
Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh and Steps for Future Safeguarding

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Abstract: This paper presents a new emerging knowledge of the Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Bangladesh along with an initiative to raise consciousness for preservation of the heritages. At present we have four nominated elements for the 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' by UNESCO. Subsequently, UNESCO nominated the 'historic 7th March speech' delineated by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Memory of the World International Register which is a list of documents having universal significance to ensure preservation for those items. Another two items are under process for nomination. Besides these, we have many other cultural traditions which could be placed on the nomination list of UNESCO for safeguarding the ICH. In this paper, some element will discuss as a prospective ICH for UNESCO nomination as well as some proposal for future safeguarding. To preserve and promote our ICH, both governmental initiative and public awareness is necessary for preservation and development of this newly emerging sector.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Art History, Copyright patent, Cultural Safeguarding, UNESCO, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

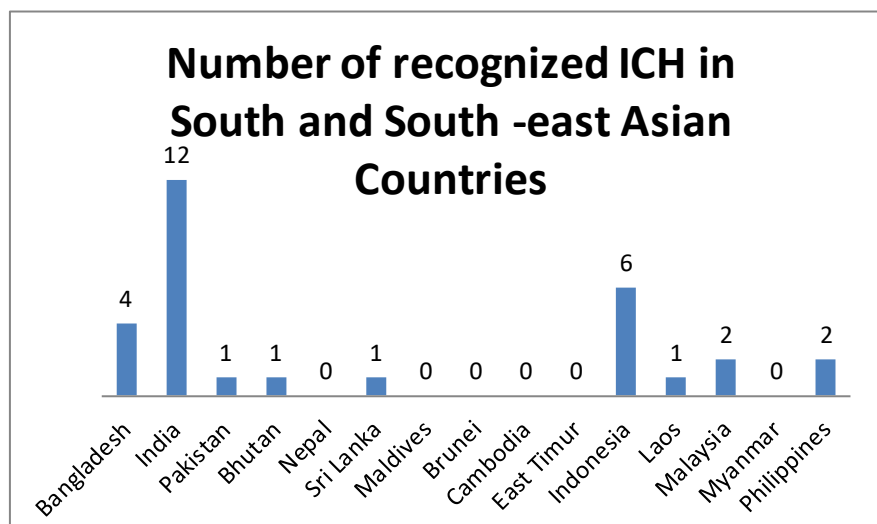
The idea of 'Intangible heritage' is a relatively unexplored concept to the people of Bangladesh and an important element of cultural identity of Bangladeshi people. From many centuries of its history, Bangladesh saw different types of indigenous, religious and tribal cultural heritage of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslims and Christians. From the mid-3rd century BCE, the rule of Maurya, Gupta, Pala, Sen, Mughal, and British brought much diversity in life-style, custom, culture, religion, beliefs and language. A Multi-cultural aspect based on multi-religious phenomena is the chief components of Bengali culture. And this is the main source of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Bangladesh.

Up to 2018, UNESCO nominated ICH Lists have contained 508 elements in total corresponding to 122 countries. Among the South and South East Asian group, India has possessed the highest number of recognized elements of ICH. The Urgent Safeguarding List now has 35 elements [7].

Bangladesh is a member state of UNESCO from 27 October, 1972. UNESCO asked the member nations to ratify the convention, and this job Bangladesh did duly in 2009. However, although Dhaka ratifies the convention, there was hardly any effort made to highlight all other intangible cultural heritages of Bangladesh. In recent days, Bangladesh is taking step to inventory own ICH. A joint work of UNESCO Dhaka Office and ‘Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy’ was organized a five-day long workshop on community-based intangible cultural heritage inventoried which was held from 24 - 28 September 2017. This workshop was a part of a series of capacity-building trainings aiming to strengthening the national institutional capacity of Bangladesh to carry out the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH [8].

This research work is an initiative to present our Intangible Cultural Heritage to the heritage lovers of the world and propose some steps for keep those ICH. At present, we have listed 4 elements as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity; theses are: (1) Baul Song, (2) Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving (3) Mongal Shovajatra on Pahela Baishakh and (4) Traditional Art of Shital Pati Weaving of Sylhet. In October 30, 2017, we have achieved another nomination from UNESCO; that is ‘7-March Historic Speech’ by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was the Father of our present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as well as considered as the Father of Bangladeshi Nation. His great speech showed us the path of Independence. UNESCO recognizes this historic 7- March Speech as part of the world’s documentary heritage.

Graph 1: Number of Nominated ICH of the South and South-east Asia



2. Rational of the Research

Present research aimed to present a discussion on three major aspects; scenario of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Bangladesh; a proposal has some new item for the future nomination and; some steps to keep these heritages. This research is a pertinent initiative to promote the value of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh. In other way, this study can be a first step to raise awareness for urgent safeguarding of some proposed ICH of Bangladesh. For data collection secondary sources has studied for data collection; such

as, books, journal papers, reputed Newspaper, UNESCO websites and many other sources. This research addresses a key question: what steps should follow to safeguard our own heritage from extinction? If we want to represent our intangible cultural heritages and can keep our traditional and valuable identity then one of the best ways to do this is placed ICH in the UNESCO list. As well as this study is a preliminary work to list Bangladeshi heritages and this could help future researchers to prepare national inventory.

3. Recognized Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh Nominated by UNESCO

3.1 Baul Song: Traditional song of Bangladesh

In 2008, UNESCO has declared a Bangladeshi song as an ICH, which is known as 'Baul Song'. In rural Bangladesh, some mystic minstrels are living by singing devotional songs and they are known as 'Baul'. The Baul's are first appeared in Bengali literature around 15th century. The Baul songs has based on spiritual liberation. They sing and dances with using a musical instrument named 'ektara' (a single-stringed instrument); some Baul's uses 'dotara' (two-stringed instrument) and a drum named 'dubki'.

The lyrics of the Baul songs has based on contemporary relevance of rural Bangladesh. Some prominent Baul singers are: Kari Amir Uddin Ahmed, Abdur Rahman Bayati, Shyam Sundar Baishnab, Shah Abdul Karim, and Kangalini Sufia. Mazharul Islam writes in his book that, 'most Baul songs have as their inner meaning the playful and sweet relation that binds the creator to the created' [9].

