

Language and Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups

Class Seven



National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

**Prescribed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board
as a textbook for class seven from the academic year 2014**

**Language and Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups
Class Seven**

Revised for the year 2025

Published by
The National Curriculum and Textbook Board
69-70, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000

[All rights reserved by the publisher]

First edition written, edited and translated by

Professor Dr. Md. Ahsan Ali
Professor Gonesh Soren
Professor Dr. Shourav Sikder
Hasan Al Shafie
Swagatam Chakma
Abantee Harun

First Publication : December 2013
Revised Edition : November 2015
Revised Edition : October 2024

Preface

The importance of formal education is diversified. The prime goal of modern education is not to impart knowledge only but to build a prosperous nation by developing skilled human resources. At the same time, education is the best means of developing a society free from superstitions and adheres to science and facts. To stand as a developed nation in the science and technology-driven world of the 21st century, we need to ensure quality education. A well-planned education is essential for enabling our new generation to face the challenges of the age and to motivate them with the strength of patriotism, values, and ethics. In this context, the government is determined to ensure education as per the demand of the age.

Education is the backbone of a nation and a curriculum provides the essence of formal education. Again, the most important tool for implementing a curriculum is the textbook. The National Curriculum 2012 has been adopted to achieve the goals of the National Education Policy 2010. In light of this, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has been persistently working on developing, printing, and distributing quality textbooks. This organization also reviews and revises the curriculum, textbook, and assessment methods according to needs and realities.

Secondary education is a vital stage in our education system. This textbook is catered to the age, aptitude, and endless inquisitiveness of the students at this level, as well as to achieve the aims and objectives of the curriculum. It is believed that the book written and meticulously edited by experienced and skilled teachers and experts will be conducive to a joyful experience for the students. It is hoped that the book will play a significant role in promoting creative and aesthetic spirits among students along with subject knowledge and skills.

The society and the culture of different Ethnic Groups living in Bangladesh are different from those of others. We are proud of that society and culture of Minority Ethnic Groups as a part of our national heritage. But the larger section of the population knows very little diverse cultures of these communities. To give attention to this sector according to the revised curriculum NCTB has developed a textbook named **Language and Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups** for the first time. In this book, different subject matters related to language and culture of Minority Ethnic Groups have been discussed. It is expected that the students will be respectful towards other's language and culture by practising these subject matters.

It may be mentioned here that due to the changing situation in 2024 and as per the needs the textbook has been reviewed and revised for the academic year 2025. It is mentionable here that the last version of the textbook developed according to the curriculum 2012 has been taken as the basis. Meticulous attention has been paid to the textbook to make it more learner-friendly and error-free. However, any suggestions for further improvement of this book will be appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the book as writers, editors, reviewers, illustrators and graphic designers.

October 2024

Prof. Dr. A K M Reazul Hassan

Chairman

National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

Contents

Chapter	Title	Pages
One	Introduction to the Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups	1–15
Two	Beliefs and Values of Minority Ethnic Groups	16–31
Three	Political life of Minority Ethnic Groups	32–47
Four	Minority Ethnic Groups in Movements and struggles	48–61
Five	Indigenous knowledge of Minority Ethnic Groups	62–71
Six	Minority Ethnic Groups in The Conservation of Biodiversity and Environment	72–87

Chapter One

Introduction to the Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups

The language, culture, religion and the custom-usages-tradition of minority ethnic groups living in Bangladesh are different from those of others. The larger section of the population knows very little about the diverse cultures of these ethnic communities. Even the sphere of their acquaintances is not sufficient. Consequently the actual picture of their civilization and culture, or life style and values remain almost unknown. Moreover, it is also true that the language and culture of these minority ethnic communities are at risk now. Their common rhymes, myths, folk literature, music, traditional attires, food habits, even the traditional sports and games are on the way of disappearance. In this chapter we will learn an introduction to the culture of minority ethnic groups.



Fig. 1.1 : Jhum cultivation in Chattogram Hill Tracts

After completion of this chapter, we would be able to:

- name the languages of the minority ethnic groups;
- describe the literature and types of culture of the minority ethnic groups;
- state the stories and folklores, folksongs, rhymes, myths and music of the minority ethnic groups;
- prepare a list of different musical instruments of the different ethnic groups;
- describe the dresses and food habits of the minority ethnic communities;
- value the culture of ethnic groups;
- describe the different sports and games of the minority ethnic groups;
- make the list of equipment for special games for the minority ethnic groups and draw pictures;

- understand the languages and varied cultures of the minority ethnic groups;
- enjoy the aesthetic side of literary work and music of the minority ethnic groups.

Lesson-01: The language and literature of Minority Ethnic Groups

We know not only that language is a medium of expressing thoughts, but also people leave evidences of their creative works through language. And literature is the symbol of those creative works. As every ethnic community has their own language, they have their own literature, too. Nevertheless many of them don't have their own alphabets, so their literature passed on orally for many years. Of this oral literature, the rhymes are very old, so are the myths. Moreover folklore is considered to be an important old literature, which has been passed on orally for a long time within a community. Although nowadays we get different written folk literature in different forms, earlier it was absent.

Almost all the ethnic minorities in Bangladesh have their own rhymes, myths, folklores etc. Santals, Chakmas, Marmas, Oraons, Mandis, Tripuras, Meiteis, Bishnupriya, Pangal, Khasi etc all have their own traditions and life oriented literature, that is, rhymes, myths, folklores and music. However due to lack of practice, this literature of the minority ethnic groups could not have the chance to develop. But it can be said that, among all of them, the Chakma literature, especially stories and poems had some opportunity for practice. The minority ethnic groups like Khumi, Pangkhua, Mro, Lusai, Patro, Pahan, Mahle, Malo, Munda, Dalu and others are very few in number among the minority ethnic groups of this country. But their literature is so rich that we are filled with wonder while reading it. In consideration of literature and tradition, the literature of every language is important. If there is no problem of alphabets and if the population becomes literate, then scope for practice of literature in mother tongue develops automatically.

Exercise	
Task 1:	What is the example of the creative work of man?
Task 2:	How had the myths and the folklores been continuing for so long?

Lesson-02: The Myths of Minority Ethnic Groups

Almost every community in the world has some popular rhymes and myths of their own. Basically they carry these for long time through generations. Much of their living is reflected in these. There are rhymes, proverbs and hearsays among the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh. But many of them don't have written literature. So many myths cannot be found anymore. The myths are mainly based on the history of the creation of their race, **the creation of the planet earth, nature, plants, natural disasters, epidemics** etc. A Khumi myth is described here:

The Tale of a Turtle (Uki Achi): Once there lived a turtle in a jungle. One day a group of monkeys, sitting on a tree of that jungle, was eating black berries. The turtle was looking for the dropped berries under the tree. The naughty monkeys saw the turtle and picked it up the tree and fastened it with a branch of the tree. There after the monkeys fled away. The captive turtle started crying. Its tears created mud under the tree. One day a pig went there to swim. The turtle fell on that pig with a sound. The pig died. The turtle then made a flute with the teeth of the pig and played on it every morning and evening. On hearing the sound of the flute, a rat came out from its burrow in the soil. The rat asked for the flute from the turtle to play, took the flute and entered into the burrow with it. With grief in mind, the turtle began to cry again. On hearing its cry, a cobra incubating eggs on the branch of a tree, came down. The turtle told him about his misery. The snake at once, asking the turtle to incubate the eggs, entered the burrow to fetch the flute. The turtle was incubating the eggs. At that time, two shama birds (song-bird of thrush family) came and suggested to move while incubating and the turtle did so. As a result the eggs of the snake broke. The turtle started crying again. When the snake returned with the flute, the turtle told him about the bad suggestion of the cunning birds. The snake returned him the flute. The snake, with anger and grief, remained at the river bank to take revenge of the shamas. One day when the two birds came to drink water in the river, the snake bit them and took revenge.

Exercise

Task 1:	What is reflected in the myths?
Task 2:	Write the main theme of the <i>Uki achi</i> or the tale of a turtle.

Lesson 03: The Rhymes of Minority Ethnic Groups

Every ethnic community in Bangladesh has their own rhymes. These are very rich and traditional. Of the rhymes, lullabies are the most popular among all the communities. One lullaby of the Mandis with its meaning is mentioned here:

Achik Language of the Mandi.

Quini nano quiyee
Kangkhi mei soeng' aa
Shiruchi koeng aa
Quini nano quiyee!!
Maam bokka channan de
Da-chi bokka chanan de
Quini nano quinee!!
Jawa ba-tra khatunoya
Mangkhaoyi chiknowa
Quinee nage quiyee!!

Translation of Achik Language.

Sleep baby sleep,
Crabs sat on the cooking,
Shalik goes to lift water,
Sleep baby sleep! !
You will eat fine rice,
Get fresh white egg,
Sleep baby sleep!!
Robbers will snatch you,
Monsters will tear you and eat !
Sleep baby sleep!!

of the snake, came for lunch, the old father struck the snake at the middle with a chopper. The snake was thus cut into two pieces and died. On her return, the elder sister Kosomoti saw this horrible scene. With much grief, she went to the jungle with the dead snake. Then she buried the snake on the hill under the rocks. After a few days, the graveyard became covered with blood red flowers. And two streams came down from that hill. The name of one was Logang and the other was Pujang. These two are hilly streams or small flow of water. They do exist even today in the Panchari upazila.

Exercise

Task- 1: Why did Kosomoti marry a snake?

Lesson- 05: Santal Folklore

Once there lived one hen and one cat in a farmer's house. Both were good friends. On one occasion, the cat went to another place for a couple of days. While going he said to the hen, "Don't go anywhere and meet any visitor and talk to anybody until I return."

A fox just after two days, could understand that the hen was staying alone. So he was hitting upon plan to catch the hen. The fox came to the hen's house at night, began to push the door and was calling with hissing sound. The hen did neither talk, nor open the door. The fox became hopeless and left the place.

The next day the fox had another plan. He brought some wheat and broken rice and scattered around the hen's house. And he sat silently at a little distance. The hen became greedy for food and came out of the house, then she looked around but saw nothing. So he began to eat granules with fearless mind. At this the fox grabbed the hen at the neck from behind. The hen tossed about for some time and died.



Fig. 1.3 : The fox had another plan next day

On the way that cat met the fox. The cat could realize that that was its favourite hen. So the cat followed the fox and saw the burrow where the fox lived. The fox had a good meal with her calves with the hen.

The next day the fox, leaving her two calves in the hole, went out in search of food. At the time of her departure, she said to his children, “don’t get out of the hole until I return.” After the fox had left the cat went near the hole and called the two calves. But the calves didn’t respond at all. Being frustrated, the cat went away on that day.

The following day the cat once again went there in absence of the fox. On that day she wore anklet on the leg and took a big sack in her hand. She went near the hole and started dancing with jingles of bell in the anklet. On hearing the sound of dance, the calves could stay inside the burrow no more. The cat shortly became friendly with the calves. Then she put the calves with tricks into the sack, fastened the mouth of the sack tightly and went with it. After some time the fox returned to the hole and could not see her calves. She then could understand that certainly the cat took away her babies. The fox began to weep with the sorrow for her calves.

