

*UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and  
Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*

**Quadrennial Periodic Report on Measures to Protect  
And Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**

Submitted by **BANGLADESH**

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## **Executive Summary**

Bangladesh has ratified the UNESCO Convention 2005 on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in 2007. Bangladesh is a unique example of multicultural country where along with the 98% Bengali population there are at least 45 small ethnic groups who possess different cultures like their own language, food habit, dress, music etc.

In the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh it is clarified that the State will safeguard the right of practice and development of all cultural trends of all the people in its territory regardless of caste, religion, origin, colour, gender, etc.

Bangladesh has been working on protection and promotion of Cultural diversity for long through different activities and programs. A cultural policy in this regard was also approved in 2006. Under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs there are several departments such as Department of Archaeology and Museum, National Archives of Bangladesh, Department of Public Library etc. apart from autonomous institutions like Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh National Museum and Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation. They are engaged in implementing the government programmes as well as activities formulated under the convention of Cultural Diversity. Bangladesh Shishu Academy under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) under the Ministry of Industries also play significant roles for this purpose.

Under the approved Cultural policy, Bangladesh Government has taken remarkable initiatives to implement the agendas of the convention within and outside its territory, legal frameworks have been developed viz., Bangla Academy Ordinance 1978, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Act 1989, International Mother Language Institute Act 2010, Small Ethnic Groups

Cultural Organizations Act 2010 etc. Besides, in the National Education Policy 2010 and National Women Policy 2011 the promotion and protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in Bangladesh have been ensured. Through different Government agencies or organizations Bangladesh has done some other important projects and events to protect and promote Cultural diversity.

Bangladesh has also played significant role for the ratification of the UNESCO Convention aiming at the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions of all the ethnic groups. Bangladesh, in association with UNESCO, organized the Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia Pacific Region in May 2012 in Dhaka. Cultural Exchange programs with different countries of the world are being regularly organized.

After the ratification, Government is consolidating endeavors for the protection, promotion and preservation of all cultural expressions in its territory and at international level. Awareness building and programs on the actual content and implementation of the convention is being undertaken.

## **1. General Information**

**(a) Name of Party:** People's Republic of Bangladesh

**b) Date of ratification:** 31 May 2007

**(c) Ratification process (e.g. parliamentary process):** Bangladesh Government has ratified convention through the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to France/UNESCO.

**(d) Total contribution to the IFCD (to date):** (under process)

**(e) Organisation(s) or entity(ies) responsible for the preparation of the report:** The Ministry of Cultural Affairs

**(f) Officially designated point of contact:** Mr. Mahmud Selim, Director, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, phone: +88 01711 391622, email: mahmudselim53@yahoo.com

**(g) Date when report was prepared:** 09 January 2013

**(h) Name of designated official(s) signing the report:** Suraiya Begum ndc, Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Government of Bangladesh.

Phone: +88 7168977

Email: suraiya123@yahoo.comx

**i) Description of the consultation process established for the preparation of the report and name of representative(s) of participating civil society organisation(s):**

This report has been prepared by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Its contents are obtained from different ministries, departments, agencies, organisations and NGOs. Consultation process included;

1. Inter departmental meeting in MoCA,
2. Data collected from relevant government agencies and ministries.
5. FGD with representatives of civil society organizations
6. In-depth interview with relevant government agencies and NGO representatives

## 2. Measures

### 2.1 Cultural policies and measures

#### Legal frame work: Constitution, Acts, Policies

Bangladesh has a firm legal framework to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions in its territory. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh states on national culture, "The State shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, and so to foster and improve the national language, literature and the arts that all sections of the people are afforded the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture." (Article 23) In article 24 it is also clarified, "The State shall adopt measures for the protection against disfigurement, damage or removal of all monuments, objects or places of special artistic or historic importance or interest." As regards provision of basic necessity, the constitution in its article 15 ensures that it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, with a view to securing to its citizens, (a) the provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care; (b) the right to work, that is the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage having regard to the quantity and quality of work; (c) the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure; and the right to social security, that is to say to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases."

Under the provision of the Constitution, Bangladesh Government has enacted different Acts, Ordinances and Policies to protect and promote the

Diversity of the wide range of cultural expressions viz, Antiquities Act, 1968, Bangla Academy Ordinance 1978, National Archive Ordinance 1983,

Bangladesh National Museum Ordinance 1983, Nazrul Institute Ordinance 1984, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Act 1989, Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation Act 1998, Copyright Act 2000, Bangladesh National Cultural Policy 2006, Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Organisation Act 2010 etc. It is noteworthy that for the last 40 years Bangladesh Government has been working for many of the principles, depicted in the UNESCO Convention 2005.