Baul's are religiously, socially and mentally independent from any kind of boundaries. Baul's are not identified with any religion or any caste system, or any temples or sacred places. Mimlu Sen wrote in his book named 'Baulsphere' that, 'Baul belonged to a society conducted by Brahmins. And, in spite of all his singing against caste and religious prejudice, in life, he often had to give in to the law' [10]. The mystic lives of Baul's are admired by general people and even Rabindranath Tagore's (Nobel Prize laureate and National poet of India) compositions had influenced by these Baul songs by their distinctive aesthetic qualities. An article of his on Baul songs appeared in the Bharati in 1883 when Tagor was 22 years old. He said, later on, that his acquaintance with Baul songs helped him to discover his own poetic gifts and to realize that he was a Baul [11]. However, now a day, Baul singers are facing critical situation of sustainability.

3.2 Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving: Traditional Handloom Product

The UNESCO inscribed the 'Traditional art of Jamdani weaving' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the 8th session which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in December 2013 [12]. Jamdani is a surviving variety of Muslin group which are identifies as an ancient cloth of Bengali women and characterized by geometric or floral designs. According to Pravina Shukla, this is Bengali Jamdani and home district of this exclusive cloth was Dhaka in Bangladesh. The writer also said that, jamdani sari has appreciated for the skill of the weaver, his hand-eye coordination in creating floating motifs that are evenly spaced and steady in scale, distribution and design. A slight imperfection or 'mistake', reminds the beholder that this sari has made completely by hand, by a highly skilled human being which adds to appreciation' [13]. Usually Jamdani is refers for sari, but other types for cloth are also available which has made from Jamdani; Salowar-Kamiz, Scarves, or Kurta etc. [14]. The Jamdani production has patronized by Mughal emperors. Under British colonialism, the Bengali Jamdani and Muslin industries rapidly declined due to

colonial import policies which favoring industrially manufactured textiles. In recent years, production of Jamdani has saw a revival in Bangladesh [15].

According the Chandra Shekhar Saha, a Bangladeshi textile expert, Jamdani is unique because it has distinctive and consistent use of geometric patterns that inspired by Iranian motifs and opacity of the pattern woven into the transparent base mesh together during the weaving process in such a way as to make the Jamdani look supremely delicate, fine and beautiful. Though apparently the motifs used in Jamdani have an abstract look are actually the creative and geometric transformations of nature's elements such as creepers, leaves, flowers, animals etc. [16]. Although we have the nomination from UNESCO, we should have initiated a detailed research on Jamdani's history, development, used motif as well as the Jamdani weaver's story. This traditional element as well as the weaving site and method could be an asset of our cultural tourism sector also.

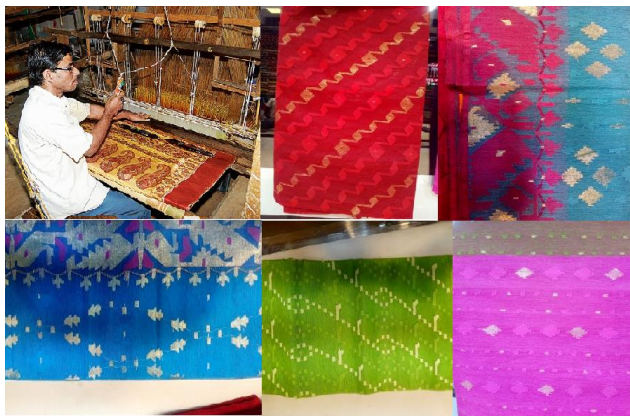


Fig. 2: Different types of Jamdani Motifs

Source: S.K Faisal Ahmed and Rifat Amin

3.3 Mongol Shovajatra on Pahela Baishakh: a vibrant and colorful procession

A unique element of our Bangladeshi culture named 'Mangal Shobhajatra on Pahela Baishakh' has been inscribed in UNESCO's 'Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' in 2016. Every year students of Fine Arts Faculty, University of Dhaka are organizing a colorful procession which is known as 'Mongol Shovajatra' for celebrating Bengali New Year's Day. According to history, a community cultural organization, 'Charupith' initiated 'Mangal Shobhajatra' in 1985 and this procession continues its popularity among all Bangladeshi people. The festival has celebrated with processions, fairs with colorful indigenous items, and get-together of family and friends. The procession showcasing the traditional themes and motifs carried by local participants wearing traditional dresses spontaneously joining to celebrate the first day of Bengali New Year [17].

'Mongol' means good wishing and 'Shovajatra' means procession. Bengali New Years are known as 'Pahela Boishakh'; 'Pahela' means first and 'Boishakh' is the first month of the Bengali calendar. This procession is a part of celebrating the first day of Boishakh month and it is opens for public. With the sun rising of that special day, the festival starts with Rabindranath Tagor's song at Ramna, nearby place of University of Dhaka, organized by a prominent cultural organization named 'Chhayanoout'.

3.4 Traditional Art of Shitol Pati Weaving of Sylhet: Handcrafted mat

Traditional Art of 'Shitol Pati' Weaving of Sylhet' is nominated by the Inter-Governmental Committee of ICH in

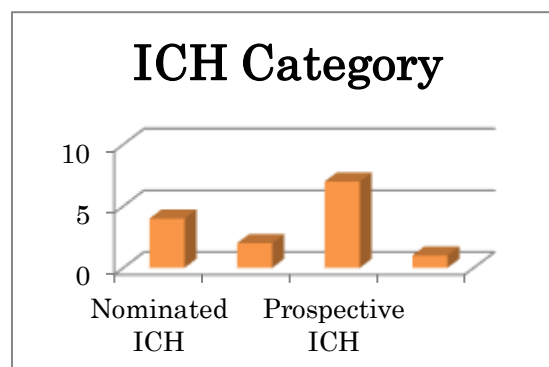
2017 [18]. ‘Shitol Pati’ is a handicraft mat, made by weaving strips of the green cane locally known as ‘Murta’ (*Schumannianthus dichotomus*) in city of Sylhet in northeastern Bangladesh. Sylhet region characterized by river valleys and low-lying marshy land which offers a natural habitat for Murta plant, the basic raw material for ‘Shitol Pati’. Although Murta plant is the best, ‘Shitol Pati’ could be made from bamboo, hogla, reed and palm leave as well.