Exercise

Task- 1: Why did the cat take the two calves of the fox from the burrow?

Lesson-06 and 07: Music and Musical instruments of Minority Ethnic Groups

Almost all communities in the world have their own music and musical instruments. They practise them for long period of time generations after generations. This is the main aspect of the culture or living of the minority ethnic groups. The minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh have their traditional music and different musical instruments. Below is a discussion on the music and some instruments of some ethnic groups.

Music: The music of the minority ethnic groups is mainly folk music. This is not only popular but it expresses the simplicity of their lifestyle also. In the social and religious festivals of the Mandi, there is a tradition of entertaining with songs and dance. One of their mentionable music is ‘Re-Re’. It is manifested through words and rhythm of tune spontaneously. An expert ‘Re Re’ musician can sing the song without any preparation beforehand.

The songs of minority ethnic Chakma of Chittagong hill tracts, is also very rich like others, especially the songs composed and sung by the rural poets. The songs are called ‘geet’ in the Chakma language. Those who sing such songs are called gengkhuli. The gengkhulis are the minstrels for their lyrical display of songs by turns. They sing in different festivals. The Tanchanga has their own songs which are called ubhageet. Another name of ubhageet is sappegeet. The males play on the flutes in the tune of ubhageet and the females play khenggrong, a mouth organ made of bamboo strips. The Chakma sing in their own language during different festivals and mourning services. The song is called chhickhrang. One of the most important

characteristics of Bishnupriya and Meitei Monipur songs is drama and dance. Extolment (Kirtan) is the soul of the songs of the Bishnupriya Manipuri community following boishnab religion. Both the Bishnupriya and Meitei sing on different festivals and occasions.

The music of Tripura is very rich. By music they mainly mean dance, songs and instrumental music. The most important aspect of Tripura music is nature and livelihood which are merged together. There was a time when many famous musicians of India decorated the court of the king of Tripura. The king Dhonmanikya was an outstanding artist. A patriotic Tripura song is presented here with its translation.

Bangla aani achaim:ni-ha	Bangla is the country of my birth
<i>Bangla aani shadhin khaim:ha</i>	Bangla is my free country
<i>Bangla ani kh:fum:ni</i>	Bangla is my dear country
<i>Kochangya tungf: tungva</i>	Neither hot, nor cold, a country to my mind
<i>Thongthawom:ni ha chamung kpungha</i>	As good to stay in her panoramic scenes!!
<i>Nai thaom:niha!!</i>	My country is full of corns
<i>Raw:ni haba: bai raw:ni noba: bai</i>	Light and air are plenty here
<i>Bangla aana anong aa:chai roi mi:</i>	Bangla mother has given me birth
<i>Bangla hama:no kongye matong oi.</i>	I vow my head to thank her!!
<i>Aa:ru bai tangmung toimung bai</i>	The seasons prevail here
<i>Baoha khaiye mili tong oi</i>	To give plenty of food
<i>Bangla hama:le mokhani arudoi</i>	Bangla is a country of my taste
<i>Chungmo:ni aa:rudoi!!</i>	Bangla is a country of my mind!!

The style of music and lyrics of Marma are very ancient. They are divided in different streams, such as: kapyra, chagayang, sakhrang langa, lungdi etc. A recent patriotic Marma song with its meaning is quoted below:

Tang joing pairo ga hibar-e	Around are hills.
<i>Tong joing pai row ga hi ba re</i>	Around are hills
<i>Re ge kheng kah row lokhare</i>	There river sangkha dances down
<i>Tong kheng mrang chih pairo hi-re</i>	Rivers, canal and fountains sing
<i>Rowadmroh saya hla ba re.</i>	In this beautiful Bandarban.
<i>Bangladesh akoyayerow pre froyete</i>	Bangladesh is our country
<i>De prema yekheye nih gayete</i>	In joys and sufferings-
<i>Lugri lunge chu: row pong row</i>	Hands in hands all

<i>De pre go hlayong lokokaime.</i>	For the progress of the country!!
<i>Ungakse asaing ga ning thowkote</i>	Chirping of birds raise the Sun
<i>Mrank pangti ungyeerong toknire</i>	The grasses assume silver dress,
<i>Depre lu: choyek khoyeng mare</i>	Protect the honor of this country
<i>Jakha moche asakko choyeng noh-thoire!!</i>	Even though we die!!

The big festival of Oraon is 'Karam'. They sing only one song in this festival. And that is the song of the loosing brother, the song of the pain. This song is presented here in the Sadri language with its inner meaning.

<i>A Song in Sadri Language.</i>	Meaning Translation
<i>Khudiai chuniai poshalo bhaiya-re</i>	I loved my brother, gave him granules of rice
<i>Bhaiya mora gele-i pardes-e</i>	This to eat and thus he became elderly.
<i>A-ke gota pitarka bhaiya-re</i>	Brother today is gone to a country never to return.
<i>Bhaiya mora gele-i pardes-e !!</i>	I had Only one brother like silver brass.
<i>Anahu paibo danahu paibo</i>	I shall get rice, paddy, money and everything.
<i>Pithasana bhaiya kaha paibo ho</i>	But where do I get my brother,
<i>Kanaka sonawa pitarka bhaiya-re</i>	Like the gold in my ear and brother from my same
<i>Bhaiya mora gele-i pardes-e ho!!</i>	mother, who left us today?

Musical Instruments: The Oraons are very interested in music and dance. In most of their families, entertainment with music and collection of musical instruments are observed. They usually make all these instruments by themselves and all of these are diverse. Almost all of the minority ethnic groups in Bangladesh use handmade musical instruments. The significant instruments used by the Oraon are dhol, madol, flute, tal, nagra, khonjoni, ghutur etc. Usually they use all these in different festivals. Besides, the Oraons use different musical instruments in different times of the year also. In recent times, they are found to use Tabla and Harmonium too.

The Pankhos use quite a good number of instruments. These are the symbols of their tradition and culture. Sial raki (horns of the wild cow), darson (brass bell), darpui (big bell), khoang (dhol made of wood from tree), rua khoang (dhol made of bamboo) and thei khang (can shahped bamboo musical instruments) are their instruments. The significant instruments used by the Chakma are: dhuduk, hengrong, shinga, flute, dogor, sharinda, tak etc. There are many types of tom-toms (dhol) used by the Rakhain and Marma, such as: cheyen-wayen or round dhol, kye-wayen or flat clock like dhol, pet-mah, the biggest dhol etc.



Fig. 1.4 : Musical instruments of the Chakma in hilly areas

Exercise

Task- 01:	Whose music is 'Re Re'? How is it played?
Task- 02:	What are ubhageet and khenggrang?

Lesson-08 and 09: Different Dresses of Minority Ethnic Groups

Any ethnic community has dress of its own characteristic. All the ethnic communities in Bangladesh have their own traditional dress. The different colours and different types of dresses of these ethnic communities are very attractive. On one hand they wear simple outfits in their daily life and on the other, during festivals they wear very traditional attires. In most cases they make their own dresses. That is why, the colourful attire of the minority ethnic groups are very important in the context of cultural diversity and tradition of Bangladesh. Whenever you visit hill tracts you will find very colourful dresses of Chakma, Tanchanga, Marma and Tripura and your visit to Sylhet will be fascinated by different colourful dresses of Manipuris and Khasi. Below is the description of dresses together with the pictures of some of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh.

Dresses of Kheyang, Khumi and Chak: The Kheyang have their own dresses. Their dresses are woven by them, especially those for women, though appears to be like those of Rakhains, they call thami as patoon and brassiere as langat. The Kheyang males wear 'nengti'(a piece of cloth covering only the genitals and the annal area) and a hand made shirt. They also wear pagri (head dress) when they go out.

The Khumi call their thami as nena. It has very colourful designs. The females wear pagri, males wear nengti and lungi. The customary dress of the Chak is the panghe kamuhu or nine cubits long dhuti. Nowadays this has almost disappeared and instead now they use lungi. The name of blouse is 'raikain-pe' to them.



Fig. 1.5 : The dresses of Tripura, Kheyang, Chakma and Tanchanga

Chakma and Tanchanga: The Chakma and Tanchanga are famous for their traditional hand knitted or woven clothes. The women make the clothes with waist loom named bein. The significant dresses of the Chakma are pinon, khadi kanai, khobong etc.

The name of the Tanchanga women's dress is pinuin. The length of the dress is from waist to ankle. It is very colourful and the length is 4 cubits. The color appears to be almost like that of a rainbow. The pinuins of the Tanchanga are like those of Chakma and they are horizontally black and inside there are red and yellow borders. But there is no vertical chabugi (up and down) like the Chakma pinuin.

The most interesting is that dresses are fixed for different gasas or clans, such as: for karsawa gosa pinuin, khadi, faror duri, khobng for head, white koboi salum etc. On the other hand, Mu-o gosa pinuin wear khadi, black koboi, blouse etc. The dress of tripuras living in the Chattogram Hill Tracts, too, are very colourful and attractive. The name of the clothes which the Tripura women make with looms to wear from waist to upper body is called Risai and the lower part is named Rinai.

Minority ethnic Mandi men wear gando, pantra, shirt, kadi or kotip and the women wear reking, jaron, anpan, koping etc. Once the Hajong women used to wear red and

black striped hand woven 5 cubits in length and 3 cubits in breadth clothes named Patin. It is almost disappearing now.

The Marma men wear woven dhuti like 'dhoar' and with it wear a jacket like 'barista angi' over a shirt. However they have a tradition of Lungi as well. Women wear a blouse named 'bedaita angi.' Once Santal community had their traditional dresses, such as: panchi (a small dhuti) for men and two pieces of thick clothes called panchi-parhand for women. Nowadays these dresses are not used much. Rather men wear dhuti and lungi and women wear shari. Of the minority ethnic communities, the dresses of Oraon and Santal are similar. Earlier the Khasi men used to wear their traditional coat, pagri (head dress), dhuti and mongol. The traditional attire which women used to wear around their necks was called jankubas. This remained hang.

The dresses of Manipuri women are no less traditional. The woven Manipuri dresses are very famous. These are chakchabi, inafi, angoluri, chomkir ahing, irufi, khangchet etc. And the male dresses are keichum, khutte koet. There are the impressions of their own skill of art in the dresses of Manipuri too. Besides, the dresses of the majority of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh residing in the plane land are lungi, duti, shirt, Panjabi and fatua for men and sarees for women.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Whose colourful traditional dresses will you see when you will visit Chattogram Hills Tracts?
Task- 02:	Which attires of the Hajong Women are almost disappearing now?