### **2.1.1 Bangladesh National Cultural Policy 2006**

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs provides the framework for an overall cultural policy and sets the objectives, financial frameworks, subsidy arrangements and the organizational structures that form the basis of cultural policy in Bangladesh.

The Cultural Policy was introduced in 2006. According to the acts and strategies this policy has been implemented through 17 organizations under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and in coordination with other ministries such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Children and Women affairs and Ministry of Industries etc.

The Cultural Policy measures apply to everyone living in Bangladesh irrespective of ethnic, religious, linguistic or other background. In Bangladesh, the following areas are within the province of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs: Visual Art, Music, Theatre, Film, Libraries, Archives, Museums, Cultural Environment, and Copyright etc.

The main objectives of this Cultural Policy are as follows:

1. To protect and promote all cultural expressions in Bangladesh regardless of caste, class, religion, origin etc.
2. To develop cultural activities and integration with economic development.
3. To protect, preserve and develop cultural elements of small ethnic groups.
4. And of course, to meet the wave of globalization and conceive positive elements and resist negative effects.

For the people of Chittagong Hill Tract area where majority of small ethnic communities lives, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs including local government agencies and NGOs works for the development of life and culture in that region.

During the period (2011- 2012), Bangladesh government allocated budget amount of 28005524.00 USD for implementation of this policy through government agencies and NGOs.

At present people are more aware about Cultural Diversity at local, regional, national and international level. Especially small ethnic groups are more recognized by main stream culture in Bangladesh. And of course, small ethnic groups and women are more conscious about value and importance of their cultural legacies and practices.

### **2.2.2 Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Organisation Act 2010**

The major objective of the Act is to recognize small ethnic groups with respect and separate identity as they are. And to protect, preserve and promote the cultural expressions of small ethnic groups of Bangladesh at local, national and international level.



To implement this Act, several public agencies have taken different initiatives, such as, collection and preservation of their own cultural elements (language, musical instruments, ornaments, handloom textile etc.). At the same time, organize festival and cultural programs in national and international level, research and publications on their folklore, organize workshops and seminar etc. are the other activities according to the act.

Bangladesh Government has sanctioned 513378.00 USD for the implementation of this Act properly for the year 2011-12.

Presently the small ethnic groups are much more recognized by mainstream people than ever before in Bangladesh. At the same time, people of small ethnic groups are much aware about the rights and importance of their cultural expressions. Cultural activities of small ethnic groups (such as dance, music, theatre etc.) are exposed and exhibited at national and international level. The awareness building in the society of small ethnic groups is considered the main challenge as stated by Scholars, Academics and Govt. officials. More than 56% fund is utilised in Cultural Diversity program.

### **2.2.3 The National Education Policy 2010**

Bangladesh conforms fully to the Education for All (EFA) objectives, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and international declarations. Article 17 of the Bangladesh Constitution provides free of charge secondary education for all children between the ages of six and eighteen years. In the National Education Policy 2010 equal opportunities have been ensured for all the children including small ethnic groups. Primary education has been raised to Class-VIII which was previously Class-V. In the text books information of all small ethnic groups has been furnished so that

Mainstream people can be aware of culture, food habit, dress etc of these groups.

During 2007-2011, more primary schools have been setup in remote areas for the benefit of these children. The government provided all facilities for them to achieve 100% literacy rate. Measures have been taken for the underprivileged children so that they can be admitted to the schools with boarding facilities to continue their studies without any break. There is a provision to appoint teachers from ethnic groups and train them and introduce bilingual text books so that they can easily learn using their mother tongue. These children also have teaching on their own religions other than the four major religions of the country. Appropriate measures will be taken to provide them with scholarships so that they can go for higher education. To help them flourish in their creativity, all initiatives have been taken from the government. Total contribution of Bangladesh Government in this field was 1298744365.00 USD in the year 2011-12.

The small ethnic group children are yet to get education/teaching in their own mother tongue. Besides, children living in remote areas cannot get access to schools as there are geographical difficulties. Moreover, numbers of families are so poor that they prefer their children to be day labourers or work in the fields with their parents for their livelihood.

