

International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage  
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## **COUNTRY REPORT: BANGLADESH**

### **Mechanism of Communities for Safeguarding of ICH**

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#### **Introduction**

From the geological and anthropological viewpoint, our country is a very old one. In the novel *Oitoyer Aronnok* written by Ridbeg in 3000B.C. we can see a country called Banga. Anthropologists think that this sea-going and riverine nation developed from a mixture of people of several nations. Bangladesh came into being on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1971 following a bloody war. Before that it was named Purba Pakistan, whose literature, cultures and mode of life comprised different styles. Thus, our culture has different characteristics. Not only that we inherited our own cultures from our older generation, which is our valuable treasure.

The country Bangladesh being situated between South and South-East Asia inherits a rich cultural heritage of colourful history of more than two millennia. With the identity of a nation born of the elements of its culture at various times, the government of Bangladesh with non-government organizations have been working hard for intangible cultural heritage through the globalization process. The past and present way and other important subjects have been incorporated to maintain this policy of the culture to safeguard our culture. Organizations are working to. The culture is the global specialty includes its past histories and reactions of every thing in the population of the country. The main reason for creating this specialty is the continuous consciousness of the people of this country.

The tradition and culture of Bangladesh is mainly connected with its land and people. Sometimes it's the substitute of others. The main reason for this is rural locality. Rural localities are the main bearer of our tradition and culture. The traditional life-style of all people of our country, their happiness, sorrows, music, environment, farmers sweat, plough, husking pedal, folk culture, behavior, believes, experience etc are included in our culture.

In **geometric** history of Bangladesh we can see, our localities were always crowded by foreigners. So we can tell that our many localities was created by foreign people, like “nigrobutu, austric, drabir, mongolio etc and other people helped in rising our nation and they were the main inhabitant in early Aryan race. Historians think that Aryans were first to come in Bangladesh, and then other nations came, principally among them Shok, Hun, Greek, Semit, Dutch, Olondaz, Mughol, Pathan and British. With the mixing of blood our cultures were also mixed and tookon the character of a mixed race..

The cultural folk traditions are mainly the following from:

- A. Loko shongskar, lokachar & lok bisshash.
- B. Folk literature, (Probad, probochon, riddles, etc)
- C. Loko nritto, lokgiti.
- D. Loko natto
- E. Loko baddo-jontros

With these folk cultures, not only can we find our cultures, traditions, and religious activities but also it focus on our national sensibilities.

First of all, in the folk songs how much love people in swamp land got for the loved person creates a song called “Vatialy”. The areas for this song are Mymensing, Hobygonj, Sunamgonj. On the other side, the dry and high areas like Rangpur, dinajpur got “Vaoaia” songs. This type of songs got moishal, rakhai, gariyal, mahut etc. We also have Jari, Sari and Baul songs which got wakefulness of all the religions. Apart from those we also got, Dhamail, Murshdi, Vashan, Bhajan, Kushan, Manik pির songs etc.

Secondly, folk theatre are basically created and acted based on the stories of folk life, such as-

1. With the Aryan gods and their Avatars written in the Ramayan and Mahabharat. Like, Ramayan, Shri Krishna’s act of praising, Padabali act of praising.
2. The gods described in mangal poems, mansamangal with their stories.
3. Stories of muslim saints, with them we got Manik pির gaan, Mather pির gaan, Jari gaan, Kobi gaan etc.
4. Songs of love, separation and non religious type like, Kichha gaan, Pala gaan, Gitika etc.
5. Some social act and laughter production like, Gomvira, Alkap, Shongjatra etc.

We also got some more cultures centering round the religion like, chaitra sonkranti, boishakhi utsab, nobanno, Muharram, punnosthan, rother mela, ras utsab, karam etc.

In our country we also find some aboriginal people who have their own cultures.