‘Shitol Pati’, literally meaning ‘cool mat’, earned its name from the cold comfort it offers in the tropical weather of Bangladesh. Visually it is a flat and rectangular sheet which could rolled up to put away. When spread on floor or bed, its upper surface appears glossy and smooth while the inner surface is rough. The people all over Bangladesh use it as sitting mat bedspreads or praying mat and size of ‘Shitol Pati’ varies so. The techniques of ‘Shitol Pati’ weaving have transmitted through the families of crafts people, from mother to daughter and father to son, thereby ensuring continuity of the craft from generation to generation. Traditionally made for sitting or lying, but the use of good quality ‘Shitol Pati’ in the interior decoration industry is increasing. The use of the ethnic motif of ‘Shitol Pati’ by top range fashion designers and book illustrators had enhanced the cultural value of the element.

3.5 7– March Historic Address: great speech of the Father of Nation

The great ‘7-March speech’ was nominated for enlisted in the ‘Memory of the World International Register’ during IAC’s meeting from 24 to 27 October 2017. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) is the peak body to tell UNESCO on the planning and implementation of the choice program. This speech is one of the memorable speeches that inspired history. It was a 19-minute speech that Father of Nation ‘Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’ delivered and we believe that this speech has created a nation called ‘Bangladeshi’. Father of the Nation ‘Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’ invited the freedom-loving Bengalis on March-7 in 1971 in his fiery speech to wage a decisive struggle against the Pakistani rulers. It ignited the revolutionary spirit of the people of Bangladesh and this spirit remained alive until we won independence on 16 December 1971. It is one of the 21 great speeches of the 20th century [19]. This special Historic speech should nominate as the ‘National Speech of the Father of Nation’.

Graph 2: Category of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh



4. Proposed Item of Intangible Cultural Heritage to UNESCO

We have two proposed elements to UNESCO for nomination; that is 'The Rickshaw and Rickshaw painting in Dhaka' which proposed in 2014 and listed as on-going nomination for 2018 and 'Nakhshi Kantha' which proposed but denied for nomination.

4.1 The Rikshaw and Rikshaw Painting in Dhaka: a human-propelled transport

A file submitted to the UNESCO in the name 'Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka' for inscription in Representative List. The file is pending by the intergovernmental committee (2014). The rickshaw, a human-propelled transport on three wheels, is an outstanding feature of Dhaka city and another city of Bangladesh. Rickshaw craftsmanship has been highly renowned for its traditional process of fashioning the rickshaw by hand. Dhaka city's rickshaw painting is the most enthralling representation of transport art in the world [20]. The word 'rickshaw' originates from the three Japanese word 'jinn' (human), 'riki' (power or force) and 'sha' means vehicle. So, 'jinrikisha' covered the meaning of human propelled transport. We can see paintings on two portions in a rickshaw; on the plastic hood which used as a cover for passengers and on the lower backboard. The theme for these paintings has diversified; story from religious myth, contemporary cinema artist, daily social phenomenon, even image of foreign national figures is sometime painted in these rickshaws. The rickshaw painting is a hereditary work in which master painter usually pass their knowledge and skills to their pupils and close relatives.

In Bangladesh, rickshaw has introduced from Calcutta. It said that Rickshaw have reached Chattogram from Myanmar in 1919 but did not spread out to Dhaka and other cities of Bangladesh from Chattogram. Around 1930, jute exporters from Europe lived in Narayanganj near Dhaka and Netrokona near Mymensingh district who need some suitable transport for their easy movement and that times horse carriage, palanquins and city-canal boats were their main transport. So, foreign exporters had first imported rickshaw from Calcutta in 1938 for their personal use which got much curiosity among the local people of Dhaka. In 1941, Dhaka city had only 37 rickshaws and 181 rickshaws in 1947. Before 1947, Dhaka was a district town, which has a population of 62,469 only according to 1951 census. But in 1998, the city's population grew over 8 million and the number of registered rickshaws in the city was 112,572. The number of rickshaws in all other cities of Bangladesh in that year was 274,265 and in all villages 91,040. It is a popular guess that the total number of rickshaws in the city is at least two and a half times that of the registered ones and so, the city had at least 280,000 rickshaws in 2000 [21]. According to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), there are 79,554 licensed rickshaws in Dhaka city. But the number of rickshaws has estimated 1.1 million [22].

4.2 Nakhshi Kantha: Embroidered Quilt: 'Nakhshi Kantha' is the traditional handicraft of our country. Bengali word 'nakshi' means design. In village, it is most commonly done with old cloth and threads, although new cotton and silk cloth are using for embroidery in present days. The details of the embroidery work are very intricate and each piece can take months to work on depending on the size. The History of 'Nakshi Kantha' has rooted in our history and culture. The origin of folk art is almost lost and even after repeated search we could not set up the exact life of a particular 'Kantha' kept in different Museums [23].

Women are making this from generation to generation by their magical hand with high imagination and it is closely related with our culture, marriage ceremony, and affection for the new-born, prosperity, happiness, sorrows, beauty of nature and village lifestyle. There are different sizes based on need like single, double, king size. The design is now crossed its border and is using in the fashion world designing, urban and international market and fashion show in female sarees and dresses, mats, ornaments, bed cover, photo frame etc. like embroidered appliqué silk saree, wax dye and hand painted cloths. Unfortunately, due to the lack of proper presentation as an ICH, this wonderful creation of our village women did not get inscription from UNESCO. ‘Nakshi Kantha’ can get UNESCO inscription if it has included in the national inventory and be submitted properly by ICH expert.



Fig. 3: A women artist is busy with Nakhshi Kantha weaving

Source: Kazi Nasrin Siddiqa

5. Feasible Item for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh

5.1 Traditional Art of Painting: Our Bangladeshi cultural has enriched with variety of painted and decorated elements. Lists of Bangladeshi traditional painted items are present in the Table 1.

Table 1: Traditional Art of Painting in Bangladesh

Category	Item name	Place of popularity	Flourishing era
Painted vase	Sakher Hadi	Basantapur, Rajshahi district, Dhaka, Sonargaon at Narayanganj distric	Approximately 800 years old
Ritual painted motif	Alpana	Common in all district	Pre-Aryan period (c. 1500-1200 BCE)
Hanging scroll with Painted motifs	Pata Painting	Dhaka, Noakhali, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Munshiganj	12 th century-late 19 th century

5.1a Sakher Hadi: This colorful living tradition of Bangladesh is one kind of traditional earthen pot called ‘Sakher hadi’ at Basantapur in Rajshahi district in the northern part of Bangladesh. This unique item of our culture has used for wedding and other festive occasions. The ‘Sakher hadi’ has painted in red, blue, green and black on yellow-colored pots. It has painted with the image of fish, combs, mirrors, birds, half-blossomed lotus, daldam (a kind of aquatic grass) and floral creepers. The traditional art of painting the ‘Sakher hadi’ is highly traditional, being handed down from generation to generation for many centuries. Bangladesh is a country of religious coalescence and we are enjoying many religious festive all over the year. The ‘sakher hadi’ has sold mostly on the occasions of religious festivals like Rathajatra (Hindu festive), Durga Puja (Hindu festive), Eid-ul-Fitr (Muslim festive), Eid ul-Azha (Muslim festive), and Muharram (Muslim Shia festive). Detailed work could help this element for inclusion in the national inventory and inscription by UNESCO in future.