Due to the policy direction situation is gradually improving. It is seen that in 2006 the 15+ literacy rate was 53.7 (source: [http://www.bbs.gov.bd/PageSVRS\\_Rpt\\_4\\_10.aspx?page=%2fPageReportLists.aspx%3fPARENTKEY%3d102](http://www.bbs.gov.bd/PageSVRS_Rpt_4_10.aspx?page=%2fPageReportLists.aspx%3fPARENTKEY%3d102)) according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics . In latest literacy survey in 2010 the rate of 15-24 age group literacy rate increased to 78.58 (female-78.38, male-78, 81). (Source: The Bangladesh Literacy Survey, 2010, <http://www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/Survey%20reports/Bangladesh%20Literacy%20Survey%202010f.pdf>)

#### **2.2.4 The National Children Policy 2011**

In Bangladesh, it is ensured that every child (aged under 18) including children from small ethnic groups will be developed and their flourishing will be ensured by providing them with standard and necessary services.

These services, such as education, health, nutrition, security, entertainment and other rights, will be ensured irrespective of their age, gender, religion, nationality, profession, social, regional and ethnic identity. A section of the policy includes taking special measures for small ethnic group women so that their development and flourishing can be achieved

through ensuring their rights and by keeping their traditional and cultural heritage. Total expenditures of the Government for this policy was 8653036.00 USD for the year 2011-12.

Poverty and lack of awareness is the main obstacle for implementation of the policy effectively. Inadequate reading material in the mother language of small ethnic communities is another challenge.

#### **2.2.5 National Women Development Policy 2011**

To safeguard women's rights the government is firmly committed to the women's development and drew an action plan for their uplift in the Policy. It also ensures women's rights in formulation and implementation of economic policies for sectors like trade, currency and tax. The Policy contains provisions for physically and mentally challenged women and those from the indigenous communities. The policy includes a section for taking special measures for small ethnic group women so that their development can be achieved through ensuring their rights and by keeping their traditional and cultural heritage.

The Policy provides women with full control over their right to land, earned property, health, education, training, information, inheritance, credit, technology and opportunity to earn and enact necessary new laws to put these rights into practice. If necessary, the government will amend or repeal laws that are harmful and discriminatory to women. Total Budget for the implementation of the policy was 150907317.00 USD for the year 2011-

Though present government is very much positive about women empowerment yet social taboo, eve teasing, poverty and fundamental mentality to women are big challenges to implement this policy.

Women education and empowerment have been increased. The womenfolk of the country were encouraged to have such a Policy for their advancement. The policy was termed as consistent with the spirit of Liberation War and country's constitution. A number of women's organizations, activists, and intellectuals have welcomed the government for approving the NWDP.

Net enrolment of girl's ratio in Secondary education in Bangladesh was 47 percent in 1999, 51 percent in 2002 and 59 percent in 2010.

(Source:[http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=500](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=500))

Secondary education is another major determinant of empowerment, along with the woman's mobility and decision making scores.

Not only that, more than 85% workers in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh are women. Women are also working in large scale in other industries such as leather, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, food processing etc. They are also self-employed in non-formal economic activities. Women are engaged in agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishery and other economic sectors. There is a growing trend of women working in construction sites.

The women of Bangladesh are also participating in international labour markets(source:

[http://www.brecorder.com/supplements/88/1169169/March 26, 2012](http://www.brecorder.com/supplements/88/1169169/March%2026,%202012)).

Lack of awareness and social taboo are the main obstacles for implementation of this policy.

## **2.2 International cooperation and preferential treatment**

As regards diversity of cultural expressions, the guiding principle for Bangladesh is to take active part in the work of international organizations, highlighting the viewpoints and needs of a small country and a small

language area in larger international and global issues. Bangladesh has agreement on cultural exchange program with many countries of the world. According to those agreements, exchange program has taken place regularly in different cultural fields with other countries where participation of small ethnic groups with their traditional cultural elements must be incorporated.

### **2.2.1 Conference on Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia Pacific Region, Dhaka 2012**

A 3-day long Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia-Pacific Region was organized in Dhaka from 9 to 11 May 2012 where 44 countries participated. The sessions consisted of opening and closing sessions, plenary sessions as well as panel discussions. Total budget of the event was 363426.00 USD for the year 2011-12.

