

Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-30.59.2023.00006

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Dhaka

District

Munshiganj

Upazila

Details Address

Geolocation(Latitude)

23.4583

Geolocation(Longitude)

90.5417

Community Category

Professionals

Community

Rural

Name of the Heritage, (as used by the community or group concerned)

Dhattri Biddya (Traditional Midwifery)

Short title of the Heritage, (preferably within 200 words)

Traditional child delivery system, falling under Domain 3 of Social Practices

Concerned Community(ies)/Group(s), (who recognize the element as part of their cultural heritage)

Physical location(s) of the element/how often it is practiced

Rural and urban Bangladesh

Short description of the Heritage, (preferably within 350 words)

Dhattri biddya, a traditional child delivery procedure performed by experienced women in Bangladeshi villages. These traditional birth attendants, known as "Dhattri" or midwives, play a vital role in providing reproductive healthcare and personal care to women in rural areas, where access to doctors and healthcare facilities is limited. Over 80% of rural and urban poor women in Bangladesh rely on the services provided by these midwives. They offer not only assistance during childbirth but also pre- and post-natal care, herbal treatments for gynecological issues, and care for infants. The Dais possess extensive knowledge of local biodiversity and utilize indigenous practices. Despite their invaluable

contributions, they are not officially recognized or appreciated by the government or modern healthcare systems. However, UBINIG, an organization, has formed a network of Dais and advocates for their recognition and support. The Dais themselves, mostly belonging to the poor class, are respected and supported by their communities. They seek to learn about modern health issues and adapt their practices accordingly. The recognition of Dais and their indigenous knowledge in the healthcare system is a crucial but often overlooked issue.

□ Domains of the Heritage (applicable fields)

- ☐ Oral Traditions and Expressions
- ☐ Performing Arts
- ☐ Social Customs and Traditions
- ☐ Knowledge and Practices related to Nature and Universe
- ☐ Traditional Craftsmanship
- ☐ Food

□ Section-2: Characteristics of the element

□ Practitioners(s)/performer(s) directly involved in the representation or practice of the Heritage (including roles, name, age, gender, social status, and/or professional category etc.)

Experienced woman practitioners are only involved in this profession. Documentation was made with the help of following community members:: 1. Mosammad Mukta Begam, Age 51 Gram-Tumchor, Dakghor- Bodortuni 8261, Hijla Upozila Barishal

□ Other tradition bearers (individuals/groups and their roles))

The midwife performs her duties with other elderly, married women of the family.

□ Language(s), register(s), speech level(s) involved

Local dialects of Bangla

□ Associated tangible elements used (if any)

Herbal medication, now mixed with use of allopathic medicine, if necessary.

□ How are women and people of other genders associated with this Heritage?

This is only performed by women midwives for pregnant women.

□ Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage

Normally the patient, or her family, contact the dhaima/daima before she enters the 2nd month of pregnancy. The Dhaima examines the patient regularly and takes care of the would-be mother, predicts the delivery time and finally completes the delivery at home.

□ Elements to which other customary practices or practices may be connected or accessed in any respect of the heritage (if any)

The delivery process is restricted to women only.

□ Modes of transmission to others in the community

Dhatribiddya is transmitted from one generation to another. The practitioner learnt from her Grandmother and mother. However, her daughter has not taken up dhattri bidya.

□ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

Govt of Bangladesh Midwifery Training Program: There was a reluctance to revisit the traditional birth attendants programme, especially after the WHO report that training traditional birth attendants alone did not help in decreasing maternal deaths.⁶ Instead, the government took the initiative in 2003 to retrain community-based female fieldworkers (family welfare assistants and female health assistants) in midwifery skills and identifying danger signs for referral. This cadre, who are already known at village level and accountable to their government supervisors, have been providing family planning methods, such as oral contraceptives and condoms, and advising on sanitation and preventive health measures. The training programme was designed through a consultative process with professionals from different

training institutions, such as the Azimpur Maternal and Child Health Training Institute and Institute of Child and Maternal Health at Matuail, the Bangladesh Nursing Council, the Obstetrics and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh, UNFPA and WHO. The six-month course is intensive and competency-based, and stresses both clinical and community practices (Dhattribidya)

□ Section-3: State of the element (viability) —

□ Threats to the enactment

Reliance on traditional midwifery

□ Enactment Threats Description

□ Threats to the transmission (if any)

Traditional midwifery is incorporated into Nursing & Midwifery Training by the Govt of Bangladesh. However, many communities still remain dependent on dhaimas. Knowledge of herbal medicine needs safeguarding.