Lesson-10 and 11: Food Habits of Minority Ethnic Groups

The minority ethnic groups of hills once depended on forests, jungles and rivers for their food. Thus they used to hunt and collect their food. Then their favourite food items were rabbit, snails and kuche (a species of eel) but these are not seen anymore. At present, rice, lentils, fishes, vegetables etc. are the common foods of the people of minority ethnic groups as of others. Different types of cakes (Pitha) made of powdered rice are traditional foods of Oraons. They are similarities to the cakes of Bangali. They also have fried rice, murki and naru. Kormo-kar, kolhe, gondo, turi, pahan, bagdi, mahato, mahle, bhumij, malo, munda, rajoar, paharia, raotia and santal all have similar food habits like the Oraon. But due to religious and social injunctions, some of them may not take certain kind of foods, As for example, many including Bormon and Turi don't eat beef. On the other hand many of them prepare a drink from rice called Haria. Haria is drunk during many different occasions, festivals and wedding ceremonies.

Broman, Banai, Hajong, Dalu, coach and some other minority ethnic communities of northern Bengal love rice, fish and meat on the list of their common food. But there are some differences in the cooking process of minority ethnic groups. Again the festival foods are also different. The significant food of Mandi is binni rice (binni- a species of rice when boiled becomes very sticky and sweet) prepared under different names, such as: mimil, gulthummanthi, ganthong manthi, megarujoa, mekhop bitta, khiowek khari, sothupa, khappa, mibram, nakham etc.

The favourite food of Patro is one type of soup called 'pachuben' which is made with fish and dried fish (*shutki*). The majority of Boishnob followers of Monipuris are mostly vegetarian. There are traditions of curd, puffed rice and flaked rice during festivals. Their favourite menu in food is leafy vegetables and fruits. The favourite food of minority ethnic group Rakhains is binni rice and nappi made with small shrimps.

The menu of daily food of Santal is almost similar to that of the Bangali people. However, they use lamb, goat, duck, hen, and among wild animals, they eat deer, rabbit and some birds. The common menu of most of the hilly communities is the nappi, prepared with small shrimps. Besides, when the Kheyang or the Khumi hunt animals, they dry the meat and eat later on. The traditional food of Chak is 'kaingrabung' prepared mixing different types of vegetables and meat, or sour and hot spicy stuffs mixed with meat. Dried fish, boiled vegetables, and chili paste are traditional food. Boiled vegetables are called 'usuna chon'.

The traditional food processing of Chakma has been, in the mean time, appreciated by both local and foreign guests. Among the cooking processes, uchha, sikka, bola gudeya, kebang, gorang, korbo are noteworthy. When vegetables are boiled to eat, it is called Uchha. Mainly vegetables are boiled for eating purpose. Sikka is the fomentation of a piece of meat mixing with salt, turmeric and chilli. Cooking fish or meat with less grave is called 'hola'. 'Gudeya' is the process of preparing any curry of vegetables either pasting or mixing with a bit more hot chilli in a metal pot or a bamboo cylinder. A food item, wrapping with banana leaf or any other leaf is cooked in the fire is called 'kabung'. A special flavor and taste are created in the foods prepared by wrapping with leaves. Korbo is one type of food which is prepared by mixing large amount of chili, onion, dried fish or 'shidol' with any type of vegetables.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Name the main foods of Oraon?
Task- 02:	What are common foods of most of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram hill tracts? How are they prepared?

Lesson-12: The Games and Sports of Minority Ethnic Groups

Here we shall be introduced with some games and sports of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh. A general game of the minority ethnic groups of the hilly areas is the gila playing. Chakma, Marma, Pangkhua etc play this game. A traditional game named Pattaboli or hymn fighting is still followed by the Kheyang. The most interesting game of 'Khumi' is 'A tho ach ke'. Two or four men standing at the end of a five feet long bamboo, holding the bamboo end under the arms on both sides and trying to throw the either on the ground is the 'A tho ach ke' game. The team that falls first on the ground loses the game. Another name of this game is testing of power by impeding with bamboo. Noteworthy games of Pangkhua are poika (ghila game), saileb (stick game), kalchek or competition of walking with bamboo. Besides, revolving of bamboo and cane circle are mentionable.

Marma name of ghila game is "Do Kaja Bowe. " Besides wrestling (kang lung bowe), hide and seek (Ho ok tai), and 'bri dai ', a race, are their notable games. Most of the games of Lusai are of strength measuring games. One of them is Inusut Nor. This is a game of moving someone by knocking. Knocking is exerted by a wooden pole husking paddy for rice. Measuring strength by hitting one another is the core of the game

The sports of Mandi are misi menggong (cat-mouse game), gang gisikka (wrestling), thumua (hide and seek), binbinjari (game with leg and fingers), angkhi kheppa (game of crab maze), chagripa (besieging one man), wafong sala (pulling a bamboo pole at both ends) etc. The traditional game of the Bormon is laathi khela (stick game) and measuring physical strength. Some major games of Hajong is kuk-kuk (finding out someone), bangi paka (dive into water in circle), kakra mao game and narkoal game (trying to catch coconut), pek game etc.

The most significant traditional game of the Meitei Monipuri is the 'kangchoi', a game which later on became very famous in the whole world as 'Polo.' The English introduced this game in England during the British period. Besides they have kanamachi, bondi, kopati, ototpani gurgurani, maichong, panja etc as their popular games. Khasis have archery, wrestling, saidikut, kanamachi and hadudu.

Of the games practised by Rakhain society, in their language are 'khyet-kauchi' (a game like danguli), kra-na-krong lai-tang (cat and mouse game) etc. Here the description of khet-kau-chhi is given. It is to some extent same like danguli (played by Bangali boys with two sticks). Two of the teams have equal number of players. Only boys can play the game. The materials for this game dang and gula are made with wood. A mild touch at any point of the gula on either end with dang of a player, gives chance to play at least three times with the flying gula. The distance is measured with the dang and distances

of all the players are measured. The team which acquires more distance wins. The winners celebrate by ridding on the back of the losers or holding their ears. It is very popular in the Rakhain village.

Exercise	
Task-01:	Which community plays 'Atho ach ke'? Describe the game.
Task-02:	Which game became popular in the whole world as 'Polo'?

Exercise

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Kokborok is the language of which minority ethnic group?

- a. Chakma b. Marma
c. Garo d. Tripura

2. Is reflected in myths .

- i. philosophy of human life.
ii. customs of the society.
iii. culture of creative literature.

Which one of the following option is correct ?

- a. i, b. ii,
c. i and ii, d. ii and iii.

Read the following paragraph and answer the question numbers 3 and 4:

Ansar Gain of Satani village sings jari song (a memorial lyrical song sung in Bangladesh) on way of talking. To any question put by any body, he answers in song.

3. Which song has the relation with the on-the-spot song of Ansar Gain?

- a. Geet b. Re-re
c. Kirton d. Kappya

4. Ansar Gain's song expresses his-

- i. common events of his life
ii. philosophy of religion and society
iii. artistic creativity

Chapter Two

Beliefs and Values of Minority Ethnic Groups

Every culture has some definite ideals, morality and values, which influence the behavior and activities of the members of that culture. It is through these ideals, moralities and values that people judge good and bad, right and wrong and try to behave accordingly. Values and ideals together control the passions of human mind like greed, lust, anger, grief, hatred, emotion etc. Religion plays an important role in building ideals, morality and values in social life of human being. Hence, in any society religion is an essential social institution. In this chapter we will learn the relation between culture and religion.

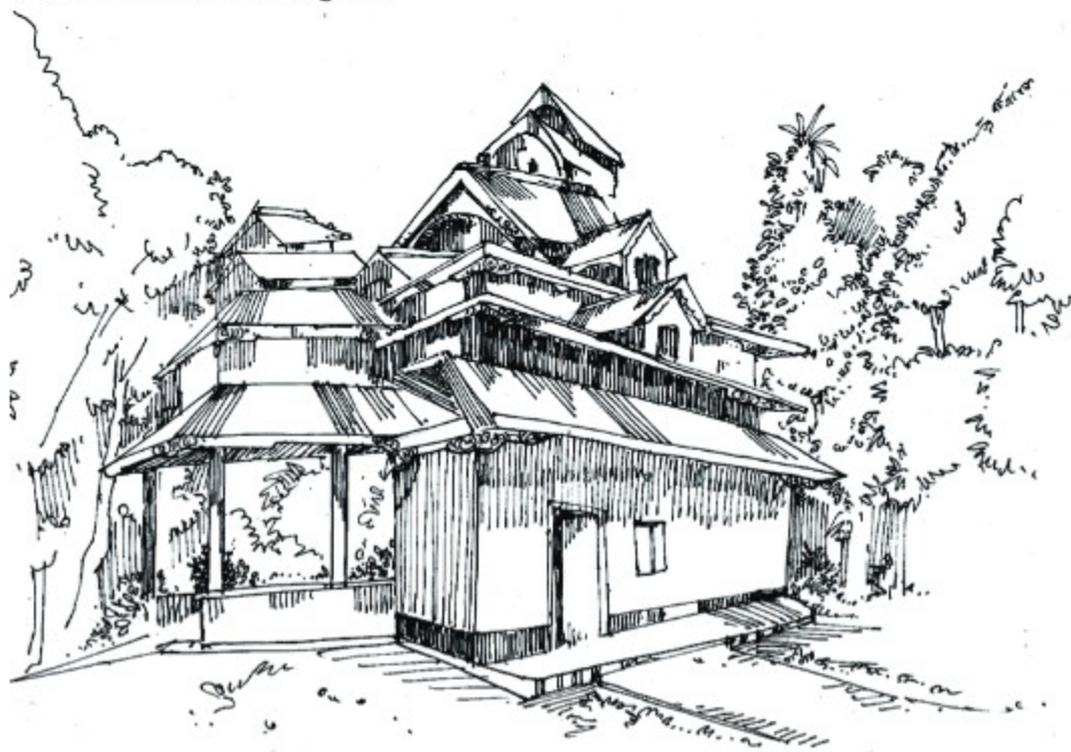


Fig. 2.1 : Prayer house of Chakma and Marma

On completion of this chapter, we would be able to –

- describe the ideals present in the minority ethnic society;
- explain the concept of values;
- identify the values present in a society;
- describe the existing beliefs, religious rights and rituals in a society;
- list the taboos found in a society;
- be respectful to the customs, religious beliefs, rituals and taboos existing in their society.

Lesson-01: Concept of Ideals and Values

Through ideals, morality and values people judge good and bad, just and unjust, right and wrong and try to behave accordingly. Apparently ideals and values appear to be the personal qualities of an individual. But in fact the individual acquires this from culture somehow. Every culture builds up its members through its values from the childhood. People become accustomed to behave accordingly. Due to the formation of this habit from childhood for a long period of time, these behavior patterns seem to be normal to any member of any culture.

Ideals, morality and values differ from society to society. For instance, most of the married couples in minority ethnic societies live with their parents, because that is normal according to their cultural values. But in Europe or USA, as soon as the offsprings acquire adulthood, they live separately from their parents. So it can be said that social morals and values are some such rules and regulations that determine how and in which manner people should behave or act in different social conditions and environment. Basically social ideals and values play a wide and important role in maintaining a social equilibrium and order.

