

## Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-10.06.2023.00102

### Section-1: Identification of the element

#### Heritage Location

##### Division

Barishal

##### District

Barishal

##### Upazila

Barishal Sadar (Kotwali)

##### Details Address

##### Geolocation(Latitude)

22.7

##### Geolocation(Longitude)

90.366

##### Community Category

Religious

##### Community

Hindu

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

Shola Shilpakarmo

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

Sholashilpa is a unique artwork of Bengali tradition and folk life.

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

The hindu community of the southern part of Barishal district.

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

Barishal

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

Shola Craft is a folk craft of Bangladesh. The craftsmen use spongy stems of shola plants which grow in marshlands or paddy fields. Its scientific name is *Aeschymene aspera*. Shola plants have an important role to play in the natural and social environment of the country. There is a legend about the use of shola crafts. It is said that while going to wed Himalaya's daughter, Parvati, Shiva desired to wear a conical white hat. As the celestial artist Vishvakarma began looking for an appropriate material to make the hat, a kind of plant grew in the wetland as desired by Shiva. This was the shola or spongewood plant. But Visvakarma was used to working with only hard materials like stone or wood and not

with soft shola. Once again at Shiva's desire there appeared in the marsh a handsome youngman and he was named Malakar. All those who are now connected with the shola craft are thus known as malakars and belong to the Hindu community. Traditionally, the makers made a variety of hats, ornaments for the deities, background scenery for idol worships, temple decorations, garlands, toys and decorative pieces for homes with shola. Blacksmiths and carpenters are worshipers of Visvakarma but malakars worship Shiva as they believe they owe their existence to Shiva and therefore are obliged to worship him. Shola crown Almost the whole of the shola plant is its stem. Its bark is grey and inner body white. It grows to a height of 5-6 feet. The circumference of the stem is 2 to 3 inches long. There are two species of shola: kath shola and bhat shola. Kath shola is rather hard but bhat shola is light in weight and soft. Areas in Bangladesh famous for shola craft are Manikganj, Keraniganj of Dhaka, Munshiganj, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Maulvi Bazar, Habiganj, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Jessore, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Barisal. The area of old Dhaka where malakar craftsmen once lived became known as Malitola although there is not much evidence of the craft there these days. Instead quite a few craftsmen of the Shankhari Bazar area of the city are now famous for shola work. They are Prakash Sur, Ovi Sur and Tapan Nandi. Prakash Sur and Tapan Nandi are well-known for their delicate craftsmanship. They make a variety of shola products according to the demand of society. Tapan Nandi is deft in making ornaments for deities, their background scenes, and in designing their costumes. Tapan Nandi does most of the puja pandal decorations of the Shankhari Bazar area.

**□ 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))**

People of the Barishal

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

Bengali

**□ Associated tangible elements used (if any)**

With the help of shola, bangles, knife and glue, the art work is being made by the devotees.

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

Both male and female are involved in making Shola Craft.

**□ Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage**

Although both male and female are engaged in making Shola crafts, but male are seen to sell these in different fairs.

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

Shola's artwork is crucial in folk culture and folk art, particularly used by traditional religious people. It is used in decorating gods and goddesses, creating temple models, and depicting folk tales in watercolors. Hindus paint portraits of gods and goddesses on canvases during pujas. Shola crowns and garlands are also used in wedding ceremonies. The craft is also used by fishing communities for nets and home furnishings. Shola products are highly sought after in rural fairs.

**□ Modes of transmission to others in the community**

Community transmission

**☐ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)**

BCIC, Bangladesh National Museum, Bangladesh Folk Arts & Crafts Foundation

**☐ Section-3: State of the element (viability)**

**☐ Threats to the enactment**

Yes

**☐ Enactment Threats Description**

No preservation laws in the country.

**☐ Threats to the transmission (if any)**

Yes

**☐ Threat to associated tangible elements and resources (if any)**

This art is done using a type of plant like our native bush. And depending on the region, this plant is called Mali Shola and Bhat Shola. There was a time when the Sholar Hat was in vogue as an accessory to the dress of the police constables. Bangladesh is the land of thirteen festivals in twelve months. In our country, shola is propagated in water bodies and low-lying areas during the rainy season. But till now no cultivation of this herbaceous plant has started anywhere. Thus the trees are becoming less day by day.

**☐ Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)**

None

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

None

**☐ 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**

N/A

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

No

**☐ Section-5: Resource Person**

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

N/A

**☐ Date of data collection**

**☐ Place(s) of data collection**

Barishal

**☐ Section-6: Safeguarding techniques**

No safeguarding measures have been taken by the community.

Established local and international Markets. Provide fair cost for each item of Shola.

N/A

N/A

Yes

## Becoming less

Government initiative to sustain our various rural industries has not yet created a market for handicrafts. As a result, even though the country's only private handicraft institute has created a market with various artworks from Arong, the artists are not getting fair prices for their artworks.

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

## ▢ Section-10: Upload Document

### Heritage Details Document