That among 44 Asia-pacific countries only 12 countries have ratified the convention, is not an encouraging news. So the main challenge was to ensure the participation of other countries in this program; and particularly those countries that did not ratify the convention yet

The main objectives of this High-level Conference were as follows:

1. Have a substantial exchange on ongoing implementation initiatives in the different Asia-Pacific countries that have ratified the convention, regarding i.e. cultural policy and programmes, the involvement of stakeholders in their design, creative industries, development strategies, funding schemes and other relevant issues; success, challenges and future action.
2. Identify the challenges and opportunities for cultural cooperation for development in the region.
3. Explore the possibility of establishing a network for sharing information and knowledge on policies for protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions to build up bilateral and multilateral relationships between countries in the region.
4. Clarify key concepts and objectives of specifically the 2005-Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expression, in order to understand the unique value and contribution of the Convention and how it distinguishes itself from the other UNESCO Culture Conventions.
5. Encourage more ratification in the Asia-Pacific Region.

.Positive impact was observed in Asia pacific region in favor of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005. Bangladesh has played an important role for implementing convention in this region. After this Forum, other countries might be inspired to ratify the convention in near future.

28 countries from Asia pacific region participated in this forum including UNESCO delegations. Dhaka Declarations is a significant step for implementing convention in this region.

### **2.2.2. Symposium on Folkdance in the SAARC Region 2011**

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Government of Bangladesh in cooperation with the SAARC Cultural Centre organized the program. Total expenditure of this Program was 34250.00 USD for the year 2011-12.

Main objectives of the measure were to document the existing folk dances of the SAARC region for posterity and to identify and highlight the potential of cultural diversity through folk dances in the SAARC region. It was held in 2011 in Dhaka.

A workshop/symposium on folkdance, a parade of folk dancers and vivid activities were organized at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. This program had positive impact on national and regional folk dance scenario. Especially it will play important role to protect and promote folk dance in this region. It has another impact on folk dance for exchange and sharing idea and aesthetic expressions between participating performers.

### **2.2.3 Action plan for the Safeguarding of Baul Song in 2008.**

Main objectives of this measure were:

- To ensure that the new generations of Bauls are properly trained in accurate performance and transmission of Baul Songs.
- To identify the Baul Communities of Bangladesh.
- To raise the awareness among the population of Bangladesh about the Baul Songs.

Field survey has been done (June to August, 09) in the greater district of Kushtia which comprises Chuadanga, Meherpur and Kushtia districts to identify the Baul communities. It was found that most of the Bauls reside in Jhenidah, Jessore, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia and Faridpur Upazilas.

Six hundred Baul songs were collected from the field – some were recorded in audio form and others were in written text where recording was not possible.

- A five-day workshop was organized in June, 2009 to identify the young Bauls for training. A total number of 120 young Bauls were identified through the workshop. Among the participants, ten Bauls were finally selected and trained by the Baul Gurus Pagla Bablu and Karim Shah to record Baul songs for CD.
- A National Baul fair was held on 8th and 9th August, 2009 at Kushtia District Shilpakala Academy premises. About 250 Baul artists and Baul followers from the greater Sylhet, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Magura, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Kushtia areas participated in this fair.
- A two-day long International Baul Mela and Seminar was held at the premises of Shilpakala Academy on 11th and 12th December, 2009. Baul singers from all over Bangladesh as well as West Bengal, India participated in the Baul fair. National experts from Bangladesh and International experts from India, United Kingdom and Italy presented papers in the seminar. Most of these were presented both in Bangla language and are kept by the Academy for future use.
- After completion of the collection and research, the Academy published 500 copies of “Collection of Baul songs”, 500 copies of “Notation of Baul songs” and 500 copies of audio CD as well.

Total cost of this project was 67,000.00 USD.

Contact with original Bauls and Gurus as well as convince them to attain this program was the main challenge of this project. Collection and documentation of authentic Baul songs in a proper manner and prepare staff notation was another problem.



After this project, Bauls and Baul songs are recognized and highlighted in local, national and international level. Moreover, Baul songs are collected, preserved and published with notation which will be significant steps towards safeguarding Baul songs. At the same time, awareness of the mass people about the preservation of the Baul songs has increased.

### **2.3 Integration of culture in sustainable development policies**

Bangladesh government has been trying to integrate culture in sustainable development projects according to its development policies. Ministry of Cultural Affairs plays the most significant role in this regard. Besides, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs are playing important role to establish cultural elements in sustainable development policies. Folk Art and Craft Foundation, Bangladesh Film Development Corporation, Bangladesh Film Archive, Small Ethnic Group Cultural Organizations in different parts of the country, Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) etc. are most significant organisations in Bangladesh in this respect. All of them are covering a vast area of cultural industry such as cinema, music, art and crafts, theatre, dance, literature etc and trying to develop them according to the government policies.