Cultural values also prevent people from doing some definite behaviors. For example, almost all cultures consider theft or lying immoral. Again in some cases there are differences in values of different cultures. For instance, it is considered a sacred duty to sacrifice an animal according to Islamic values; on the other hand, among the Buddhists killing animals is prohibited. Therefore, one cannot judge the values of one culture with that of the other. Therefore, in order to understand the subjects controlling the life and behavior of people of a society, we are to understand in the light of that culture.

Human beings can acquire values in many ways. Values are primarily taught in the family. Family members teach the children about good and bad things and right behavior in different ways. They also learn different ideals and values from schools or other educational institutes. But the followers of all religions retain and nourish the ideals and values of their own religions, more or less.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What are ideals and values?
Task- 02:	What is the role of values in society?

Lesson-02: Religion and Belief System

Anthropology discusses the relationship of religion with culture and environment. Every religion consists of three issues. These include- 1) Religious sentiment and belief, 2) Religious customs and rituals and 3) Religion based social institutions. Therefore, these three aspects are considered in the anthropological discussions about religion.

Religion is a kind of belief which is expressed through certain rituals and customs. In every culture religion is an important social institution. Religious sentiments and thoughts evolve from the belief in some supernatural power existing outside our familiar visible surroundings. This supernatural power is believed to control different aspects of human life. It is believed that all the mundane events of human life, such as- good-bad, happiness-grief, hope-despair, diseases etc. are controlled by the supernatural power. Almost in all cultures worldwide it is believed that through prayers, observing rituals and giving sacrifices, this supernatural power can be appeased. So human beings for their own good, try to pacify this supernatural power through observing religious rituals. Hence it is seen that from behavior at the individual level to the entire human living process and in case of social institutions, religious beliefs and feelings have important roles.

Description of a religion should be true and accurate from the viewpoint of those who follow it. This is because in the description of a religion, be it Islam, Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism, we must be conscious about the feelings of the followers of that religion. If we discuss a religion in a neutral manner, it becomes more accessible and meaningful to people of other religions and cultures. In this case we have to remember that, the followers of all religions believe their religious ideas as true and significant. So through discussing religions neutrally it is possible to show respect to the religious beliefs and sentiments of all people.

Religious system of any culture is based on the beliefs of human beings. According to the number of followers, major religious beliefs of the world are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto etc. Besides these major religions, followers of many other religions including Judaism, Jainism, Sikhism and Bahaism are scattered around the world. Again there are many others in the present world, who do not follow any particular religion.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What are the three main aspects of all religions?
Task- 02:	For what reasons and from which perspectives is religion studied in anthropology?

Lesson-03: Diversity in Religious Beliefs of Minority Ethnic Groups of Bangladesh

Bangladesh possesses a cultural diversity composed of many ethnic groups. From a religious perspective, there are 91.06% Muslim, 7.96% Hindu, 0.30% Christian, 0.61% Buddhist and 0.06% others religious according to 2022 census. Long term coexistence and cultural reciprocity between people of different religions have enriched the religious consciousness of the people of Bangladesh. The minority groups of different religions in Bangladesh are briefly discussed below.

(1) Followers of Ancient and Animistic Religions: Many minority groups followed animistic religions. But many of these ethnic groups are converted and have accepted other religions. *Shangsharek* religion of Garo or Mandi of Tangail-Mymensingh, *Apokpa or Sanamahi* religion of Meitei (Manipuri) in Sylhet, and the religious beliefs of the Mru, Khumi and Bom in Chattogram Hill Tracts, and the Oraon, Santal, Munda, Turi in the Northern region are included in Animistic religions.

(2) Followers of Old and Hindu Religions: Minority ethnic groups that follow Hinduism are the Tripura of Chattogram Hill Tracts, the Hajang in North Bengal, and the Vishnupriya (Manipuri) of Sylhet. Again, many ethnic groups of North Bengal, brought about some changes in their old religions and have been merged gradually in to Hinduism. That means although today they are known as Hindus, they are still found to observe some rights and rituals of their old religions. Barman, Rajbangshi, Coach , Pahan, Oraon etc are a few of such ethnic groups .

(3) Followers of Buddhism: The Chakma, Marma, Tanchanga, Khiyang, Chak, Pankhoa of the CHT, and Rakhain of Cox's Bazar and Patuakhali are mainly followers of Buddhism. There are some other ethnic groups also in CHT, such as Mru and Khumi who are gradually becoming followers of Buddhism.

(4) Followers of Christianity: Many of the Bom, Lushai of CHT, the Garo or Mandi of Tangail-Maymingsingh, the Oraon, Santal, Munda of North Bengal and the Khashiya of Sylhet have accepted Christianity.

(5) Muslims: The only ethnic group following Islam in Bangladesh is the Pangan (Manipuri) of Sylhet. But a small number of people of different ethnic groups have been converted to Islam individually.

Exercise

Task- 01: Which religions are followed by the people of Bangladesh?

Task- 02: Who follow the Old and Animistic religions in Bangladesh?

Lesson- 04 and 05: Origin of Religions in Minority Ethnic Groups

Anthropologists have provided with various explanations of the origin of religion in minority ethnic groups. To give you some idea about this, two explanations of the origin of religion are discussed here, such as: (1) Religion originating from the concept of soul, and (2) Religion originating from magic.

(1) Religion originating from the concept of soul: People did not know the scientific explanation of some very simple natural phenomena. One of these was falling asleep. In sleep, human beings dream. And in dreams he sometimes sees some past events or observes some dead or living persons alive. These issues made the ancient people thoughtful. Besides, what is the difference among living, sleeping and a dead body? Again, why does a dead body never wake up or not come back from the sleep like the living body does? Why do our shadows follow us throughout the daytime? Human mind became curious about such innumerable questions.

Primitive people attempted to answer these questions through their emotions, feelings, imaginations and assumptions. They assumed that something invisible is present inside human bodies. This is how people of the past first conceived of souls. Through this concept of souls they found the answers to what happens to humans when they die, sleep and dream. Human beings are alive because of the presence of souls in human body. People die when the soul leaves the body. According to the beliefs of the ancient people, souls can travel from one place to another and from one body to another body. Since souls have no particular shape, they believed that they travel not only from one human body to another but can also travel even among animal bodies, trees and other natural things. That is, they believe that souls can take the shape of animals, trees or things. They also used to believe that souls leave the living human body when people sleep and go around from place to place and this is the reason people see the things and events while dreaming. That is, dream is made up of events resulting from the movement of souls from place to place, which cannot be seen when awake. And through death, souls leave the body forever. They also believed that despite human death, souls are indestructible, they never die. That is why dead persons are seen in dreams.

Primitive people also used to believe that, souls have much greater power than ordinary living humans. They believed that souls with extraordinary supernatural powers can be the cause of human well-being and sickness. As the souls can cause harm to man, so they can do good also. Human activities can make them happy or satisfied, and at the same time, there is the possibility of their being annoyed, dissatisfied or angry. Hence, people of different cultures try to pacify the

souls. Also, they always try to avoid doing things that would irritate them. Thus, anthropologists think that the concept of souls is a basic tenet of the origin of religion. From the prehistoric time to the present age, the concepts of souls exist in various forms among the people of all religions and cultures.

(2) Religion originating from magic: Humans always depended on Nature. People do not have any control on natural phenomena like storms, rainfall, flood the attack of wild animals or natural events like winter, summer etc. Indeed, human beings have always been the victims of various natural disasters. Therefore, they have learned to adapt themselves to different environmental situations and conditions. In primitive time human life had many fears and uncertainties. People have always tried to protect themselves from different natural uncertainties. Human beings, in all ages, have tried to ensure their protection from these events. They tried to know nature and acquire knowledge about nature. Thereby they tried to control natural forces. They attempted to direct different natural events according to their needs and will. Magic originated from these attempts of human beings. It is thought that magic was used to maintain control over nature with the use of various techniques.

The practice of magic is seen among different cultures of the past and present. Humans used magic to get rid of uncertainties and to maintain the results of various phenomena according to their will. For instance, many cultures have the practice of contagious magic (baan mara) to cause harm to the enemies. Magic involves the use of incantations along with different body parts such as, hair, nails etc. for doing harm to a person. Again, we are reminded of medicine men (Ojha), when somebody is bitten by a snake. Moreover, many take help of incantations, (jharfuk), amulets (tabij-koboch) for treating complex diseases and health problems. In these cases people believe in the extraordinary powers of medicine men, tantric, and ojha.

Although primitive people relied heavily on magic, gradually they discovered its various weaknesses. They could understand that it was not possible to control all forces of nature with magic only. Gradually from limited power of ojha and weaknesses of magic, the concepts of more powerful supernatural power emerged and thereby developed the idea of gods and goddesses. Religion and Magic are basically based on beliefs. Though the practitioners of magic could do something practically or not, they believe that it can change the course of events or make their wishes come true. The same thing applies to religion also. Believers of different religions think that God or deities control and guide this universe. Thus some of the anthropologists think that in this way originated the idea of religion from magic in olden time.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	How did religion of minority ethnic groups originate?
Task- 02:	Why did magic begin to be practised in different religions? Is there any practice of magic in your own religion?

Lesson-06: Concept of Supernatural Power in the Religious Beliefs of Minority Ethnic Groups

There are many natural phenomena that people cannot understand with their normal intelligence and knowledge. Besides there is the fear of our death and many uncertainties are existing on our survival. Religions of minority ethnic groups offer different explanations for these events or of life and death.

One of the important aspects of religious belief of minority ethnic groups is the concept of an outer world that exists beyond our familiar world. Many believe that there is a world surrounding these supernatural powers. According to their belief this 'supernatural world' is dictated by some supernatural power or beings far more superior than human beings. Since humans believe that these beings or powers are more powerful than themselves, humans cannot have control over them. And therefore people try to be on good terms with them through observing prayers, rituals and sacrifices. It is believed that the cases of human happiness and welfare of the society are associated with satisfaction of the supernatural power.

According to the religious belief, four types of supernatural powers and beings are known, such as: (1) Creator or God; (2) Deities, gods and goddesses; (3) Souls of ancestors or dead human beings and (4) Supernatural powers or beings.

(1) Creator or God: According to some religious beliefs, which include Islam and Christianity, creator is a unitary being and He is believed to be omnipotent. This is a monotheist religion.

(2) Gods and goddesses: Many religions have the concept of god and goddess. Although these gods and goddesses are similar in existences, thoughts, feelings and activities to human beings, they possess special or supernatural powers. Some religions have the idea of more than one god or goddess. It is believed that each of these gods and goddesses own different powers with which they control different aspects of human life. These religions are called polytheistic religion. Various myths and sacred texts describe the lives, relationships and activities of the gods and goddesses. Among many minority ethnic groups different types of rituals exist in order to please the gods and goddesses.

