cultural identity. Whether in weddings, funerals, or festivals, the rhythms of the *Pung* serve as a medium for expressing shared emotions and cultural narratives, making it a vital part of the community's social fabric (Meitei, 2017).

However, the challenges identified in the study underscore the need for proactive and holistic preservation strategies. The decline in interest among younger generations, commercialization of traditional arts, and limited formal training opportunities all contribute to the erosion of the cultural significance of *Pung* drumming. (Devi H. , 2024) To address these issues, it is essential to integrate *Pung* drumming into formal education systems, where it can be taught alongside other cultural and artistic subjects. Incorporating *Pung* drumming into curricula can not only preserve the art form but also provide younger generations with the tools to engage with and appreciate their cultural heritage. Additionally, promoting digital documentation of *Pung* performances, as well as offering financial support for artists, can help ensure the sustainability of this tradition. As Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest, cultural sustainability requires a collaborative approach that involves the combined efforts of practitioners, educators, and policymakers.

The study also revealed a significant generational divide in how *Pung* drumming is perceived. Elder practitioners view the art form as a spiritual and cultural obligation, a means of connecting with the divine and preserving tradition. In contrast, younger participants often see it as an optional art form, more of a cultural artifact than a living practice. This generational gap presents a critical challenge in preserving the relevance of *Pung* drumming. It suggests that educational approaches must be culturally responsive, adapting traditional practices to meet the needs and interests of contemporary youth. By making *Pung* drumming relevant to modern life and emphasizing its value beyond the ritual context, it may become a more appealing and meaningful practice for younger generations. As Rajkumari (2020) noted, integrating traditional arts into the broader cultural narrative is key to ensuring their continued vitality.

The findings of this study thus point to the importance of balancing tradition with innovation, ensuring that *Pung* drumming remains both a living tradition and an important part of Manipuri cultural identity.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Dr. W.M.H.G.U. Indika Tikiri Bandara Weerakoon

The study underscores the enduring cultural significance of *Pung* drumming in Manipuri society, reflecting the region's spiritual, social, and artistic ethos. As a vital component of religious rituals, dance traditions, and social gatherings, the *Pung* drum transcends its role as a musical instrument, serving as a symbol of cultural identity and communal harmony.

Findings revealed that *Pung* drumming remains integral to Vaishnava practices, particularly *Sankirtana*, where rhythmic patterns accompany devotional singing and dancing. It also plays a central role in classical dance forms such as the *Ras Lila*, enhancing both narrative expression and emotional depth. Beyond religious settings, the *Pung* drum accompanies life cycle events, festivals, and community celebrations, reinforcing social bonds and cultural continuity.

However, the study also highlighted challenges facing *Pung* drumming, including declining interest among younger generations, commercialization of traditional arts, and limited formal training opportunities. These challenges, if unaddressed, could threaten the sustainability of this cultural heritage.

Despite these obstacles, preservation efforts by cultural organizations, government initiatives, and community-driven programs demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding *Pung* drumming. The study concludes that through collaborative efforts involving practitioners, educators, policymakers, and the community, the cultural heritage of *Pung* drumming can be preserved and revitalized for future generations.

4.2 Recommendations

To address the challenges identified and promote the sustainable preservation of *Pung* drumming, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educational Programs:

- Integrate *Pung* drumming into school curriculums as part of cultural education.
- Establish community workshops and summer camps to teach *Pung* drumming to younger generations.
- Encourage intergenerational learning by pairing experienced drummers with students in mentorship programs.

2. Cultural Preservation Initiatives:

- Create digital archives and online platforms to document *Pung* performances, oral histories, and traditional rhythms.
- Organize annual *Pung* festivals and competitions to celebrate and promote the art form.
- Support research initiatives that explore the historical, cultural, and musical dimensions of *Pung* drumming.

3. Government and Institutional Support:

- Encourage government funding and grants for artists, cultural organizations, and educational institutions promoting *Pung* drumming.
- Collaborate with universities and cultural institutions to offer certification programs and academic courses on Manipuri music and drumming traditions.
- Promote *Pung* drumming through national and international cultural exchanges and festivals.

