Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-45.72.2023.00062

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Mymensingh

District

Netrakona

Upazila

Details Address

Geolocation(Latitude)

Geolocation(Longitude)

Community Category

Artists

Community

Rural

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

Pathin Weaving of Hajong: Process and Technique

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

Pathin is a wrap-around skirt worn by the women of the Hajong tribe, who reside both in Bangladesh & India. Weaving of pathin is a unique craft which falls under ICH Domain 5.

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

Hajong are one of the indigenous communities living in Bangladesh. There is a very limited number of Hajong who have continued weaving 'pathin' in Haluaghat, Netrokona, Kalmakanda, Durgapur and Sunamganj areas of Bangladesh. At present, though, the rate of Pathin weaving is continuously declining. Most Bangladeshi Hajong do not weave 'pathin' now. They purchase 'pathin' from India.

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

Hajong are one of the distinct indigenous communities living in Bangladesh. They have their own cultural heritage. Hajong women wear their traditional dress ‘pathin’. The ‘pathin’ worn by Hajong women is a thick cloth woven in a

combination of yarns of different colors, three and a half cubits long and two and a half cubits wide. Hajong women wear 'pathin' as a garment wrapped around their chest . In winter, Hajong women wear a kind of belt called 'banang' when they plant saplings in aman rice fields. Yarn, weaving machine, khatni are used as raw materials for making 'pathin'. Hajong weavers buy white yarn from the market and soak it in water for two days. Then, they clean the yarn with chemicals. Next, two weavers put yarn on the bamboo and squeeze out the water. Now, water and paint are boiled together in a large pot. Starch is added to the yarn. Then, the yarn is dried in the sun and is cut with the help of a spinning wheel and finally it is used in the 'waist-loom'. They make songs and dances in Hajong language while weaving 'pathin'. Women in the upper class wear a long 'pathin' which falls down to the floor while women in the lower class wear a shorter 'pathin' reaches only uptp the ankle. The pathin is a horizontally striped, colourful, rectangular piece of cloth with alternate layers of different colours between red stripes and thick horizontal borders called chapa. The stripes of the Pathin are similar to skirts of other Himalayan tribes like Bodos, Tamangs and Bhutanese. The 'pathin' may be the primitive form of the Tibetan Pangden. Many scholars consider Hajongs to be primitive kacharies, who inhabited Hajo in ancient times. 'Pathins' are woven in traditional looms known as 'Sipni Bana' and 'Sal Bana'. It is operated with hands and does not require the use of feet.

Domains of the Heritage (applicable fields)

- [ ] Oral Traditions and Expressions
- [ ] Performing Arts
- [ ] Social Customs and Traditions
- [ ] Knowledge and Practices related to Nature and Universe
- [x] 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.)

We sought the help of Shephali Hajong of the Hajong community. She is a teacher. She is 35 years old and make a living by teaching. She is a married Hajong woman. Her mother used to weave pathin in her spare time. Though she cannot weave, Shephali has expressed an interest in learning Pathin weaving.

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

The Hajong community weaves pathins on their own looms and perform dances and songs in the Hajong language while weaving.

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

The words "Pathin" and "Bana" come from Sanskrit. They feel comfortable using "Bana" in Hajong language.Hajong is spoken by about 175,000 people in Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal in India, and in Mymensingh District in Bangladesh. It is considered an Indo-Aryan language with a Tibeto-Burman substrate. The old Hajong language (Khati Hajong) was a Tibeto-Burman language possibly related to Garo and Bodo, but the language got mixed with Assamese and Bengali. Hajong is written with the Latin and Assamese scripts in India. In Bangladesh the Bengali script is generally used.