Fig. 4: The ‘Sakher hadi’, *Source: Kazi Nasrin Siddiqua*

5.1b Alpana: ‘Alpana’ is a kind of painting or motif of folk art especially Hindu women folk who decorated yard of houses and walls with their religious and social imagination. In Bangladesh at present Muslims also draw ‘Alpana’ on different occasions such as marriage ceremony and other sociocultural and religious festivals. Bangladeshi women are also draw ‘Alpana’ in their hand in different festivals. Every year, the Shaheed Minar in Dhaka and roads leading to it has decorated with ‘Alpana’ paintings which is the part of the memory of our International Mother Language Day on 21 February. Though ‘Alpana’ is the culture of Hindu religion and culture of other countries like India, Nepal but we have already achieved some unique purpose of this design; on the eve of Bangla New Year 1419 (2012), five eminent artists coordinated the 350,000 square feet motif (World’s largest) representing the folk culture of Bangladesh. The inclusion of ‘Alpana’ art in the national inventory will help in preservation of this traditional art.

5.1c Pattachrita: Pata Painting or ‘pattachitra’ a traditional art form of scroll painting, characterized by religious and social motifs and imageries. The word ‘pata’ has derived from the Sanskrit word ‘patta’ which means ‘piece of cloth’. Pata or ‘pot’ as pronounced in Bengali means a woven surface, a paper or wooden panel on which painting has done. The artists who do this kind of works are popularly known as ‘patua’; but they are also

known as 'chitrakar', which literary means picture makers [24]. This traditional element has originated and being active from 12th century to late 19th century and gained popularity in Bangladesh and India. In Bangladesh, one very famous pata painting named 'Gazir Pata' is very traditional and Shudir Acharya of Mun'shiganj district was a noted 'patua' for Gazir pata. As many of the pata artist have shifted to other lucrative professions and this traditional art faced a prominent threat from the growing urbanization so proper care of preservation is essential.

5.2 Traditional Art of Lost-Wax casting in imagery at Dhamrai in Dhaka

The traditional art of Metal casting by lost-wax method at Dhamrai area celebrates the diversity and unity of creativity in modern Bangladesh. This tradition goes back to the Pala Dynasty dated 800-1100 century and became extinct in the early thirteenth 13th century and revived in the 16th century but did not flourished in the territory of present Bangladesh that time.

The revival of this ICH in present Bangladesh is a fascinating story. After the Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, an energetic young Muslim of Dhamrai area realized that the Bengalis, having attained their freedom, would become more conscious of their heritage in art and culture in the secular atmosphere of the new-born country. His name was Musharraf Hussain. Musharraf thought of creating such icons as would be worthy of collection by art lovers. Svaksmi Gopal Bonik, a Hindu man, became his partner. These two men, a Muslim and a Hindu, turned Dhamrai area into a prolific center of Metal sculpture by producing Hindu, Buddhist and Jain images based on the mythological traditions. They preferred to create works to imitation of Pala metal sculptures illustrated in published books [25]. We should immediately register this cultural element in the national inventory of ICH and inscription by UNESCO will contribute to the preservation and development of the art work as well as the artist.

5.3 Traditional Art of Weaving

5.3a Nakshi Pakha: traditional 'Nakshi Pakha' is a decorative hand fan usually made by village women with natural materials like bamboo, cane, palm leaves, sponge wood, and flax colorful shares (for making borders) and painted attractively with colorful designs. To decorate the 'Nakshi Pakha', a variety of natural and geometric motifs has used. Famous folklore sentences are also added for extra attraction. In summer time, this item has gained its demand. This traditional element could include in the national inventory for immediate safeguarding as one of our prospective ICH.

5.3b Sataranji: 'Sataranji' is a special hand-loomed and woven product from Rangpur region that has been a very unique handicraft of Bangladesh. Because of low benefit, lack of raw materials, transport facility problem, paucity of capital etc. is the main causes that 'Sataranji' artists are leaving this occupation. This type of handicraft has no institutional framework and done only by experienced person. This very attractive and colorful handicraft is also used to make seat cover, bed sheet and wall mat for interior decoration of houses or even extra-large sizes has produced to cover a place of big public gathering to hold meeting or music festivals. This tradition of 'Sataranji' weaving has started before mid-19th century. Local information said that Rangpur was a leading weaving center during the Mughul period. In present days, 'Sataranji' has used to make from manifold creative product like ladies' bag, coin purse, and table mat. In order to develop and promote this folk craft, the government is undertaking a project to set a 'Sataranji Village'. The Government will invest around 10 million

Taka to set up the village, which will include 116 weaver families from Nishbetganj area [26].

The socio-economic standard of the ‘Sataranji’ workers can increase if we can place this item as an important asset of our ICH by considering its weaving pattern and tradition. As well as, if the government give help to solve the capital and raw material problem, then this prospectus cultural item could be an asset.

5.4 Traditional Festivals

In Bangladesh, we used a common saying that Bangladeshi’s have celebrated 13 festivals in 12 months (*baro mashe tero parbon*). Festivals have always linked with the socio-economic development of the country because purchasing capacity are rising gradually. Lists of Bangladeshi festivals which have celebrated with national holiday (except indigenous and non-indigenous) are present in the Table 2.