#### **Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)**

It was established in 1957 by an Act of Parliament. The establishment of BSCIC was in recognition of the need for a specialized agency to promote Small, Medium & Cottage Industries (SMCIs) in the manufacturing sector.

BSCIC strives to create resilient and efficient SMCIs, able to compete in a liberalized market environment. SMCIs have to be efficient and knowledge-driven, including using ICT to be globally 'connected' and accessible. The

Corporation will promote SMCI's to be an integral part of the country's industrial development capable of producing high value-added manufacturing product & services. BSCIC will serve as the national focal point for the overall development of SMCI's in the country.

The principal goal of the Bangladesh Govt. economic policy is to reduce poverty which is coherent with the MDGs. For achieving the above goal, economic growth policy is adopted by the Govt. in the macro-economic policy. In view of the above the BSCIC Vision, Mission, Goal, Strategy, Initiative, Challenges, Needs, Objectives, Services, Function and Programmes are fixed:

As the leading Organization BSCIC endeavours to contribute to the economic growth leading to create vibrant and resilient SMCI's that enhance Bangladesh's competitiveness in the world market. It also aims at transforming SMCI's into an economic powerhouse of the country by 2025.

To materialize the vision, following measures may be taken:

- i) Provide latest technical and managerial assistance to enterprises and communities for the improvement of productivity, quality and environment.
- ii) Promote strategic alliance with clients as well as national and international professional bodies in pursuit of economic development.
- iii) Develop the work place that encourages creativity, innovation, professional growth and positive value.
- iv) To encourage SMCI's to be export-oriented.
- v) Share the rewards of own endeavors with our communities, customers, employees, suppliers, management and our stakeholders.

Here are some other example of these types of activities of different organizations and public agencies:

### **2.3.1 Folk Art Festival at Sonargaon**

Main objective of this festival is collection, protection, exhibition, preservation and promotion of Bangladesh folk art and culture. Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation under The Ministry of Cultural Affairs is responsible for this event. Festival. With the participation of various folk artists Bangladesh Folk Art and Craft Foundation organizes Folk artists/artisans from all over Bangladesh are invited to attend this this month-long festival every year. Total budget of this program is 250000.00 USD for the year 2011-12

By this event folk artists/artisans are getting opportunity to sell their crafts/product in this festival. This festival is a positive step of marketing and distribution process of crafts item in Bangladesh. Folk art and artists are highlighted on this occasion in print and electronic media.

### **2.3.3 Documentation of traditional design motifs of *Dhakai Jamdani in 2009.***

Documentation of traditional design motifs of Dhakai Jamdani and preserving all its images and related information of raw materials, weaving, teaching methods etc. for future generations was the main purpose of this initiatives. UNESCO, Dhaka in cooperation with Centre for Research on Art and Culture (CRAC) has done the project.

A survey has been conducted in Jamdani area, especially in Rupganj and Sonargaon upozilla (sub district). Details photographs of various steps of weaving have been taken.

Total budget of this project is 14,400.00 USD. Insufficient fund, puzzling name of the motifs, lack of awareness in weavers' society are the most significant problems of this project. After completing the project, 101 motifs of *Dhakai Jamdani* have been documented in a proper manner with all details. Anyone can reconstruct the traditional designs of Dhakai Jamdani with the support of this documentation.

Besides, in the year 2012, formal proposal for the enlistment of *Dhakai Jamdani* as intangible heritage have been submitted to UNESCO by MoCA.

#### **2.3.4 Training and Capacity Building for Long-term Management and Best Practice Conservation for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage sites and World Heritage Properties in Bangladesh**

Main objective of this training program is capacity building for long-term management and for the preservation of cultural heritage sites and world heritage properties in Bangladesh.

It was introduced in 2011. It was implemented in the following manner:

1. Workshop on baseline concepts and principle of convention with special emphasis on the World Heritage Convention and Operational Guideline that provides professionals more in-depth understanding of the key issues related to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
2. Workshop on identification of management needs and development of basic principle for planning and management, as well as identification and elaboration of project proposals for the development of management plans for World Heritage properties.
3. Workshop on site presentation and sustainable tourism development with a view to developing inter-agency coordination in tourism development plans for Paharpur, Bagerhat, Mahasthan and Kantajee heritage sites by providing an overview of selected methods and tools for

sustainable tourism planning and management and formulating an action plan for follow-up and training on tourism management for site managers.