Associated tangible elements used (if any)

The waist-loom/loin-loom/backstrap loom is used to weave the 'pathin'.The loin loom, common to hill tribes of the northeast, also referred to as back strap or body tension loom, is one of the oldest devices for weaving cloth. These age-old looms are simple in construction and easy of operation. They are cheap too. They have neither permanent fixtures nor heavy frames and so are easily portable. They can be attached to any fixed structure such as a wall or a tree. The weaver sits on the ground or floor, leans back against a wide leather/rubber strap which holds the threads taut. The weaver maintains the tension on the warps by pressing the foot on a firm support on the ground. The loin loom weaving is an extremely taxing and slow process and one cannot weave long at one go.

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

Hajong women have been weaving 'pathin' as part of their traditional cultural practice. Young Hajong women weave 'pathin' while sitting at leisure.

Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage

While Hajong may assist by making the looms and gathering raw material for weaving i.e. yarn, color, etc, division of labor is rarely observed. 'Pathin' weaving is an art of Hajong women.

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

There is no problem of access.

Modes of transmission to others in the community

The art of 'pathin' weaving is transmitted from one generation of women to another.

Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

Some NGOs are working towards safeguarding of Hajong cultural practices i.e. ACEEPH.

Section-3: State of the element (viability)

Threats to the enactment

Enactment Threats Description

Though Hajong of India have preserved, intact, the art of weaving 'pathing', it is almost lost within Hajong in Bangladesh, due to cheap procurement from India and lack of raw material in Bangladesh.

Threats to the transmission (if any)

Some opportunistic businessmen, engaged in cross-border trading of 'pathin' are creating reluctance among Hajong young women in towards learning the art of loin-weaving which is used to weave 'pathing'..

Threat to associated tangible elements and resources (if any)

Raw material for 'pathin' weaving i.e. yarn, color, are not available in Bangladesh. So, is the art of making the loin-loom.

Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)

The Hajong community, especially women have a unique relationship with loin-weaving. It provides them with a special identity. But for various reasons it is under threat today.

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

The ACEEPH organization has already been able to show documentaries on the Hajong community through social media, hold discussion meetings with members of the Hajong community every week. Hajong young women are being attracted to the art of loin-weaving. Hajong young people are expected to be attracted if Cultural Centers for Indigenous Communities, established by the Govt of Bangladesh, provide them with proper training. It would be a sight to behold on social media, such as YouTube, to attract Hajong young women to weave their own looms in their spare time.

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

Verbal consent was obtained during the conversation with Shephali Hajong of the Hajong community. She assured verifiability and gave information about 'pathin' with great pleasure. She signed a white paper on a very ordinary mobile phone and sent it to the ethnographer through Sakar Mustafa who heads ACEEPH.

Restrictions on use of collected data, (if any)

No restrictions were found.

Section-5: Resource Person

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

Information provided by Shephali Hajong, via Sakar Mustafa, Assistant Professor and Head of Department, Department of Folklore, National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh; and compiled by Mahfuza Arifa Nila; email: mahfuzaarifanila@gmail.com

Date of data collection

Place(s) of data collection

Mymensingh

Section-6: Safeguarding techniques

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

Creating awareness amongst Hajong women by NGOs and Govt of Bangladesh Cultural Centres for Indigenous Communities.

Suggestions for safeguarding of the Heritage from the community

1. Providing training, 2. Providing access to raw-material

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

References to/in literature

1) Newspapers. 2) Banglapedia. 3) Books 4) Interviews

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)

Mahfuza Arifa Nila of ACEEPH will be supporting the Hajong Community.

Date of Community Consent

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

Consent from Shephali Hajong.

Present Condition of Heritage

Threatened with extinction

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

Threatened with extinction

Section-9: Community suggestions

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

For revival of 'pathin' weaving, the Hajong community need 1) retraining, 2) loans from banks, 3) ensure round-the-clock electricity, and finally 3) government patronage to attract young Hajong women towards 'pathin' weaving, These measures will not only return a cultural practice unique to Hajong women, it will also help to modernize the 'pathin; weaving industry.

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

Due to COVID19 pandemic situation all data-collection was carried out via cell-phone ethnography.

Section-10: Upload Document

Heritage Details Document

PDF

Heritage Images

