

Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-50.70.2023.00020

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Rajshahi

District

Ch. Nawabganj

Upazila

Details Address

Geolocation(Latitude)

24.741311

Geolocation(Longitude)

88.291207

Community Category

Artists

Community

Rural

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

Gombhira, folk dialogic performance

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

Gambhira is a popular folk performance of Rajshahi. It is a dialogue between two actors

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

Gombhira performances are centred around Chapai Nawabganj District in Bangladesh. The tradition is also popular in the nearby districts of Rajshahi and Naogaon.

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

Gambhira is a type of folk song popular in the northwestern region of Bangladesh. Gambhira songs are assumed to have originated from the worship of the god Shiva, who is also known as Gambhir. In ancient times, Gambhira used to be celebrated as puja (worship) only. In the medieval period, most Hindu communities celebrated the puja of Dharma Thakur (a popular god of the Hindus) on the last three days of the Bengali year; this came to be known as the Gajan of Shiva later on. In the past Shiva was imagined to be present at the performance. Gambhira is initially, Gambhira was of two

kinds: the primary gambhira and the narrative gambhira. The primary gambhira would address gods and goddesses and describe human joys and sorrows, and, sometimes, important events of the year. In the narrative gambhira, every character would represent a social problem. Gambhira songs originated among the Hindu community of Maldah in west bengal. After the creation of Pakistan, Chapai Nawabganj in rajshahi became the main centre of gambhira songs, which underwent major changes in theme and mode of presentation. Muslims became the custodians of this song and made it an integral part of their social life and their culture. Apart from Rajshahi, gambhira songs are also popular in Nawabganj and Naogaon. At present the main characters of a gambhira are a maternal grandfather and his grandson. The performance is structured as a dialogue, interspersed with songs. Both prose and verse are used for the dialogue. The gambhira reflects contemporary social problems through witty dialogue, songs, dances and jokes. Both the actors wear lubgi. The grey-bearded grandfather wears a mathal (straw hat) on his head and holds a stick in his hand. The grandson wears a torn jersey and has a gamchha (local checked towel) tied round his waist. In the past gambhira songs were sung in the measures of ektal, trital, dadra, khemta, kaharba etc. Today the tunes are influenced by songs from popular Bangla and Hindi movies. Kutubul Alam, Rakibuddin, Biren Ghosh and Mahbubul Alam of Nawabganj have made the gambhira song popular in Bangladesh by introducing new subjects and characters and interesting and witty dialogue.

☐ 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 —

☐ Practitioner(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.)

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

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

☐ Associated tangible elements used (if any)

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

☐ Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage

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

☐ Modes of transmission to others in the community

☐ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

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

□ Threats to the enactment

□ Enactment Threats Description

□ Threats to the transmission (if any)

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

□ Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)

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

□ 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

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

□ Section-5: Resource Person

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

□ Date of data collection

□ Place(s) of data collection

□ Section-6: Safeguarding techniques

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

□ Suggestions for safeguarding of the Heritage from the community

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

☐ **References to/in literature**

☐ **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)**

☐ **Date of Community Consent**

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

☐ **Present Condition of Heritage**

☐ **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)**

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

☐ **Section-10: Upload Document**



Heritage Images

