

Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-30.35.2025.00121

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Dhaka

District

Gopalganj

Upazila

Gopalganj Sadar

Details Address

Village: Gimadanga, Union: Patgati, Upzila: Tungipara, District: Gopalganj

Geolocation(Latitude)

23.10315514

Geolocation(Longitude)

89.90731105

Community Category

Artists

Community

Rural

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

গোপালগঞ্জের ঐতিহ্যবাহী নৌকা তৈরী (Traditional Boat making in Gopalganj)

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

Traditional Boat Making of GopalganjTraditional Boat Making of Gopalganj

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

All community members, including Muslims and Hindus, are involved in the boat-making profession. There is no specific community or group in this profession. Those who work on making boats are usually referred to as boat makers or boat craftsmen.

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

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

The Gopalganj District of Bangladesh has a rich tradition of boats, reflecting its deep cultural and historical roots. With over 700 rivers and numerous oxbow lakes, boats symbolize more than transportation—they embody the nation's heritage. These boats vary in shapes and sizes, each tailored to specific needs along the country's waterways. The donga, a nimble wooden craft, excels in navigating narrow rivers and canals, accommodating passengers or small

amounts of cargo. In addition, the boats named Fenis or Mosha are used for taking care of the farmers' land, using it for the daily needs of the family, visiting the market, or for other related purposes. All these boats are generally 8 to 18 feet in length. Another prevalent type of boat in the region is called Talai. This type of boat is a little bigger, especially its bow. The specialty of using this boat is fishing or transporting cargo. This type of boat can carry cargo from 100 to 150 kg. Despite diverse designs, boats are pivotal to both culture and economy, representing centuries of craftsmanship and tradition in Gopalganj and across the country. They remain essential, connecting communities and sustaining livelihoods, a testament to Bangladesh's enduring relationship with its waterways.

☐ 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.)

Somir Biswash (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 38) Hironmoi Roy (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 40) Angat Mandal (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 30) Subir Mandal (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 41) Al Dahim (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 35) Khojan talukdar (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 32) Radwan Talukdar (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 36)

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

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

Bangla

☐ Associated tangible elements used (if any)

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

Only Male

☐ 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)

Access to all aspects of the boat-making workshops is open, and there are no customary practices governing access to the workshops. Visitors are welcome to explore the workshops. The boat makers generally work outdoors, but photographs of their paintings can be taken by asking for simple permission, as there are no customary restrictions on collecting books, newspaper reports, or pictures presented at foreign workshops.

☐ Modes of transmission to others in the community

Local boat craftsmen have explained that the skill of boat making is usually learned from a young age by observing family practices. In addition, expertise in this craft is developed through working with experienced craftsmen. The high demand for boat-making often inspires future generations to take up this traditional profession. Since there are no formal education or training programs, carpenter families play a crucial role in passing down the necessary techniques and material knowledge to the next generation, thus ensuring the preservation of this esteemed profession in Gopalganj.

☐ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

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

□ Threats to the enactment

No

□ Enactment Threats Description

□ Threats to the transmission (if any)

As the growth of this traditional craft is decreasing day by day, the new generation or anyone new does not want to join this profession. Due to the future of this profession being under threat, many people do not want to join this profession again, considering the increase in the price of raw materials, and the fact that it requires a lot of patience, talent, artistic knowledge, and laborious work.

□ 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

Data were collected with free and prior consent from the concerned community (Written Consent Letter)

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

There is no restriction on using the data from the community.

□ Section-5: Resource Person —

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

Somir Biswash (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 38) Hironmoi Roy (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 40) Angat Mandal (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 30) Subir Mandal (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 41) Al Dahim (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 35) Khojan talukdar (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 32) Radwan Talukdar (Boatmaker, Male, Age: 36)

□ Date of data collection

19-03-2024

□ Place(s) of data collection

Village: Gimadanga, Union: Patgati, Upazila: Tungipara, District: Gopalganj

□ 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

Engaging with local boat builders underscores their anticipation of government support to make the profession more appealing to the new generation, which will help advance the industry. Boat Market or Hut: Boat markets used to be held in this area, but they are no longer operational due to the costs of transporting the boats, paying subscriptions to the hut, and other discouraging factors for boat makers. Therefore, they have requested the government to reopen boat huts in the region and ensure that boatmakers can participate without hindrance. Soft Loan Scheme: The government can announce an easy bank loan scheme for local banks to support the saree industry. This will ensure that no boatmaker abandons their craftsmanship due to a lack of funds and seeks another profession. Local boat makers demand that the bank interest rate for these loans should be below 5%. Renovation of canals: Gopalganj has many rivers and canals, but they are sometimes unusable due to lack of maintenance. The government should address these issues to increase the use of eco-friendly boats and encourage new generations to join the boat-building profession. Boat Exhibition: A regional boat exhibition is a celebration of the region's boating heritage, deeply rooted in the ancient culture of our country. The recognition of this heritage will increase nationally and internationally, appreciated by current and future generations. Boat Fair: Organizing various cultural festivals and traditional boat fairs regionally will showcase different types of boats, giving a fresh perspective to this profession and tradition.

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

□ References to/in literature

1. Bolstad, T. and E.G. Jansen. 1997. Sailing against the wind boats and boatmen of Bangladesh. The University Press Limited, Dhaka. 158 pp. 2. Jansen, E.G.; Dolman, A.J.; Jerve, A.M. and N. Rahman. 1994. The country boats of Bangladesh social and economic development and decision-making in inland water transport. The University Press Limited, Dhaka. xx + 279 pp. 3. Kvam, R.; Palmer, C. and N. Rahman. 1991. Navigation the winds of change – mechanization of the country boats in Bangladesh. BIWTA/NOAMI, Dhaka. p. 27. 4. Palmer, C. 1992. Renewed prosperity for the country boats of Bangladesh. Energy Policy, UK. Vol. 20/1. pp. 54-61. 5. Rahman, N. and M. Hossain. Bangladesh country boat owner's association. Country Boat Bulletin, NOAMI, Dhaka. No. 3. p. 4. 6. Taher, M.A. 2014. Boats of Bangladesh. NRB Scholars Publishers, Dhaka. 171 pp.

□ Audiovisual materials or archives

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=gopalganj+boat+making+v=gO1myH1rjRg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO1myH1rjRg>

□ 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)

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□ Date of Community Consent

19-03-2024

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

Data were collected by free and prior consent from the concern community (Written Consent Letter)

□ Present Condition of Heritage

Still maintaining

□ 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).

N/A

Section-10: Upload Document

Consent Document



Heritage Details Document



Heritage Images



Heritage Video

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