Table 2: List of Traditional Festivals of Bangladesh

Festive Category	Festive Name		Celebrate season/day	Type of Occasion
Religious	Muslim festivals	Eid-ul-Fitr	On the 1 st day of Shawwal month of the lunar Islamic calendar.	Festival of breaking the fast.
		Eid-ul Azha	On the 10 th day of Dhu al-Hijjah month of the Islamic calendar.	Festival of the sacrifice.
		Ahura	On the 10 th day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar.	ritual for Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the last prophet Muhammad, was martyred in the Battle of Karbala.
		Eid-e-Meeladun - Nabi	The Birth of the last Prophet.	12 th Rabi’al-awwal, the 3 rd month in the Islamic Calendar.
		Shah-e-Baraat	On the night between 14 and 15 Sha’ban-the 8 th months of Islamic calendar.	When Allah may forgive sinners.
	Hindu festivals	Durga Puja	On the month of September-October in the Gregorian Calendar.	Pays homage to the Hindu goddess Durga.
		Krishna Janmashtami	August/September of the Gregorian Calendar.	Celebration of the birth of Hindu deity Krishna.
		Kali Puja	New moon day of the Bengali month Kartik.	Dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali.
		Saraswati Puja	On the 5 th day of the Hindu luni-solar calendar month of Magha, or late January or February of the Gregorian	Dedicated to Goddess Saraswati who is the deity of knowledge, language, music and all arts.

			calendar.	
	Christian festivals	Charismas Day	On 25 December of the Gregorian calendar	Birth of Jesus Christ.
	Buddhist festivals	Buddha Purnima	On the month of April or May of the Gregorian calendar	Birth of the Prince Siddhartha Gautama.
National	International Mother Language Day/Shahid Dibosh/ Martyrs Day		21 st February	To commemorate Bengali Language movement and the martyrs of the movement on 21 February every year.
	Victory Day		16 th December	To commemorate the victory of Bangladeshi people over the Pakistani forces.
	Independence Day		25 th March	Declaration of Independence from Pakistan.
	Martyred Intellectual Day		14 th December	To commemorate the intellectuals who were killed by Pakistani forces and their collaborators during the 1971 Liberation War.
Indigenous	Pohela Falgun		On the 1 st day of Bengali calendar (Usually falls on the 13 th February of Gregorian Calendar).	Celebrated with colorful dress specially Saree and traditional snakes.
	Borsho Boron in Pohela Baishakh		On the 1 st day of the Bengali calendar and summer festival.	To commemorate the indigenous heritage of Bangladeshi people, this festival is celebrated with colorful procession, singing, fairs with traditional food.
	Nabanna Utshab		On the first day of the Agrahayan (Bengali month) the first day of harvesting.	Celebrated with traditional dance, local cuisine, and music.
	Boi-sa-bi		New year festival	Three/five days colorful celebration with new dress, special vegetable dish preparation, playing traditional games etc.
Non-indigenous	Valentine day		On the month of February, day 14, of the Gregorian calendar.	To commemorate the affection of love, sincerity, dignity and faith, it celebrates especially among the young generation.

	Book Fair of International Mother Language Day or Omor Ekushe Granthamela	On the whole month of February of the Gregorian calendar.	National book fair of Bangladesh.
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Some festivals mentioned in this list have possessed very special features that should place in the national inventory for future preservation. These proposed elements are:

5.4a Nabanno Utshab: ‘Naba’ meaning new and ‘Anna’ means grain, so it is the theme of new grain festive to make sure good crop and healthy cattle. We have many other festivals which have linkage with harvesting. Celebration of this festival in different areas and ethnic groups should show and research work could be performed on it; which help these festivals to inclusion in the national inventory of ICH.

Table 3: Harvesting related tribal festivals of Bangladesh

Festive name	Ethnic group	Related religion	Celebrating place in Bangladesh	Celebrating season
Soharay	Santals	Worship of Marang Buru	Rajshahi	Winter
Mailukma	Usui/Uchoi	Buddhist	Bandarban, Rangamati	Winter
Wangalla & Agalmaka	Garo	Christian	Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sunamganj, Sylher, and Gazipur	Winter
Chhiachhat –ply	Mru/Mrucha/Murong	Theravada Buddhism	Chattrogram hill tracts	December-February

5.4b Boi-Sa-Bi: A Traditional Festival of Indigenous people:

It is a New Year festival organized by the tribal community of Chattrogram hill tracts of Bangladesh. One of the joyous displays of the mosaic diversity of Chattrogram is the colorful three days festival named ‘Boi-Sa-Bi’. The word ‘Boisabi’ is acronyms from various tribal festivals; such as, Tripura tribe called this festival as ‘Boishuk’; Marma tribe called it ‘Sangrai’; and Chakma tribe named it ‘Biju’. All the tribal groups have their own cultural heritage and each and every part of their festival should consider as the intangible cultural heritage and need proper initiative for safeguarding before extinction [27].

5.4c Borsho Boron in Pohela Baishakh: literally means ‘Celebrating the first day of Bengali New Year’. This tradition had started in the year 1967 and except 1971 followed in every year to celebrate the Bengali New Year. ‘Pohela Baishakh’ has celebrated with grandeur and colors in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh. The celebration started with Rabindranath Tagore’s song ‘Esho he Baishakh’ (welcome the first month of Bengali New Year) by a leading Music Institute ‘Chhayanout’. This festive could gain a new momentum if this has included in the ICH national inventory of Bangladesh.

5.4d Mother Language Day or Omor Ekushe: Literally means the day of February 21 of every year. ‘Ekushe’ or February 21 is a memorable day for Bangladeshi Nation. This special day has celebrated every year in the

memory of Bengali language movement of 1952. Shaheed Minar is a monument dedicated to the martyrs of the Bangla Language Movement which reached its climax on 21 February 1952. There is no other nation like Bangladeshi people who has dedicated their lives for language. The inclusion of this event in the national inventory of ICH or nominated by UNESCO as a Bangladeshi ICH will definitely promote our cultural diversity.

5.4e Book Fair of International Mother Language Day or Omor Ekushe Granthamela:

‘Omor Ekushe Granthamela’ is a month-long event that lasts until the last day of February every year. The hallmarks of ‘Omor Ekushe Granthamela’ are quite visible: a) it is a celebration of the nation’s talented, imaginative and creative writing community; b) the publishers are the exhibitors of a wide range of books; c) the venue, which is at the heart of Dhaka city, wears a dazzling look; d) the entire venue is free from smoking and polythene; e) access to ‘Omor Ekushe Granthamela’ is free. ‘Omor Ekushe Granthamela’ began in February 1973 and the original name of the book fair was ‘Boimela’. Since then, this book fair, (longest in the world), has become one of the most noticeable expressions of the post-1971 cultural awakening [28]. Its significance in the context of Ekushe is so imperative that it has now been called ‘Omor Ekushe Granthamela’. This very special book fair of Bangladesh should place in the list of UNESCO world heritage list.