4. Community Engagement:

- Foster community-led initiatives, such as *Pung* clubs and cultural centers, to promote active participation.
- Encourage local media to highlight *Pung* performances and cultural stories to raise public awareness.
- Engage youth through social media campaigns and creative platforms that celebrate traditional arts.

5. Sustainable Preservation Strategies:

- Promote eco-friendly practices in the production of *Pung* drums, including sustainable sourcing of materials.
- Ensure that commercialization efforts respect cultural authenticity while promoting economic opportunities for artisans and performers.
- Establish collaborations between cultural practitioners, educators, and policymakers to create long-term preservation strategies.

5. Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this study. My heartfelt thanks go to the ***Pung* drumming practitioners, cultural historians, and community elders in Manipur** for sharing their invaluable knowledge, experiences, and insights. Their contributions provided the foundation for this research. I am also deeply grateful to the **Department of Dance and Music at Manipur University** and the **Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy** for their support and access to resources that enriched my understanding of Manipuri culture and traditional arts. Special thanks to my **research assistants**, who played a crucial role in the data collection process, and to the **institutions and organizations** that facilitated my fieldwork and interviews. Finally, I extend my appreciation to Faculty Members in the Department of Dance and Music at Manipur University and Manipur colleagues for their unwavering encouragement and support throughout this research journey.

6. Future Directions

While this study provided valuable insights into the socio-cultural significance of *Pung* drumming, future research could further explore the following areas:

- Comparative studies of *Pung* drumming with other traditional percussion instruments across India and Southeast Asia.
- Examination of how digital platforms and modern music collaborations can support the evolution of *Pung* drumming.
- Longitudinal studies assessing the effectiveness of educational programs and preservation initiatives over time.

References

Bhattacharya, S. (2013). *Sacred Soundscapes: The Role of Pung in Manipuri Rituals and Dance*. Kolkata: Eastern Publications.

Culture, M. o. (2020). *Preservation of intangible cultural heritage: report*. New Delhi: Government of India.

Devi, H. (2024, May 24). Pung Drumming. (I. Weerakoon, Interviewer)

Devi, L. (2018). *Cultural Practices in Manipur: A Historical Perspective*. Imphal: Eastern Publications.

Devi, L. (2019). *Preserving the rhythms: Challenges and opportunities in Manipuri traditional music*. Imphal: Cultural Studies Press.

Devi, L. (2023, December 20). Guru Shishya Parampara. (I. Weerakoon, Interviewer)

Devi, R. (2015). *Cultural significance of Manipuri Pung drumming*. Imphal: Manipur University Press.

Devi, S. (2023, December 18). Festival In Manipur. (I. Weerakoon, Interviewer)

Kshetrimayum, B. (2014). *Rhythms of devotion: The role of Pung in Manipuri culture*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Kshetrimayum, B. (2019). *Challenges and preservation of Manipuri performing arts*. Imphal: Cultural Research Institute.

Laishram, T. (2017). *The Ras Leela: Dance, music, and tradition in Manipur*. Kolkata: Eastern Book House.

Meitei, T. (2017). *The Role of Pung in Manipuri Classical Dance*. Imphal: Manipur University Press.

Rajkumari, S. (2020). *Women in Manipuri Performing Arts: Breaking Cultural Barriers*. Imphal: Heritage Publications.

Salgamuwa, W. (2022). *A comparative study of percussion Based on Sri Lankan Gataberaya and Manipuri Pung drum*. Manipur: Unpublish PhD thesis.

Sharma, H. (2016). *Gurushishya Parampara and the transmission of musical traditions in Manipur*. Imphal: Scholars' Press.

Sharma, K. (2016). *Sacred rhythms: The cultural and religious significance of Pung drumming*. New Delhi: Cultural Insights.

Singh, R. (2012). *Manipuri Traditional Arts and Their Societal Impact*. Guwahati: Northeast Cultural Studies.

Singh, T. (2024, July 24). Pund drumming. (I. Weerakoon, Interviewer)

UNESCO. (2013). *Nata Sankirtana: Ritual singing, drumming, and dancing of Manipur*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.