The ministry of culture of the government of Bangladesh has taken diverse necessary steps for saving our cultures and traditions. Many respectable persons and organizations of different metropolitan city are involved in this program

#### **BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF THEATER ARTS**

This organization works for the re-union of the fisherman’s of Putia in Chittagong, the port city of the country and also surrounded with natural beauty.

#### **PROSHIKA MANOBIK UNNOYON KENDRA**

This organization is working to protect the “Kushan Gaan” of Kurigram in Rangpur and ‘Shong’ in Tangail District. “Kushan Gaan” mainly describes the stories of Ramayan and Mahabharat. This song is disappearing for lack of new artists to act this type of songs and ‘Shang’ mainly based on social satire. Proshika searches for these artistes and also give training to others, by doing this they have composed the “Kushan Gaan” and “Shong” popular again.

#### **GRAMEEN BANK**

By giving financial help, Grameen Bank is restoring the abolishing crafts like, handicraft and “tat shilpo”. At present, grameen tat and grameen loj panno are very popular in foreign countries.

#### **BRAC & ARONG**

This organization is working for retrieve the clay art, “Tat shipo”, etc. They find these types of people and train them, also they train new people. Then they create new products and export them. For this now Arong is very famous worldwide.

### **KHULNA & RUPANTOR**

Rupantor is totally a non-government and non-profit organization. It works in Khulna for retrieving the historical “Pot gaan” and makes it famous and also spread it to the new generation. It mainly trains the new generation of the people involved with this culture. It also arranges shows of this art regularly. Pot gaan is generally a religion based story. Based on social story, many pictures are drawn and they are shown in front of people.

### **POLLI BAUL SHOMAJ UNNOYON SHONGSTHA**

This organization searches the “Baul”, and is spreading their life-style and art to our country and foreign countries as well.

### **BENGAL FOUNDATION**

This non-government organization was established 15 years ago in order to save and preserve cultural traditions. Its main work is to search for old and new artists to spread inside Bangladesh and improve their skills. Also fine arts, painting exhibition, audio, publication, documentation, drama development, & giving scholarship for cultural researches are included in its activity.

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides that, ‘The State shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, and so to foster and improve the national language, literature and the arts that all sections of the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture.’”

Country always works to save the cultural value of its own and also improve its language so that every type of person can participate to enrich the national culture.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted the following policies in accordance with the constitutions of the country.

1. To identify, protect, preserve and present the cultural traditions and heritage of the people.
2. To adopt measures for the safeguard against the disfigurement, damage or removal of monuments, objects or places of special artistic & historic importance or interests.

### **Conclusion**

It is undeniable that financial problems are the main cause for loss of the cultural heritage from our country. Cultures are mixed with our rural soul. People connected with these arts leave it for their livelihood. Also, natural distasters, such as flood, famine, cyclone, etc are the reasons for the loss of our arts.

With the change of time the living styles in our country are also changing. So some of our cultures are changed and some are disappearing. Save too intangible cultural heritage of our historical culture, the Government of Bangladesh along with other non-government organizations are working hard to preserve culture for our future generation. The past and present to maintain this policy of the culture with keeping safely of our culture these organizations are working.

The organizations that are working for this purpose are; Grameen bank, Brac, proshika manobik unnoyan kendra, Bengal foundation, Bulbul academy of fine arts, Chayanat, Nazrul academy, Rupantor, Losabau, Educational puppet development centre, Bangladesh institute of theatre arts, Polli baul shomaz unnoyon shongstha, Nrittayanchol, Bangladesh baul shomoti, Udichi, Bangladesh group theatre federation, Ulipur lok songit songothon, Vaoaia academy, Shejuti Parishad, Comilla tati shomaz, Shonglap-Comilla, Mansamangal theatre, Torun opera, Vashan

jatra dol, Shrimira shomproday, Bangladesh shanskritik academy etc. The organizations are told working in 63 districts to for saving our abolishing cultures.

The rules for culture are to mix with the heart and walk forward with the time. The culture of Bangladesh is also going with that path, to the road of eternity. Government of Bangladesh and some interested organizations have helped with this journey.