(3) Souls of ancestors and other dead persons: In all societies more or less there are different ideas, beliefs and ritual ceremonies about human death and the dead persons. Almost in all societies it is believed that when the soul leaves the body, humans die. Though the body is cremated or buried, the soul of the dead man is not visible. So there remains much fear, belief and imagination around the power and movement of invisible souls. According to religious beliefs, people of many ethnic groups believe that the souls of their dead ancestors live near them. The soul of their ancestors can play role in controlling their good and bad, well-being and sufferings. So to appease the souls of the dead ancestors they observe many ritual ceremonies and sacrifice different things. In many societies it is believed that if someone's death is caused by suicide, accident or some unwanted reasons, the souls of those dead persons acquire power of frightening or harming the living. These kinds of souls are described in different names, such as; ghosts, female spirits, supernatural spirits etc.

(4) Supernatural or extra-world beings or power: Many of you must have already heard stories of ghosts. In the ethnic minority groups there exists concepts of supernatural existence and Powers. Different societies have different sorts of ideas of these supernatural powers or beings. Fairies, angels, demons, fawns, are believed to reside very close to human beings. In many societies it is believed that even though they are not visible with naked eyes, their presence can be felt. Moreover, it is believed that they are capable of doing both good and bad to man.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	How many types of supernatural powers and beings are there?
Task- 02:	Why and how do human beings build relationships with supernatural powers and beings?

Lesson- 07: Mythology (purans) and Beliefs of Minority Ethnic Groups

From the religious aspect, sacred tales are called myths. In the religion of the ethnic minority groups like all other religions, there are tales about how this world was created, how human beings were born and how the customs and rituals came to be. The religious myth or mythology develops with the description of the subjects like the kinds of supernatural powers, the supernatural powers of the creator or gods and goddesses and the objectives of creation of this cosmos and their processes. The mythological tales tell us about the first advent of human beings on earth, different cultural institutions and the origination of human civilization. Many rules, rituals, customs and laws of society develop in accordance with the explanations of religious myths and texts. Sacred myths or texts provide religious explanations of the good and bad, the relationship between woman and man, high and low castes or class among humans. Hence these myths are always important and acceptable to people. Many rituals and ceremonies develop around these myths in different cultures.

We will now tell you a mythical fable of the Mru of the Chattogram Hill Tracts. The Mru are followers of animistic religion. The Mru call themselves “Mrocha”. ‘Mro’ means human being and ‘Cha’ means group. According to the mru-myth, the creator of the universe Thurai once urged all the groups and nations to send a representative to him on a certain day at a certain time. He promised that he would bestow the representative with the holy book of that group. Moreover he will explain to the representative the rules and taboos of their religion to be observed. However, the Mru representative failed to reach the conference on time on the chosen day. He was old, so it took him a long time to walk to the meeting place. Upon arrival he found that the venue was empty. Meanwhile, in absence of the Mru representative, the creator Thurai had charged a cow with the responsibility to take the sacred text to the Mru. The sacred text had been written on a banana leaf. While on the way to mru, the cow was very hungry and could not but eat the banana leaf along with the sacred text. This resulted in the loss of not only the sacred text of the mru but also the written form or alphabets of their language.

According to this, the Mru believe that they lost their holy book on account of the cow. And since the lost holy book was also written in their mother tongue, they have now no written form of their mother language or any alphabet. Not only that, the cow also told to mru that Thurai was very angry with them. But later on when mru could meet Thurai, they came to know about the truth. Creator Thurai had granted the mru the permission and right to punish the cow for lying. Therefore the Mru’s greatest religious ceremony is ‘*Chiasotpoy*’. In this ceremony the Mru together kill a cow as punishment for eating their holy book. Besides for the fault of misguiding them by lying, they cut away the tongue of the cow. Mrus maintain this cow-killing ceremony for gaining the good-will of Thurai. ‘*Chiasotpoy*’ is celebrated every year at a certain time for not only for killing the cow but also for their well-being of illness or for keeping themselves safe from dangers.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What are the elements of religious thought and belief?
Task- 02:	What is myth?

Lesson-08: Religious rituals and Ceremonies of Minority Ethnic Groups

Human beings observe different behaviors, activities or rituals on the basis of their religious thoughts and beliefs. These are called religious rituals. These are part and parcel of religion. These rituals, in their meanings and importance, are different from other daily activities. People observe these religious rituals for their own welfare by pacifying the supernatural power.

People observe these regularly and successively. According to their religious belief they try to relate themselves with the holy soul, power or world through these. For this they do some definite physical postures in successions, utter holy messages and use religiously important things or materials. To carry out this program is specially important and significant for the believers. The methods of these rituals observed to pacify the supernatural power are of different kinds, such as: 1) prayer, meditation and devotion based 2) sacrifice based and 3) magic based. The visible or presentation of these rituals have many differences according to culture and religion. The members outside the ethnic minority groups observe many such rituals according to their own religion. As for example, some sort of ritual is observed in all societies for the cremation or burial of a dead body and for the welfare of the soul. According to religious thoughts, some cremate the dead body or some bury it for the welfare of the dead man and his family. And before and after the obsequies of the dead body different rites and rituals are observed. Again different rituals are observed for the fulfillment of desire, recovery from illness or to be safe from danger according to the individual belief. We describe some kinds of religious rites and rituals below with their objectives of observations and social impacts.

Forms of rites and ceremonies.	Purposes of observing rites and ceremonies.	Social consequences for observing rites, rituals and ceremonies.
Work for augmentation of sentiment: Rites, Rituals or ceremonies.	1) To control nature and environment; 2) To determine the fate of an individual; 3) To determine luck or fate of a group or society; 4) To be released from sins or their consequences; 5) For the individual's intellectual development and devotion.	A society's internal matters like: 1) Balance can be achieved between groups or clans; 2) Social solidarity, sympathy and cordiality grow, strengthen and sustain among various individuals, clans and groups.
Work for changing the stages of life: Rites, rituals or ceremonies.	To transform from one phase to another of the life or life cycle of an individual in the social status and position. For instance: 1) Celebration of ritual at the birth of a child; 2) Celebration of ritual at the	1) Changes in social status and position of an individual. 2) Acquire social acknowledgement and moral permission for carrying out social responsibilities. For example, through the

	naming of a child; 3) Celebration of ritual at the puberty of a child. 4) Celebration of ritual at the marriage of an individual; 5) Celebration of obsequies at the funeral of a dead body.	ceremony of marriage a couple is granted permission to stay together and give birth to children.
--	---	--

Anthropologists opine that the rituals and ceremonies present among the minority ethnic groups have great importance in maintaining social solidarity and unity. A sense of fraternity and unity develops among all through the celebrations of religious rites and rituals with an assemblage of all the members of the society in the mosques, temples, churches or pagodas or a place on regular basis.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Why do people observe religious rites, rituals and ceremonies?
Task- 02:	What are the social consequences of observing religious rituals and ceremonies?

Lesson- 09: Religious Beliefs and Rituals in the Mru Culture of Chattogram Hill Tracts

In the previous lesson, you have learned about the Mru's religious myth. We shall now discuss a religious ritual of the Mru. In the Mru villages diseases like malaria, diarrhoea and cholera spread in epidemic forms. Every year many Mrus are affected by these diseases. They depend, to a large extent, on the religious healing or religious rituals for curing of these diseases. Maintaining good health and food production are two major important things of their lives. So most of the religious rituals of the Mru are observed to prevent the diseases and augment food production. Every year before the beginning of shifting cultivation, that is before sowing seeds in the fields, the ritual ceremony called 'KuaKhang' is observed in the Mru villages. Members of all Mru villages fix up date and time of the ceremony. Generally it is celebrated in the month of March.

'Kua' means village and 'khang' means to close. Each Mru village celebrates the 'KuaKhang' ceremony separately. And they believe that through observance of this ritual, they can effectively close the entrance of any disease or something ominous. Through this ritual at first the boundaries of a village is demarcated. Then the village is proclaimed closed so that all the diseases and anything ominous remain outside the village boundary. 'KuaKhang' generally continues for two or three days. All the villagers participate in it with much spirit and interest. The person

who leads the ceremony is called ‘*Sra*’ or ‘*Oyammah*’. In general, the head of the village or ‘*karbari*’ plays the role of the ‘*Oyammah*’. There are also two assistants to the leader called ‘*Plairia*’.

For celebrating ‘*KuaKhang*’, some chickens are collected from every house of the village. A goat is also collected. Besides as per practice, every family contributes a hen. The rich donate more than one hen and the poor, instead of hen, donate something else. On the first day of ‘*KuaKhang*’ the hens are slain and a feast is organized for the whole village. On the second day, the goat is slain at the bank of a stream so that the blood of the animal mixes with the current of the stream. No outsider is allowed in the village within these two days of the ritual. And none can go outside the village as well. That is, the village is completely separated for the time being. Even if a girl of the village is married to a bridegroom of other village, the bridegroom also is not allowed to enter the village during the ‘*KuaKhang* ritual’. They believe that excepting the villagers, if strangers are allowed to stay in the village at that time, the defense against disasters and preventive measures for diseases become weak. After observing the ritual the ‘*Oyammah*’ or his two assistants ‘*Plairia*’ are honored with tributes of different gifts and turbans. Although this ritual is observed once a year, different rituals and ceremonies are arranged at any time of the year, when there is any epidemic, or for the recovery of an individual.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Why is ‘ <i>KuaKhang</i> ’ celebrated?
Task- 02:	How is this ceremony of ‘ <i>Kuakhang</i> ’ organized?

Lesson-10: Social Taboos of Minority Ethnic Groups and the Influence of Religion in Human Life

Despite the differences in religious beliefs and rituals among different ethnic minority groups, there are some general characteristics of religions worldwide. In every religion of the ethnic minority groups there is a form of worship and devotion toward the supernatural power. It is with this sense that people separate virtue from bad, sacred from taboo, virtue from sin, and act accordingly because they think it is only with this good behavior they can achieve the grace of the supernatural power or being. People observe different rituals with the hope of getting mercy of the supernatural power. These religious rules and prohibitions are called social taboos.