5.4f Victory Day in Dhaka: On 16 December 1971, the Pakistan Armed forces surrendered at Dhaka after a 9-month War of Liberation. The ‘16 December’ thus became Victory Day of Bangladesh [29]. Every year we celebrate that ‘16 December’ with honor in our National Memorial at Savar near capital Dhaka. This very special day should take place in the national inventory and /or inscription by UNESCO as an ICH of Bangladesh. If this element could include in the UNESCO list, then it will give to the strong presence as a national event and will raise awareness of its importance at the local, national and international levels.



Fig. 5: Celebrating Victory Day at National Memorial at Savar

5.5 Traditional designed food: Like our colorful festival, we have some exclusive foods and related places where those foods are exhibited for sale. In this paper only few elements of designed food have discussed and some very special items has listed in a table 4.

5.5a Iftar of Chawk Bazar, Old Dhaka: The month of fasting, holy Ramadan observes passionately by the people of Bangladesh. ‘Iftar’ means the evening meal with which the Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. The age-old Chawk Bazar area of old Dhaka is the Iftar hub and people from all parts of the city come here to bought the delicious ‘iftar’ for their Ramadan fasting. This food zone offers Ramadan special delicious food which arrived by the Nawab of Dhaka during the British Era. These specialists have learnt recipes from

their ancestors and are continuing generation after generation and now a part of our very old tradition with wonderful believe and feelings.

5.5b Panta-Elish of Pohela Boishakh: Traditional food item of different countries have enlisted on the list of the UNESCO ICH. ‘The Mediterranean diet’, ‘the traditional Mexican cuisine’ and the Japanese dietary culture of ‘Washoku’ are just some examples of this ICH list [30]. One of the traditional food items of Bengali New Year is ‘Panta-Elish of Pohela Boishakh’ which could be also enlisted as an ICH item. Early in the morning of Pohela Boishakh or first day of Bengali New year, people usually attend the ‘Mongol Shovajatra’ wearing traditional dresses. People also enjoy the music festival arranged by ‘Chaayanout’, and have the dish called ‘Panta Elish’ as their lunch. ‘Panta Elish’ is a kind of dish with soft rice and hilsa fish with fried vegetable, smashed potato, lemon, chili and raw onion. This food item and the serving style could be identified as Bengali traditional culture so that it could gain more popularity.

5.5c Nakshi Pitha: Decorative cakes, named ‘Nakshi Pitha’ are made by shaping pounded rice dough into various designs. Traditional motifs for ‘Nakshi Pitha’ are geometric patterns, wheels, betel leaf, flowers in bloom, fish, birds etc. ‘Nakshi Pitha’ are more popular in Dhaka and Mymensingh and are especially made for guests at weddings [31].

5.5d Bakarkhani: For 400 years, old Dhaka has been a significant center for ‘Bakarkhani’, which enriches the cuisine of Dhaka. ‘Bakarkhani’ is one kind of thick bread sweet with crispy texture. Layered, thin and crispy, it is almost biscuit-like with a hard crust and it melts in the mouth with each bite. The making of ‘Bakarkhani’ needs time and patience. The traditional knowledge and artistry related to ‘Bakarkhani’ making have transmitted from generation to generation. Like this item, there is also another traditional food item in Armenia named ‘Lavash’, nominated as ICH in 2014. So, inclusion of ‘Bakarkhani’ in the national inventory and/or inscription by UNESCO will definitely strengthen the heritage of old Dhaka and will have an impact on the bearers and practitioners who use their traditional knowledge and skills as an example of their social and cultural identity.

Table 4: Some prospective Food items for the national inventory as ICH

Name of Food	Region	Specialty
Kotkoti	Mahasthangarh, Bogura district	150 years old heritage sweet snacks
Kacha Golla	Natore	150 years old heritage sweetmeat
Padmar Elish	Districts beside the river Padma	Unique taste
Panta-Elish	Traditional food both popular in city and village	Delicious in taste and unique in decoration
Rashmalai	Cumilla	Unique recipe and taste
Doi (Sweet Curd)	Sherpur, Bogura	100 years old food
Satkara (<i>Citrus macroptera</i>)	Sylhet	Eaten as a vegetable with beef

Jamai Pitha	Cumilla	Special design served for new bride and groom
Hazir Biryani	old Dhaka	Historic recipe & traditional taste

5.6 Traditional Entertainment: From the ancient time, we have possessed many interesting game, myth and theater as an entertainment and those are in vulnerable condition at present. A list of vulnerable items which could be nominated as ICH of Bangladesh has presented in the Table 5.

Table 5: List of prospective Traditional Entertainment for the national inventory as ICH

Category	Name & Place of popularity	Nature of Entertainment
Entertainment	Lathi Khela (Stick fight), Kushtia district	Traditional martial art, Two person's stick game
	Jobbarer Boli Khela, Chattogram district	150 years old traditional form of wrestling
	Nouka Baich (boat race), Mymensingh, Pabna and Dhaka is famous for Straight-back narrow timber boats sport, Sarangi type boat is common in Sylhet, Cumilla and Brahmonbaria; Sampan is common in Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Feni and Noakhali	200 years old traditional dragon-boat style rowing sport, consist of 7-100 person.
	Puthi Path, (ancient manuscript reciting), written in Bengali script (Sylheti Nagari, Devanagari and Arabic script).	Constructive entertainment and educational theme.
	Jatra Pala, famous in Barisal district; although it's performed in other cities also.	350 years old folk drama combined of acting, song, dance and music. The use of loud noises and lights features a dramatic presentation on the giant stage.
	Traditional Bioscope, in different cities.	It is a projector used for showing picture films.

5.6a Lathi Khela or stick fighting: A famous traditional stick fighting practiced in village area of Bangladesh especially in Kushtia district. The number of women players is also increasing now besides male. But day by day, young generation is losing interest in this traditional game. To avoid extinction of this own heritage of ours and for further promotion, necessary step should take.

5.6b Nouka Baich or Boat Race: This element is one of the most traditional forms of Bangladeshi entertainment sector. There are some rules for this boat race festival; such as, the competition should consist of 25 - 100 members in each team and motor engine boats have prohibited. An interesting point should mention that in every boat there has a leader who has to continuously sing songs and rhymes to motivate the team. Normally these races

are held in big river channels and nearby villagers take part for the pride of their own areas. This local entertainment or traditional item could raise our cultural tourism value. The only work to do is raising awareness about traditional value and national identity.



