

Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-40.50.2023.00088

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Khulna

District

Kushtia

Upazila

Details Address

Geolocation(Latitude)

Geolocation(Longitude)

Community Category

Others

Community

Manasamangal Performers

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

Poddar Nachon/Lachon

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

This is a ritual performance which falls under the third ICH domain - Social practices, rituals and festive events

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

Poddar Nachon is usually presented across the country mostly in the districts of Kushtia. The artistes belong from different part of Kushtia district.

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

In rural Bangladesh with the downpour of the Monsoons comes the menace of snakes that spread a pall of fear. Thus, all over the countryside, amongst the marginalized communities, be they Muslim or Hindu, householders organize performative rituals to appease the mighty Goddess of Serpents, Manasa Devi. As the legend goes, she is the mind-born daughter of Shiva, whom the hapless Brahmin merchant Chand Saudagar refused to worship. Manasa retaliated by taking the life of Chand's youngest son Lokkhindor. Thus began the epic battle between Lokkhindor's newlywed bride

Behula, and the mighty Serpent Goddess. Popularly known as Poddar Nachon', or 'the Dance of Podda (from Padma, another name of Manasa)', these performances are in fact efficacious 'rituals' performed against a 'manot' or pledge, by a householder to appease Manasa in the hope of getting a boon from her, in the form of 'good health' for the household, or to overcome other such minor householder's obstacles. The performers, though popular village bards and actors, are all, additionally faith-healers, or 'ojhas' revered for their capacity to cure minor diseases with their wealth of knowledge about herbs and natural cure. The actors of this event - the 'ojha', the householder, the afflicted and the onlookers, are all Muslims, standing testimony to the assimilative and plural practices of rural Bangladesh, especially amongst the marginalized.

☐ 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.)

Of the many groups of Manasamangal performers, this resource person contacted one group from Kushtia comprising of: Md. Sherebul Islam (Team leader, Performer, Age-50) Md. Rezaul Haque Sholok (Performer, Age-53) Md. Ali Gayen, Md. Arif, Md. Janan, Md. Tarikul Islam, Md. Jafor Hussain, Md. Ujjal, Md. Shanot (Performers)

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

Villagers who make the pledge, or 'manot' and arrange the program. Also costume makers, musicians, stage and 'pandel' makers.

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

Bangla

☐ Associated tangible elements used (if any)

Instruments- Mandira, Kartal, Dhol Costume- Shari, Blouse, petticoat, Dhoti, wig Ritual objects such as painted terracota pots with Banana Leaves - symbolizing 'Manasa' Awning/canopy (?????????) to cover ritual space. Herbal medicine used by the faith-healer

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

Common people who pray to Manasa and pledge a performance if blessed with her boon are associated, as are all onlookers who also offer Prasad or bhog which refers to any material substance that is first offered to the deity, and then consumed (usually fruits, sweets, flowers). The process of offering is called naivedya or bhog. There is a deep symbolism and meaning associated with Prasad. Once accepted by the temple deity, the prasad is returned to the devotee, it has the deity's blessing residing within it.

☐ Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage

Householders make all arrangement of the space, usually in their courtyard; while the Manasamangal performers are responsible for the entire ritual performance.

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

These ritual performances are open to all.

☐ Modes of transmission to others in the community

The practice is, mostly, transmitted through observance.

☐ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

Entirely supported by each communities own resources.

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

□ Threats to the enactment

□ Enactment Threats Description

Poddar Nachon, and other performative rituals of Manasa usually take place during the Monsoons. This falls in the Gregorian months of July and August. As the entire month of August has been declared a month of mourning, local administrations discourage any rituals and festivities during this period. Added to this is a diminishing of faith in these rituals..

□ Threats to the transmission (if any)

Performances of female roles are by male actors dressed as females, known as 'chukri'. There now a subtle intolerance towards 'chukri' performer which discourages actors to learn these parts. Lastly, the economics of the performance is increasingly dismal. As it is, performance is an alternate profession, even for Master artistes, who are usually landless labour, masons, barbers, auto-drivers, etc.

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

Not significant.

□ Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)

The performances, though still popular, need to be recognized and documented, with some modality put in place for its conservation and transmission.

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

The departments of theatre of various universities in Bangladesh usually arrange intermittent interactions with the Manasamangal performers. However, no safeguarding measure has been initiated with the communities themselves.

□ 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

Consent form has been attached with this detailed entry.

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

Not applicable.

□ Section-5: Resource Person

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

a) Razaul Haque Sholok, Folk musician, Music Composer, Writer, Performer b) Md. Sherebul Islam, Team leader & Performer Collected by Zuairiyah Mouli, Dancer

□ Date of data collection

16-05-2020

□ Place(s) of data collection

Kushtia

Section-6: Safeguarding techniques

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

We will upload 4 Goal Approach Safeguarding Plan

Suggestions for safeguarding of the Heritage from the community

This too will be updated

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

References to/in literature

Mangal-Kavya (Bengali: মঙ্গলকাব্য; lit. "Poems of Benediction") is a group of Bengali religious texts, composed more or less between 13th and 18th centuries, notably consisting of narratives of indigenous deities of rural Bengal in the social scenario of the Middle Ages. The Mangal-Kavyas usually give prominence to a particular deity amalgamated with a Vedic or Hindu mythological god and the narratives are usually written in the form of verses. Manasa Mangal, Chandi Mangal and Dharma Mangal, the three major genus of Mangal-Kavya tradition include the portrayal of the magnitude of Manasa, Chandi and Dharmathakur respectively. They are considered the greatest among all the native divinities in Bengal.

Audiovisual materials or archives

Discography or archives

1, Sen, Dineshchandra. "CHAPTER III Currency of older forms of belief amongst the converts to Islam in their folk-literature." Sen, Rai Saheb Dineshchandra. The Folk Literature of Bengal. DELHI-110052: B.R. PUBLISHING CORPORATION, 1920. 81-97.

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

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

The Coalition for ICHpedia, Bangladesh, CIB), in collaboration with the community, will updateinforma

Date of Community Consent

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

Consent has been uploaded

Present Condition of Heritage

Becoming less

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

Becoming less

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

Consent Document



Heritage Details Document



Heritage Images