In all religions worldwide, good behavior to others and work dedicated to the welfare of humanity are considered to be the symbol of regard to the supernatural power. Different religious beliefs and rituals are being observed in society of ethnic minority groups since very olden time. Although many things have undergone

radical changes in the life of ethnic minority groups, the presence of religion continues to exist in human society. This is the reason that the roles and functions of religion in human society should, importantly, be understood. The important roles of religion are presented below:

- 1) Through social restrictions the members of minority ethnic groups form ideas relating to good and bad and thus control the behavior of the individual in the society. Suppose that you are on a visit to a house. You saw a very beautiful thing there that coveted you to take it at home without letting them know. You do not steal it even if you get the chance, but you do not do so because you know that it is called 'theft' and it is unjust, a sin. In the same way, to tell a lie or to hurt someone is also considered unjust in the society and so people refrain from doing these. Mainly religion imparts this sense of right and wrong and this moral sense debars people from misdeeds and committing crimes.
- 2) The curiosity of the ethnic minority groups about life and death and the universe is eternal. They all, now or then, think: 'Where did I come from? Where did human beings come from? Where will we go after death? How was the universe created?' Religion answers these questions in one way or the other. By providing with explanations of life-death, mystery of the creation of the universe etc, religion gives the directions about the relations between man and nature, and between man and man. Thus religion makes human life and living meaningful.
- 3) The members of the minority ethnic groups, through the observance of religious beliefs and rituals, build up a sense of intimacy and agreement of solidarity. This goes a long way to strengthen the social bondage and sustains the social system. Beliefs and values of individuals are strengthened by the participation in religious ritual ceremonies. In this way, participation in religious ceremonies creates a kind of social stability and harmony.
- 4) People suffer from various anxieties and tensions on different things. Besides there are various uncertainties and stresses, too. To get rid of these stresses and anxieties people pray to the supernatural power or perform different rituals. Thus religion cooperates with man to adjust with uncertainties.
- 5) Member of different minority ethnic groups think that both passion and fear, these two types of senses are felt through some sacred functions. Thus, through spiritual experiences human beings are mentally emancipated. It is through the observance of religious belief and rituals, human beings are liberated from different pressure creating feelings like fear, sense of guilt, repentance, shame, anger and anxiety and acquire positive emotions, such as: hope, peace, compassion etc.

- 6) Human beings cannot explain everything surrounding them with their normal knowledge; religion provides them with some kind of explanation. Humans are thus freed from different emotions, uncertainties (unable to decide) and mental pressure through religious beliefs. Again, people are encouraged to help each other by religious values. Again in many cases, although such welfare activities have no worldly benefits, the thoughts of after-life reward and welfare encourage people to perform them.

Functions of Religion: Although all religions of the world teach human beings to be tolerant with others and teach humanistic behavior, some adherents show rigid attitude. They cherish an adverse attitude towards the religions of others. Disrespect or adverse attitude towards other religions or religious ideals can call for various dangers and conflicts in the society. Excluding some problems like these, in general term, religion prevalent in the society of the minority ethnic groups can play a significant role in upholding morality of man and human welfare. It has also impacts on their social and cultural life. Religion has many psychological and social functions, some of which are described below:

Psychological Functions / Influence:	
Δ	Provides a total framework for different unknown things about the universe.
Δ	Explains the bizarre and unknown phenomena and thus removes fear, anxiety and disquiet?
Δ	Helps maintain social and moral discipline.
Δ	In the face of uncertainties, man hopes to obtain help and cooperation of the supernatural power through the observance of religious rituals. This provides man with a sense of security.

Social Functions / Influence:	
Δ	Provides with a moral framework for establishing social control and behavioral rules.
Δ	Provides with acceptable explanations for maintaining the continuity of social discipline.
Δ	Maintains social solidarity and harmony.
Δ	Strengthens the social introduction and relation of an individual with a social group.
Δ	Sustains the continuity of social traditions.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Present details of the important role played by religion on social and individual life.
Task- 02:	What are the psychological and social influences of religion in the life of the people of the ethnic minority groups?

Exercise

Multiple choice Questions

1. The sum of ideals, morality and values of man is-

- a. Consciousness b. Ideal
c. Behavior d. Works

2. The characteristic of religion is to-

- i. believe in the supernatural power and being.
ii. establish communication with the creator.
iii. remove uncertainties of man.

Which one below is true?

- a. i b. ii
c. iii d. i,ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer question numbers 3 and 4:

People from different parts of the country come to Langalband of Sonargaon upazila to take bath on the occasion of Janmastami. They take this bath as religiously meritorious.

3. What kind of ritual is taking bath at Langalband?

- a. Religious harmony b. To increase sentiment
c. Social solidarity d. Mutual solidarity

4. Through celebration of the described ritual-

- i. sins are released
ii. man becomes holy
iii. they become clean

Which one of the following option is correct?

- a. i b. ii
c. iii d. i,ii and iii

Creative Questions

1. A discussion of Umaching Marma with Rupom Chakma on the origin of religion is underway-

Umaching Marma: A man feels the presence of something invisible in his body, at the states when he sees dream, he falls asleep etc.

Rupom Chakma: It is not only in men, invisible power travels starting from animal body to the trees also. Such thought gives rise to the origin of religion.

Umaching Marma: Though with the march of time, many things of our life and livelihood have been changed, the presence of religion does exist.

- a. What is monotheism?
 - b. "The cultural values debar people from doing some definite behaviors." Write its inner meaning.
 - c. Which explanation of the origin of religion has been expressed by the discussion of Umaching Marma and Rupom Chakma? Discuss.
 - d. Analyze in the light of the text the indication given through the last speech of Umaching Marma about religion.
2. Sajib went to village during the summer vacation. One day he went with his father to attend a ritual of an other religion. There he saw a group of people ceremoniously and joyously slaughtering an animal. He asked his father: why are these men killing an animal? In reply his father told: This is celebration of their religious ritual. Due to religious belief, they observe this ritual.
- a. What is the holy tales called from the religious point of view?
 - b. Explain one characteristic of the religion of ethnic minority.
 - c. State the background of the celebration of religious ritual of the minority ethnic groups as seen by Sajib.
 - d. Evaluate the influence of the religious ceremony as described in the stem.

Chapter Three

Political life of Minority Ethnic Groups

People get involved in political activities. There are some definite customs and traditions in each and every culture for managing the social affairs well. Political system or political culture starts with the distribution of power and leadership. The more the human civilization has advanced, the more their political life, too, has developed. The culmination of this is the modern democracy or democratic social system. The minority ethnic groups are the inseparable part of the greater political system of Bangladesh. Still they have, side by side, their own political culture. In this chapter, we shall learn the traditional political system of the minority ethnic groups in Bangladesh.



On completion of this chapter, we would be able to –

- learn the customary administration of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh;
- describe the customary rules of the minority ethnic groups;
- describe the modes of social justice and explain the methods;
- analyze the impact of the customary administrative system upon the living of the minority ethnic groups;
- be interested to know about the political life style of the minority ethnic groups.

Lesson- 01 and 02: Customary Administrative System

The ethnic minorities of Bangladesh, like other countries of the world, do have their own customary administrative systems. He, who is the chief or headman of the community, is the head of the institution of customary ruling system. He is the symbol of social unity and solidarity in the minority ethnic society.

In Chattogram Hill Tracts, the way of life of various minority ethnic groups including the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Mro, Kiang etc is even now led by their customary laws and administrative system. These are recognized by the state laws. There are three circles or conventional administrative regions comprising three districts of Chattogram Hill Tracts, viz: Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari for the minority ethnic groups. They are chakma circle, bhomang circle and mong circle. The chakma circle lies in Rangamati district, the bhomang circle in Bandarban district and the mong circle lies in Khagrachari district. There is a circle chief in each circle, who is popularly known as the King. Each circle is again divided into some moujas and the moujas are in some adams or paras (village in Bengali). Each mouja has a headman, who is appointed by the deputy commissioner with the recommendation of the king. The headman collects jhum or land revenue as determined by the government from the subjects of the mouja and plays a very important role in maintaining peace and discipline in the society including the discharge of social justice. Similarly a karbary is the chief of a para. He, too, tries to maintain peace and discipline in his para or adam and resolves any dispute of the social members. These disputes are resolved according to the customary laws in vogue in the society of the minority ethnic groups. If someone is not happy with the verdict of the customary court of the karbary, he can move in the court of the headman and, if he is not satisfied, he can appeal in the court of the king. In a similar manner, minority ethnic groups like Mandis, Khasis, Manipuris, Santal, Hajong etc. have their own customary laws and rules in their society. Of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh, the Mandis and Khasis are matrilineal. The akhing nakma (nakma means chief), sangni nakma (village chief), chra-pante (male relations of a female) etc play a very important role in resolving the internal disputes and maintaining social order of the mandi society. With the increase of the credulity of the general administration of the country, the importance of the customary institutions of the mandis has reduced. Still the customary moral rules and traditions are obeyed as far as possible. Likewise, there are the traditional institutions like mantri or headman system based on the calendar, council "senkur", "khadduh" etc based on the lineage. Among the hajongs, some families form a para and some paras form a village. The title of the para head is the "gaon bura" and the village head is called a moral. A chakla or a Joar is formed of some villages and a pargona is formed of some chaklas. The chief of the pargona is the "sar-e moral" and the title of the pargona chief is the "raja". The raja is the highest administrator, protector and the sustainer of the hajongs. But the raja tradition among the hajong in Bangladesh is

no more in vogue. On the other hand, the traditional social leadership and administrative system are still in use among the santals. The village head is called the “manjohi”. He, who is morally guardian of all is the jagmanjohi. Besides they have the paranik (assistant to manjohi), nayke (priest), kudom nayke (assistant to the priest), and godeth (messenger). For the resolution of any social dispute, they have the four level traditional system of justice. These are village panchayet, pargona panchayet, panchayet of the country chief and la-bir or jangal mohasabha (the great court of the jungle). The area identified for living is called by the santals deshah. La-bir is the highest seat of justice that sits once a year. The complicated problems of the society are solved in this court through mutual discussion. The chief of the La-bi is called Dihri. Thus the minority ethnic groups residing in Bangladesh have been following their traditional laws, customs and culture and regulations through ages and generations after generations.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Give a description of the framework of the traditional administrative system of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh.
Task- 02:	Write what you know about the traditional administrative system of Hajong and Santal minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh.

Lesson - 03 : Differences between the Traditional and the State System of Administration

You must have grown interest to know in detail, what really the customary administrative system of the minority ethnic group is? What is the need? To know well about the customary administrative system, we are to understand its difference with the general administration of the country. We know that there is a general administrative system in our country. Under this administrative system, there is a constitution, a government. To run this government there are legislative division, administration division and judiciary. Thus in a country all the activities carried out through different units of the government for the welfare of general mass is the administrative system of the country. This system is applicable for all citizens and regions of the country, irrespective of caste, creed and color.

On the other hand, the customary administration is a limited system of administration. Because the system is applied only to a special group of people and it does not apply to the general mass of the country. Generally this customary administrative system is in operation in the society of different minority ethnic groups of the world. Before this, we have come to learn that the minority ethnic groups were historically outside the general administration of the state all along. The regions of their habitation were mainly inaccessible and, being surrounded by the mountains, hills and forests, they lay outside the direct administration or observation. Thus from

time immemorial, they obeyed their own king or chief of their clan, developed separate culture, practice and living process and became habituated in living with close contact of nature. They remained isolated from the general administration or the administrative system of the country. So there developed some special customs, rules and values through the generations. For the general members of the society, it was obligatory to follow them. For the resolution of any dispute among them, they would abide by the decision given by the headman of the village, mouja, clan or by the king. Thus gradually there grew some universally acceptable special rules, usages, and traditions for maintaining proper discipline and administration in each and every sphere of life, that's, in their family, social and tribal life. These customs and rules were recognized as customary laws. When a society is ruled with these customary laws, then it is called customary administrative system. Due to lack of constitutional recognition of Bangladesh, these customary laws and culture have been facing threat gradually. The importance of these customary laws and rules of the minority ethnic groups has been decreasing slowly due to lack of application in the general administration or recognition by the constitution of the country. There should be variety and multi-dimension in the society and culture of Bangladesh. So it is urgently needed that the separate culture and customary administrative system must be maintained on priority basis.