Fig. 6: Nouka Baich or Boat Race in Bangladesh

5.6c Puthi Path: reading of old Bangla manuscript: A senior person read ‘Puthi’ for his audience who are fond of listening to mythological fairy story and the reader’s mystic voice of storytelling. Sometimes these stories could be based on rural village events which convey the lesson of education. The pages of a ‘Puthi’ could be leaves, sheets of wood or old papers. Usually, they have written on one side and wrapped with a string. It is an emblematic representation of our social life that connects people with their existing traditions and still recites with the same fervor. Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad had a special research interest in Muslim contribution to Bengali Literature in the medieval period. He collected ‘Puthi’s. The Bangiya Sahitya Parisad (Bengali Literature Institute) published his catalog of Bengali manuscripts titled ‘Bangala Prachin Puthir Bivaran’ in two volumes in 1920-21. The Bengali Department of the University of Dhaka published a catalog of the manuscripts preserved in the University Library under the title ‘Puthi Parichiti’ [32]. After his work we have not taken any other initiative to research on it but it is the time to save ‘Puthi’ Path as our own cultural heritage. Just like ‘Puthi’, there is an element in Lebanese folk poetry, named ‘Zajal’ which was inscribed on the list of UNESCO in 2014.

5.6d Jatra Pala: folk theater: ‘Jatra’ is an open-air folk theater based on ancient epics and current sociopolitical as well as an important form of entertainment, especially in rural society in the not-too-distant past. There are acts, songs, dances and comic displays in a ‘Jatra’ performance. Normally, a ‘Jatra troupe’ consists of 50-60 persons, including actors and actresses, dancers, singers, musicians, technicians, managers, cooks, servants etc. Generally, ‘Jatra troupes’ rehearse from the month of July to September and travel from place to place on a Hindu festival called ‘Durga Puja’ [33].

Due to the easy access to other forms of modern entertainment, ‘Jatra’ performers have become almost jobless now a days. Government, in recent times, has been patronizing some of this folk art to propagate social awareness, especially family planning themes [34]. If ‘Jatra’ could place in the national inventory of ICH and given much attention the performers will get a platform to keep their virtues alive and can transmitted the knowledge and skills to the next generations. This element has placed in the UNESCO for the inscription (Jatra traditional performing arts 2015) but due to lack of proper field-work, research and expertise in writing the proposal, ‘Jatra’ was failed to get nomination. If it has submitted with proper research and following ICH expert

recommendations, then this valuable stage play will be able to get inscription from UNESCO and this precious form of rural entertainment could be safeguarded.

5.6e Traditional Bioscope: It can call ‘travelling movie theatre’. A Bioscope man has operated his collection of photos; such as, famous places of the world, beautiful flowers, religious monument, scenery of Dhaka, movie actor and actress, and many other photos. When there was no or very limited entertainment of television and cinema, Bioscope was a very huge source of entertainment for children. Pictures come one after another and by seeing through the pockets 4 to 5 children can enjoy the short show of still photo movie. Due to the easy access of lots of entertainment devices now-a-days, Bioscope is going extinct. If this part has included in the national inventory of ICH, it will be safeguarded and the tradition will stay alive.

5.7 Traditional Songs:

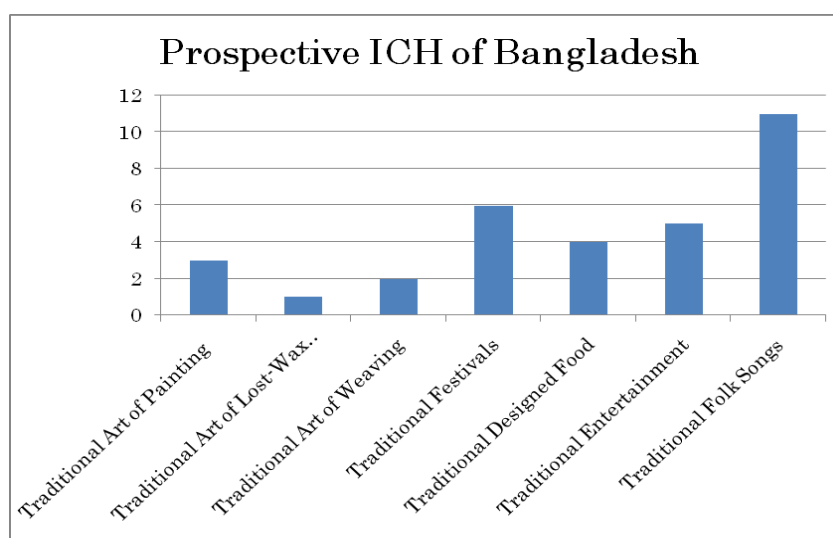
The folk music is the identity of our indigenous taste, which is blended with the philosophy of the society; from upper class aristocrat society to general village people. One of our folk song, ‘Baul’ is nominated for the Representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Its subgenre is known as ‘Lalon geeti’. There are variety of folk songs composed by our Bengali composer; some renowned composers are, Lalon Shah, Hason Raja, Kangal Harinath, Romesh Shill, Abbas Uddin, Shah Abdul Karim, Abdur Rahman Boyati, Sufi Shadhok Saidur Rahman Boyati and many unknown anonymous lyricists. It’s true that, we haven't had the pleasure to listening original singers, because the folk songs have deformed from its state. Late legend Abbasuddin Ahmed, the king of folk songs -- collected many songs, brought them to Calcutta and convinced HMV to record them, about 60 years ago. There was a time during the 1950s and 1960s when folk music festivals were held every year in Dhaka for several days and original folk songs were presented by the singers who came from different parts of the country. Folk singers have naturally fallen on hard days while folk songs are sidelined by the electronic media and rarely presented on prime time [35]. In recent time, the folk songs are gaining popularity among the young generation and rising the intension for preservation of the original songs.