Total budget of this workshop was 320,000.00 USD. Major obstacles of this workshop were as follows:

1. Participants were from various disciplines in this workshop that made some difficulties.
2. Political crisis (strike) interrupted the continuity of the workshop.

Overall, Participants were satisfied and by their knowledge on management and preservation of cultural heritage sites and world heritage properties in Bangladesh was largely increased.

### **2.3.5 Development of Folk Culture**

Main objective of this project was to protect and promotion of Folk culture of Bangladesh. Bangla Academy was responsible for the implementation of this project. It was introduced in 2010.

Data and information on folk culture in wide range were collected and preserved from 64 districts in Bangladesh. A seminar was organised in Rajshahi University as part of this program. An international conference on Folklore will be held in 2012-13 according to the project plan. Total budget of this project is 445121 USD.

Through this project diversity of original folk cultural element of different districts of Bangladesh will be recognised and preserved in proper way. At the same time, Folk artists will get recognised by mainstream people that will make possibilities to encourage the folk artists to continue and develop their work in right way. On the other hand after completing this project Government and NGO will get scope to use this survey report as guideline in their development projects.

Lack of sufficient fund and proper knowledgeable persons for survey are the major challenges for this project.

### **2.3.6 National Children's Award Competition**

Main objective of the measure is developing mental, cultural and physical sides of children and exploring their talents in innovation. It encourages children all over the country to participate in creative activities like art, music, dance, theatre etc.

The programme was introduced since its inception in 1976. Bangladesh Shishu Academy under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh is responsible for arranging this competition in Upazilla (Sub-district), district, division and national levels in every year. Total budget of this project is 93597.00 USD.

All the Children of Bangladesh are getting scope to express their creativity on this occasion. Many child artists are recognized for the first time in this competition and feel more confident to build their career in respective fields in future.

### **2.4 Protecting cultural expressions under threat**

In Bangladesh no special situation in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 8 of the Convention has been identified.

## **3. Awareness-raising and participation of civil society**

### **3.1 Parties**

Bangladesh works both at international and national levels in order to follow up on its ratification in 2007 of the Convention. National hearings and debates on how to further protect and promote cultural diversity have been organised for all interested parties, including civil society, and a number of concrete projects have been supported.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs involves the civil society in organizing awareness-raising programmes for promotion of cultural diversity at home and abroad. Such as when the Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia Pacific region was organized on 9-11 May in Dhaka members of the civil society like Mr. Ramendu Majumder, President Worldwide International Theatre Institute; Prof. Syed Jamil Ahmed, Dept. of Theatre, University of Dhaka; Prof. Sonia Nishat Amin, Dept. of History, University of Dhaka; Prof. Anisuzzaman, Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka; Mr. Aly Zaker, Trustee, Liberation War Museum, Dhaka; Rasheda K. Chowdhury, Executive Director Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and Former Adviser of the Caretaker Government; Mr. Mofidul Hoque, Member Secretary, Liberation War Museum, Dhaka; Prof. Dr. Abul Barakat; Chairman Dept. of Economics, University of Dhaka; Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank; Prof. Fakrul Alam, Dept. of English, University of Dhaka; Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed, Dept. of International Relations, University of Dhaka; Prof. Karunamaya Goswami, Principal, Cambrian College, Dhaka and others were involved in various parts of the program.

Besides, CHMF delegates, experts and civil society representatives worked together in the plenary sessions and discussions and at the end of the Forum a joint statement titled as the 'Dhaka Declaration' came out with a special call for strengthening cultural cooperation in the region.

MoCA and other subordinate agencies in partnership with civil society observe various international days and cultural shows where they promote local culture. MOCA and subordinate organizations collect data and interact with civil society to some extent to understand needs and requirements of different groups of population.

The organizations under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs namely Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangla Academy, National Museum, Directorate of Public Library, Department of Archaeology, Directorate of Archives & Libraries, National Book Centre, Nazrul Institute, Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation, Copyright Office, Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre and Rangamati, Bandarban, Moulavibazar, Rajshahi and Birisiri Small Ethnic Group Cultural Institutes have been making untiring efforts for the promotion of cultural activities across the country. In the non-governmental sector, hundreds of cultural organizations have been working throughout the country for promotion of cultural activities.

The Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has received the Cultural Diversity Medal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for her outstanding contribution towards preservation of cultural diversity and expansion of cultural activities in Bangladesh. It is very encouraging news for the nation. The Ministry endeavours to enhance and strengthen the cultural ties and promotional works with all the friendly countries. This is basically done through cultural exchange agreements and sending cultural delegations to different countries.

But as Bangla is the official language here the Convention is yet to be translated into Bangla. As a result most of the agencies or organizations who are interested to work more on cultural diversity are yet to fully utilize the benefit of the Convention.

### **3.2 Civil Society**

Civil society organizations like Ahsania Mission, BRAC, Podokkhep, RDC (Research and Development Collectives), NCIP (National Coalition for Indigenous People consisting of 318 members – both from Bengali and Small ethnic groups) and other such organizations are working on promoting the objectives and principles of the Convention within Bangladesh and in the international forum. Some of them are working



Mainly on education, health and some are on protecting cultural expressions.

Civil society has taken keen interest in promoting ratification of the Convention and they are organizing programmes for pursuing the government to implement it.

These organizations are organizing awareness-raising programmes like seminars, discussions, human chains etc to protect the rights of cultural expressions and to make aware the general people to pursue the government to do so.

Civil society members feel that for achievement of greater transparency and accountability in the governance of culture it is a must to contribute more on the issue. Their activities should be designed in such a way that small ethnic groups, most of them are ultra poor, can achieve sustainable economic and social achievements for their wellbeing.

Civil society and small ethnic group organizations are monitoring the implementation of the Convention and the Cultural policy 2006 and other policies of the country regarding the cultural expressions and raising their voices to pursue the government to ensure their rights.

The civil society members are engaged in more awareness-raising programmes so that more and more people can be aware about the cultural diversity like cultural festivals, language festivals, rallies with banner, festoons, human chain protecting any kind of violence against the small ethnic groups, organizing and providing them with capacity building trainings so that they can bargain with the government for their rights protected in the Constitution and other Policies etc. Members of Civil Society are participating in various international conferences and forums to promote and protect cultural diversity in Bangladesh.

The main challenge of recognizing cultural diversity is that it helps us recognize and respect other people not included in our cultural 'ways of being'. We can easily interact with them; we can build bridges to trust, respect, and understanding across cultures. We need to understand that cultural diversity makes our country a more interesting place to live, as people from diverse cultures contribute to language skills, new ways of thinking, new knowledge, and different experiences.

The civil society feels that the government has taken a very encouraging step by introducing the Small Ethnic Group Cultural Organisation Act 2010. But it also feels that the government needs to do more to activate this Act so that people from different ethnic groups can take the advantage of this Act and establish their own cultural expressions. For example, ensure education in their mother tongue in small ethnic communities in the country.

#### **4. Main achievements and challenges to the implementation of the Convention**

##### **4.1 Main Achievements**

a) Major achievement in implementing the convention is raising awareness in different levels in the society to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions through organized and participatory programmes at national and international level at home and abroad. For example, Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum 2012, Action plan for Safeguarding Baul song etc. are mentionable.

b). Bangladesh government has taken significant Policy and Act in favour of 2005 convention on the protection and promotion of the Diversity of cultural expressions such as National Cultural policy, National Education Policy, National Women Development policy etc. In these policies,

protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions has been ensured. At the same time, Small Ethnic Group Cultural Organization Act is one of the important milestones for protection and promotion of the cultural diversity of indigenous people of Bangladesh. Seven cultural institutes in different places in Bangladesh are working for the development and promotion of their own culture of small ethnic groups.

#### **4.2 Major Challenges**

- a) Lack of sufficient fund for implementing different activities, programs under the preview of convention in Bangladesh.
- b) Poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness in small ethnic group are some major challenges to implement 2005 Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in Bangladesh. Most of the small ethnic groups and minority people are not aware of their role and in most of the cases they don't have any idea about value and importance of their own culture.

#### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh has a firm legal framework to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions in its territory. The government of Bangladesh has taken pragmatic plan, policy and legal instruments for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in Bangladesh. Bangladesh also works both at national and international levels in order to follow up its ratification in 2007. We can hope that implementation of the Convention 2005 in Bangladesh will get more and more momentum in the days to come. This is how it will play a significant role in translating the essence of this international legal umbrella into a reality in the territorial boundary of South Asia and beyond.

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