Lesson-04 : The leadership and Power Structure of the Minority Ethnic Groups

A sharp difference can be observed in the customary leadership and power structure among the minority ethnic groups according to their origin and the region they live. For example: of the 45 minority ethnic groups in the country, Mandis and Khasis are matrilineal and the rest are patrilineal. Naturally there are many differences between the social structures of matrilineal and patrilineal societies. Besides the traditional power structures of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts and others of plane land of the country also have many differences. The society of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram is patrilineal. They are residents of either of the chakma, bhomang and mong circles. The circle chief is a king and the court of the king is the highest court in the customary administrative system. The king discharges social justice and resolves disputes of different minority ethnic groups within his circle according to customary rules of the individual groups concerned. The next tier below him is the headman or the chief of the mouja. He resolves the disputes and renders justice to the residents within his mouja and collects taxes as per government rates on the lands and jhums. The aggrieved person can appeal to the court of the king, if he is not satisfied with the verdict of the headman. Below him is the village chief or the karbary. He, too, settles the disputes of the village dwellers in the same manner and maintains peace and order in the village. A village (in chakma an adam or a para) is formed of some families. Father is the head of the family. The role of the

father is dominant in taking any decision of the family. On the other side, among the khasis and Mandis, being matrilineal, the role of mother or maternal uncle is the dominant. Of course, exceptions are found in some cases.

Though there does not exist any king as chief of the society in the Mandis today, there was kingdom or king's administration among the mandis in old time. Many changes have occurred in the customary leadership and power structure of the Mandis with changes of time. Once the customary institutions like akhing nakma (akhing means chief), sangni nakma (village chief), chra-pante (male relations of the females) had much importance. Formerly all social disputes and crimes were tried through these institutions. Now the importance of these institutions is greatly reduced. As a result the members of the society in these connections have become dependent upon the well established persons in different fields, leaders of the tribunal welfare associations, union council, district council and general administration and courts of the country.

On the other hand, the traditional customary institutions in the Manipuri society exists as yet. A very important unit is the para or village among the manipuris. Each village has a village panchayet. A senior and respectable person of the village is appointed the chief of the panchayet. The village chief resolves the disputes and renders justice to the villagers. The pargona panchayet is formed of all the villages of manipuris. The top level persons of the society including the people's representatives are the members of this pargona panchayet. This pargona panchayet resolves the complicated and unresolved disputes and issues of the village panchayets. The leadership of another Manipuri institution known as singloop is very important. All matters relating to the religion are resolved in the singloop. The senior persons and the learned are the important members of this singloop.

Similarly all the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh have their own customary leadership and power structures. But except a few minority ethnic groups of Chattogram, almost all others have their common characteristic of village centered customary power. Different customary institutions, leadership and power structures have developed around the village community. The importance of general administration along with this has been increasing gradually in the society of the minority ethnic groups. Because many of the advanced and literate people of the society, by joining the major political parties of the country, have been working as the elected representatives of people or discharging their duties by joining the bureaucracy in the army or civil services. Attempts to coordinate between the general administration and customary system have been made in some cases. The coexistence of customary leadership and general administrative system in Chattogram is an interesting example here. There are both the customary leadership

and power structure of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram (raja-headman-karbary) along with the CHT (Chattogram Hill Tract-CHT) regional council, Chattogram district council and the general district and upazila administrations of the country. The CHT-pact between the government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattogram Jansanghati Samity was signed on the 2nd of December, 1997. As a result of the CHT pact, the CHT-regional council was constituted of. A political representative elected from amongst the hilly community by the hilly people is basically responsible for running this council.

Among the many responsibilities the CHT-regional council performs, are all the developmental activities and other matters conducted under three hilly district councils, municipalities and other local councils of the CHT, general administration and supervision and coordination of law and order situation of the three hilly districts; supervision and coordination of the award of licenses for heavy industries together with the customary rules, community justice, relief and disaster management of the minority ethnic groups, NGO activities, the programs of the CHT development board etc. Besides many workers and leaders of the minority ethnic groups join national political parties and play important role in the national politics. Some of them were elected parliament members, chairman of the district or upazila council or members. Among the members of the minority ethnic groups, even some have worked as the members of the cabinet of the ministers. Apart from the customary leadership and administrative framework, the participation and role playing of the minority ethnic groups in national politics is important for their development.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Discuss the perspective of the formation of the CHT regional council and its responsibilities.
Task- 02:	State the customary leadership and power structure of the Manipuris. Is the title of a minister or that of a parliament member the part of the customary leadership and power structure of the minority ethnic groups?

Lesson-05: The Customary Laws

The minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh have their own customary laws. There are differences in the laws of different groups. The customary laws of different ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts are similar, but they have many dis-similarities with those of the minority ethnic groups of plane lands. Here we shall discuss the customary laws of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts and also some of them of the plane lands.

Definition of customary laws: Customary laws are the way of life of people and an established system or method of eternal rules and regulations arising out automatically and naturally from different necessities of life. The collective knowledge of the members of community people lay at the root of these eternal customs and regulations or laws, and the previous examples or precedents, which are in use among the society members from time immemorial on the measures to be taken for a particular problem. The leaders of the common ethnic groups, their councilors, their sons and the sons of these sons, later on, will continue to bear in mind these rules and regulations generation after generation. As they bear in memory these rules and regulations ages after ages, it is very likely that some of them might be lost from their memory. And whatever left, become eternal rules and regulations. Thus the universal rules or the prescriptions well established among the ethnic groups are the customary laws.

Of course there is no hard and fast rule that the customary rule must be very old and that the chief is to follow them. Even a customary law may be contemporary and general members of the community may implement it.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is meant by customary law?
Task- 02:	What are different types of customary laws present in your society? Find them out.

Lesson-06: Difference between Customary and General Laws

Before this, we have learnt that the perpetual rules and regulations or customs which are followed by an ethnic group across generations through ages, or the collections of those customs and regulations are the customary laws. The customary law is applicable only to the concerned ethnic group or community. These customary laws of an ethnic group are not applicable to those who are not its members. On the other hand, the general laws are promulgated by the state through the government. They are applicable throughout the whole of the country and are equally to every citizen. The state, through the government formulates, appropriate policy from time to time for maintaining peace, discipline and stability in the society and for ensuring the development, well-being and total welfare of the citizens. On the basis of this policy, definite rules and regulations and guidelines are prepared for the implementation of the above policy in the concerned areas. After getting approval from the cabinet and the parliament and then on receiving the consent and signature of the honorable president of the state, these rules and regulations become the state laws. After becoming laws, these rules and regulations become suitable for applications in the judicial system of the courts and are equally applicable to all citizens through different state departments of general administration of the

government. In this sense the state laws are wide and universal. Its sphere is wide and it is applicable to all citizens.

The customary laws originate with a specific ethnic group and are applicable only to that community. These customary laws are insurmountable for the members of the concerned ethnic group, but in the state sphere, are not obligatory. The state does not arrange punishment if someone breaks the customary laws but the concerned community does that. Some rule or practice, when followed through ages, generations after generations, by an ethnic group becomes very deep rooted. So exception is not tolerated or it becomes almost impossible to disobey the custom. This rule or folk-practice turn into eternal custom or prescription. And to this custom the concerned ethnic group has deep belief, regard and weaknesses. To this dependence is associated their worldly or extra-worldly belief, primary knowledge, experience of thousand years and some traditional habits and practices.

In Bangladesh, though not applicable to the plain land communities, the customary laws and way of life of the minority ethnic groups of the hilly areas are recognized by the state according to the Chattogram Hill Tracts Administrative Rules-1900. The CHT- Administrative Rules-1900 is still in force in Chattogram Hill Tracts, although the general laws and administrative systems, side by side the Constitution of the country, have been amended several times. The customary laws and way of life of the minority ethnic groups have been recognized by the administrative rules. The article 152 of Bangladesh constitution, in the explanations of the subject matters to be considered as laws, said that "law" means some law, ordinance, order, rule, regulation, by-laws, circular and other legal documents, and any other customs or usages with legal authority in Bangladesh. From this point of view, it can be said that the customs and usages used for ages together by the minority ethnic groups have some sort of constitutional recognition.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Write down the differences between customary laws and general laws of the country.
Task- 02:	Explain "Chattogram Hills Tracts Administrative Rules-1900."

Lesson-07: Trial under Customary Laws

The use of Customary Laws by the minority ethnic groups in Bangladesh occupies a very important place in leading their daily lives. For serious cases they go to the court of general law or administration; but in general, the minority ethnic groups resolve their disputes or problems with the customary laws even now. As for example, there are district administration and courts in Chattogram Hill Tracts. The

minority ethnic groups, besides the criminal cases or serious cases relating to land, settle their social disputes or problems by the customary laws in the courts of the karbary, headman or the king. The cases settled here under customary laws are generally the cases of marriages and dissolution of marriages, inheritance of properties, adoption of a son, status of the wife and her sustenance, paternity, and determination of responsibilities of a father, guardianship of a minor, receipt of donation and transfer, sustenance of the families, execution of will and doing harm to others' properties, dishonor, antisocial activities etc including various social disputes and crimes. The sources of these customary laws of minority ethnic groups are the way of life, values and beliefs cherished from old time, religious allegiance and injunctions, nature, biodiversity and inseparable regard and respect to their culture of the concerned group. A list of the offences tried or settled under the customary laws of minority ethnic groups in Chattogram hill tracts is given below:

Nature of offences:

1. Disputes concerning the ownership of land for cultivation of jhum and other properties;
2. Theft or dispossession of crops, domesticated animals etc;
3. Doing harm or destroying the holiness of the social properties or services of the community, such as: community water aquifer, social forest, roads, religious places, graveyards, etc;
4. To destroy crops of others' lands or gardens;
5. To dishonor others and torture physically and mentally;
6. To spoil social peace and order by creating quarrel in the family or society;
7. To spoil the honor of the family and the society by doing various antisocial activities including telling lies; doing corruption, pilferage etc;
8. Negligence to the supply of sustenance to the family members and other duties to them;
9. Dispute over inheritances and sharing of the properties;
10. To marry someone of other religion or community;
11. Not to pay back the loan or debt;
12. To show disregard to social customs or traditions and to injure the religious or social beliefs or feelings;
13. To destroy natural wealth and kill animals and birds of forests randomly and indiscriminately;
14. To hinder to the way of education, oppose to perform cultural and religious activities etc.