Table 6: Some special prospective traditional folk song to include in national inventory as ICH

Song type	Region	Specialty
Bhawaiya	Northern Bangladesh	Spiritual as well as human relation of love.
Bhatiyali	Mymensingh and Sylhet	Navigational song
Bhandari	Chattogram	Devotional song
Murshidi	Nearly all regions of Bangladesh	Religious/ devotional folk song
Jari gaan	Mymensingh	Musical battle between two group which related with legends of Muslim heroes.
Sari gaan	South-eastern lowlands of Bangladesh/locally known as Bhati area	Lower Marshy land of Sylhet & Mymensingh
Pala gaan	Jenaidah	Story telling through songs to raise awareness on social issues
Dhamail	Sylhet region	Women folk song/playing during marriage

		ceremony
Gazir gaan	Faridpur, Noakhali, Chattogram, Sylhet	Performed for blessing received or wished for.
Gombhira	Chapai Nawabganj	Discussing a topic to raise social awareness; for example, negative effect of teenage marriage, Family planning issues, local superstitions etc.
Dhuya Gaan	Faridpur, Pabana, Jessore, Dhaka	Mysterious theme, human body mystery, social injustice.

Graph 2: Prospective ICH of Bangladesh



6. Steps for Conserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

This paper is trying to document the inscribed, proposed and prospective Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh in terms of regional history and social transformation. Beside of this, if UNESCO nominated an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) then a good reflection on the cultural and tourism industry can visible, and a significant economic development in that respected area can be rise. Many of our traditional and religious festivals could be nominated as Intangible Cultural heritage as those are celebration of unity as well as the symbol of brotherhood and strong relation of Bangladeshi people.

There are three criteria where ICH could nominate by UNESCO; (a) List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding; (b) Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity; (c) Register of Good Safeguarding Practices [36]. At present we have 4 items which has nominated in the Representation List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. But we have many ICH items which are in vulnerable condition due to proper support and general consideration. Many of our traditional songs are now in the way of extinction; Jari- Sari- Bhatiali, Bhawaiya, Kavigaan, Murshidi, Marfati, Ghambhira and many more. These traditional songs could be saved by nominate them on the 'List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding'. Proper research and an informative proposal for nomination are necessary in this regard. Some social festivals and commemorative day have possessed a special emotion in our Bangladeshi culture;

‘Mother Language Day’ or ‘Omor Ekushe’, ‘Victory Day’, and ‘Panta-Elish of Pohela Boishakh’, these three components could be enlisted in the ‘Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’. Our Mother Language Day or Omor Ekushe has a glorious history of 66 years which we celebrate every year with proper respect and tearful remembrance. We celebrate the Victory Day of our Independence War for last 50 years with joy as well as tears. The Bangladeshi people are very friendly and harmonious attitude; which motivate them to attend in the New Year festival including ‘Panta-Elish of Pohela Boishakh’. This cultural trend should enlist as a Register of good safeguarding Practices.

Each and every ICH handed down by one generation to the next and ultimately become an unparalleled, highly valuable asset for all. We should think seriously about our skills, crafts, values, language, tradition, knowledge and need to recognize the importance. Some steps that should take for safeguarding our rich cultural heritage are state below:

1. We should promote our workforce and technical knowledge about ICH.
2. We should open an academic Institution as Director General of Bangla Academy proposed to make a separate ‘department of folklore and ICH’ at the institute of Fine Arts of University of Dhaka. As a result, our students can gather basic knowledge of ICH and its safeguarding.
3. A strong committee should form with experts of all related sides and with Ministry and UNESCO Commission.
4. For any particular heritage local experts, practitioners and bearers should involved to get correct information and to understand real history and cultural practice. Extensive field work needed on all ICH to confirm their cultural identity in country and global perspective. For Example, due to its importance, 7-March Historic Speech should include in our national curriculum so that our students of younger generation could understand this historic speech and realize the vibrant sprit of the Father of Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
5. A List of ICH in ‘Need of Urgent Safeguarding’ should prepare immediately, so that inscription of such heritage on the List could propose in near future.
6. A List of our ICH should publish as a Register of good safeguarding Practices and this could be a proposal for UNESCO nomination in near future.
7. Proper presentation and respect for cultural heritage of any locality is very important for increasing scope and richness in future.
8. Elements or properties that can considered as prospective heritage should focused in presentation and public exhibition.
9. A proper inventory list of ICH is mandatory now from Cultural Ministry along with a national committee.
10. We need urgent safeguarding of the traditional songs as soon as possible. At present, “Song Copyright patent” is a must do the project for our traditional songs. By this process we could earn a good amount of money also. Now a day, melody of ‘Lalon giti’ and ‘Baul Gaan’ can be found in many western fusion songs. We could not able to secure these song originalities without Copyright patent.

11. Careful attention of all the cultural features, nature and current conditions of properties will be required to preserve and promotion of our ICH. For the protection and promotion of ICH, those should assign as Cultural Properties by the experts and administrators.
12. Independent Administrative Institution, Research Institute and cell can form and we can seek help from Japan as Japan took the first initiative for their Intangible Cultural Heritage. We can take help from other foreign experts and institutions and directly from UNESCO for the support for research, workshop, training, exhibition, presentation and promotion.
13. Intergenerational sharing is a strong tool for safeguarding ICH. Communities can take measure to connect cultural leaders with youth for sharing and practicing values and customs.

In this way people of all ages and races will be aware of safeguarding it as a duty. A nice bonding should keep up with other nations to recognize our heritage globally. All of the ICH may not recognize internationally or UNESCO, even those should protect and promote locally for the sake of our future generation. Classes and co-curricular activities on traditional heritage and culture can introduced interestingly for the school students. We have to keep it in mind that ICH always faces challenges and obstacles by industrial changes, diversification of values and lack of aesthetic thinking. For that reason, proper protection measure could take in time based on good practices found in the rest of the world.

7. Conclusion

The primary focus of this research paper is to find some very special Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh as well as raise perception for urgent safeguarding of some of those heritages. This paper also suggested some ways by which our Intangible Cultural Heritages could survive for the future generation. The collected data from secondary source was analysis and reached a conclusion that, promotion of skilled workers, a proper inventory of Bangladeshi ICH, Copyright patent of some of the items; a separate institute for cultural heritage research as well as awareness of ICH safeguarding in governmental sector and public realm could help to survive our ICH. The main purpose of the research is to create a platform for nominate some prominent element as 'Intangible cultural heritage' of Bangladesh which has based on concrete evidence of historical facts and cultural identity in the history of Sub-continent as well as prepare an authentic document for future research. We should aware of our historical roots and create a connection between our older citizen and younger generations. We can promote the values of our Intangible Cultural Heritage by celebrating ICH with ceremonies and festivals, passing knowledge and skills from tradition bearers to descendants, encouraging for further development and exploring the potential of ICH as a resource.

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How to cite this article: Dilruba Sharmin, Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh and Steps for Future Safeguarding, Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech. 3(2): 07-30, 2021.