□ Threat to associated tangible elements and resources (if any)

Threat to knowledge of herbal medicine.

□ Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)

Herbal medication is used and is cost-effective.

□ Have been taken any safeguarding measures to preserve this Heritage practices? (if any)

As Govt of Bangladesh has included traditional community practices within its Maternal Child Health programs, tradition knowledge is incorporated and safeguarded within these programs. However, there is need to document dhattri-bidya more in details.

□ Section-4: Data gathering/documentation, Consent and preparation of inventory entries —

□ Consent of community/group/individuals concerned for data collection with a view to inventorying

Dhaima Mukta Begum, aged 51 performed near 8000 normal deliveries.. +8801751652039

□ Restrictions on use of collected data, (if any)

Practitioner is only comfortable with women.

□ Section-5: Resource Person —

□ Data provider/Resource person (persons/groups, community representatives)

Tahmina Parven (Relative) Senior Teacher, Ramna Buddi Protibondhi School +8801716192089 Arthy Ahmed, Dancer and researcher.

□ Date of data collection

24-06-2020

□ Place(s) of data collection

Gram: Tumchor, Post Office: Bodortuni 8261, Hijla, Barishal

□ Section-6: Safeguarding techniques —

Existing safeguarding techniques adopted by the community for the safeguarding of the Heritage

Govt of Bangladesh is incorporating parts of this knowledge, within its training while a number of NGOs are recording dhatti bida and related knowledge of herbal medication. However, there is need for safeguarding the herbs needed for this.

Suggestions for safeguarding of the Heritage from the community

1. Document the techniques 2. Understand the benefits of herbal medication 3. Financial support for aging dai mas.

Section-7: References to literature, discography, audiovisual materials or archives

References to/in literature

Bibliography 1. George, Joby. 2020. "Safe motherhood in the time of Covid-19." The Daily Star, May 29. 2. Chowdhury, Samina. 2015. "Midwifery not a dream anymore in Bangladesh." Prothom Alo, May 11. 3. Ahmed, Tahera, and Jakaria. 2009. "Community-based skilled birth attendants in Bangladesh: attending deliveries at home." Reproductive Health Matters 17 (33): 45-50. 4. Rahman, M, A Rahman, F Mehrin, A Kawser, and AH Tushar. 2018. "Birth Practices Among the Rural Women: Facts & Reasons." AKMMC J 9 (1): 05-09. 5. UBINIG. 2011. Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Care (MNCH) Service. Accessed June 25, 2020.

[http://ubinig.org/index.php/home/showArticle/153/english/UBINIG/Maternal-Newborn-and-Child-Health-Care-\(MNCH\)-Service](http://ubinig.org/index.php/home/showArticle/153/english/UBINIG/Maternal-Newborn-and-Child-Health-Care-(MNCH)-Service).

6. BRAC. 2020. Improving Maternal, Neonatal and Child Survival. Accessed June 25, 2020.

<http://www.brac.net/program/health-nutrition-and-population/maternal-neonatal-and-child-health/improving-maternal-neonatal-and-child-survival/>.

Audiovisual materials or archives

Discography or archives

Section-8: Modalities for updating the information contained in the inventory entry

Data Compiler (persons/groups, including community representatives, who compiled the information)

Resource person will regularly help to update. Information can also be sought with related NGOs.

Date of Community Consent

19-06-2020

Consent of community/group/individuals concerned for data collection with a view to inventorying

Verbal consent from the practitioner, during COVID19, and photographed signature

Present Condition of Heritage

Threatened with extinction

Brief description of Present condition of the Heritage, (if any)

Section-9: Community suggestions

□ **Brief description of suggestions for safeguarding of the element by community members/experts/holders, (if any)**

Rural communities continue to rely to dhatti bidya but the herbal medication is not readily available.

□ **Restrictions on use of collected data, (if any).**

□ Section-10: Upload Document

Heritage Details Document



Heritage Images