The minority ethnic groups of plain land also, like those of Chattogram Hill Tracts, settle different problems and disputes of their societies with the customary laws. Nevertheless the influence of the state general administration and judicial systems has been increasing gradually upon their society. In spite of this, the minority ethnic groups, obey mainly their own customary laws in case of settlement of their social problems and disputes. Here mention may be made of the social system of the Mandis, living in different districts of the country including greater Mymensingh. The Mandis have been maintaining peace and order in their society through ages together by following some customary moral laws and rules. They believe, if someone in the society does corruption, breaks social rules or does unjust act, then saljong and susime, the gods of the sun and moon respectively punish him. Besides, the traditional village court, chra, too, arrange for his punishment. In Mandi society, the following acts are considered to be the severe offences: to disobey religious rules or injunction, not to help the endangered and collection of wood, bamboo etc from the holy reserved forests, to disregard the dead person, to marry in the same clan, not to participate in the mass welfare activities; to steal, to play false and threaten somebody, not to pay back loan, to do harm to others etc. Besides the punishment of gods, there are rules in the society for punishment for these offences. Similar customary laws, with little exceptions, are also followed, more or less, by all other minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh including Santals, Manipuri, Hajong, Koch, Dalu, Borman, Khasi, Oraon and Munda.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Which offences are generally tried under the traditional laws of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh?
Task- 02:	Which kinds of customary laws are followed by the Mandi minority ethnic group? Generally in which cases are those applied?

Lesson-08: Social System of Justice

Perhaps there is no much difference between the general judicial system and the customary social judgment system of the minority ethnic groups of the country in establishing fair justice and equity. But there are many differences in the procedures and the subject matters and spheres of judgment. The general civil and criminal judgments in the country are conducted under the laws approved and promulgated through the national parliament of Bangladesh. On the other hand, the judgments in the society of minority ethnic groups are done on the basis of the customs, beliefs, values, and obligatory rules and injunctions followed through ages together and obtained from their forefathers from generations to generations. For the conduct of general judicial system, there are laws, courts, administration or different government institutions. And under the customary laws, the social judgments are conducted by different moral and social authorities prescribed at different stages by the ethnic

groups. Their responsibilities are to ensure the justice for the complainant according to the available social customary laws. At this stage we shall discuss some judicial arrangements as prevalent among the minority ethnic groups in the regions of Chattogram Hill Tracts according to their customary laws.

Each of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts has its own separate customary laws. Still how the judicial system will be run has been prescribed by the Chattogram Regulations (administrative rules) 1900. Under the regulations, the three circle chiefs or the kings, and the headmen and the karbarys below them, ensure social justice and fairness according to the available customary laws of the individual minority ethnic groups. The Chattogram regulations 1900 have prescribed three layer judicial system in Chattogram hill tracts. These are the courts of the karbarys, courts of the headmen and the courts of the kings. The picture of the administrative system in Chattogram hill tracts has been shown below:

Customary administration in Chattogram Hill Tracts

Title	Administrative areas.
The king or the Queen	Three circle chiefs of Chakma, Bhomang and Mong.
Headmen	Chiefs of moujas. At present there are 390 moujas.
Karbarys	Chiefs of the paras or villages.

Fig-3.1: Framework of Chattogram hill tracts customary administration.

Karbary's court is the lowest layer of the social justice System. Karbary is the chief of the para or village. In some cases he is the chief of the clan, too. He settles different quarrels, disputes, social problems and offences according to the customary laws of the members of the society. The aggrieved party, if not satisfied, can appeal to the court of the headman. A headman is the chief of the mouja. A mouja consists of some paras or villages. The headman gives decision on all matters submitted to him by the inhabitants of the mouja. Again the aggrieved person may appeal to the court of the king.

The headman and the king can impose pecuniary punishment on the accused or can detain a person for a period. They can compel the accused to return the assets or properties collected by unfair means.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Show the differences between the general Judgment and customary judgment of the minority ethnic groups.
Task- 02:	What are the responsibilities and powers of the headman and the karbary as conferred upon by the Chattogram Hill Tracts Administrative Rules 1900.

Lesson-09 and 10: Example of Social Justice of a Minority Ethnic Group

A forbidden or unapproved marriage in Chakma: To marry a blood related near relation and a bridegroom outside the religion or caste is forbidden in Chakma tradition. These types of marriages are considered to be forbidden or unapproved marriages. There is provision for punishing the couple involved in forbidden or unapproved marriage through the social court. Though they utter affidavit or perform other rituals as per the social custom and lead conjugal life, yet this marriage is considered forbidden or unapproved marriage. According to the customs of chakma society, one is to pay a boar and money as penalty for this forbidden marriage.

Inheritance of properties by a chakma woman: There is provision for solution by customary laws if there is any problem in chakma society. Generally it is said that a woman in chakma society does not inherit paternal properties. This complain is not true in the strict sense. A father may divide his assets among his sons and daughters equally, if he wishes. Besides if a father dies leaving no son, his daughters can acquire the ownership of his properties. If a brother dies without any son or other inheritor, sisters inherit his properties. Besides the widow of a dead husband inherit his properties. At present chakma women claim equal share with male inheritors. On this a wide discussion is underway to amend the customary laws.

Social judgment System of Lusai ethnic group : Of all the ethnic groups living in the Chattogram Hill Tracts, the Lusais are the least in numbers. The Lusai society chief or the sarder is called "Lal". Before the British administration, the administration and judgment in the Lusai society would be conducted under the leadership of "Lal". To assist the society chief or the sarder, people under the titles upa (counselor), puithium (priest), jalen (neutral person), ram-hual-tu (land specialist), tulongau (announcer), and thirdeng (blacksmith) were engaged. With the promulgation of Chattogram hill tracts administrative Rules 1900, all of their social disputes have been settled in the three tier customary courts, such as: karbary, headman and chief of the circle. According to customary law of Lusai, the wife does not inherit the properties of the dead husband. The sons of the dead inherit all properties of the dead. And in absence of any son, the property goes to the brother, brother's sons or any blood related male of the clan of the dead man. The lion's share of the paternal

properties goes to the youngest son. Because he gives sustenance to the parents according to the Lusai tradition. But if the widow of the dead resides with the issues, then she is offered highest status in the family. On the other hand, if she marries again, she loses the right of getting sustenance till death from the former husband's family.

The female issues, though do not inherit parental property, get all sustenance up to their marriage from the family. But there is no limitation for the daughters to receive any property donated or willed by parents or any other person. The wife shares the property of the husband in case of marriage dissolution. The Lusai woman enjoys the unhindered right on the property acquired by the husband before or after the marriage with money gained by him or by any other legal means. Due to some socially recognized reasons, both the wife or the husband may dissolve the marriage through the social chief or social court. In Lusai, the marriage dissolution is called 'inthen'. The second marriage of the widow or divorcee is permissible in the Lusai society. But if the husband does not render sustenance to the wife, or does not continue conjugal life, or the daughter or the wife feel that above rights applicable to herself are denied, she can regain those rights by instituting suit to the social chief 'lal' or the social or civil courts.

Customary social judgment of Oraon ethnic group: For the settlement of all disputes and maintaining peace and order in the society, oraon has their village organizations established through democracy. These organizations are called 'panjesh' in their language. The panjesh is generally formed for three to five years with seven or eight aged persons of the village. Each village has a headman or mohatosh and a priest or 'naigas'. Panjesh is basically run by them. The complainant is to pay a definite fee to the panjesh. The amount of this fee for general disputes is Tk.1.25 and for land disputes, it is from Tk.10.00 to tk.25.00. If the person is not satisfied with the verdict of the panjesh, the aggrieved may appeal to the 'panrhapanjesh'. Panrha' is a confederation of ten to twelve villages. One of the headmen of the villages is elected chief of the parha or the king. 'Panrha belas' is the name in oraon. The 'panrha panjesh' is conducted under his leadership. The decision made by the 'panrha panjesh' is the final on any dispute occurred in the society or the villages. No remuneration is required for these judgments or for the members of the panjesh. Voluntarily they maintain peace and order in the society at the cost of their labors. But due to slackness of the social bondage, many of the Oraon society have become more interested in the general laws and courts of the country.

Customary social judgment of Mandi ethnic group: Some examples of social judgment procedures of the Mandi group like those of the Oraon may be mentioned here. The village chief and the respectable persons of the Villages arrange for offering punishment for offences like stealing, setting fire, falsehood, sharing out properties,

giving threats, attempt to violate modesty, etc. As' for example, if a thief is caught, he is to return all the lost assets or total values of the asset in taka. If a house is burnt, the accused is compelled to reconstruct the house and the penalty as determined by the village chief is realized from him. Failing to repay debts, the movable or immovable properties of the debtor are sold to refund the debts. If any member of the society, threatens any one of the same society, he is to pay a penalty of Tk.1000.00. But due to various unfavorable circumstances in Bangladesh, importance of customary courts has been reduced and many of the Mandis have taken shelter to the general administration and the courts. Though other minority ethnic groups have their own traditional judicial systems in use, they have no constitutional cognizance as yet. Moreover the influence of the general administrative and judicial system of the country being dominant, the importance of the customary laws and judiciary system has been decreasing with time.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is approved marriage in Chakma society? Explain the contribution of the customary laws in case of inheritance of woman in properties.
Task- 02:	Describe the customary leadership and the inheritance system in the Lusai ethnic group.
Task- 03:	Describe the panjesh tradition in the Oraons and give some examples of penalties in their social judgments.
Task- 04:	What punishment is awarded to the accused in social judgment of Mandi ethnic group?

Exercise

Multiple Choice Questions

1. In which district, the mong circle lies?

- a. Khagrachari
- b. Rangamati
- c. Bandarban
- d. Mymensingh.

2. With the advance of human civilization-

- i. urbanization occurs
- ii. democratic mentality forms
- iii. the literacy rate increases

Which one of the following is true?

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. i and ii
- d. ii and iii

- d. Analyze how far are the above rules applicable on the minority ethnic groups living in the plain land?

2. Anupam Khisa lives in a village of Rangamati district. One day he had a dispute over land with the neighbor. He demanded justice to the chief of the para. He was not satisfied with the judgment of the chief. So he appealed to the chief above the para chief. This chief, on hearing the arguments of both sides, gave a good solution.

- a. What is chra-pante?
- b. How is the chakla of hajong formed ?
- c. Explain the functions of the chief who discharged fair justice to Anupam Khisa.
- d. Evaluate the importance of the customary judicial system in the solution of complex social problems.

Chapter Four

Minority Ethnic Groups in Movements and struggles

Bangladesh has a glorious history of movements, struggles and rebellions. People of this country rebelled many times against oppression, extortion and repression. In movements and struggles, the members of the minority ethnic groups have many contributions. They organized, in order to realize their rights or establish their rights, the great movements like Santal rebellion, Munda rebellion, Khasis rebellion, Hajong rebellion, Mandi rebellion, the riang rebellion of Tripuras, farmer rebellion of Manipuris etc. Even minority ethnic groups have much contribution in language movement of 1952, and in its continuity, in the independence movement of seventy one. There is a short discussion here on this subject.

On completion of this chapter, we would be able to–

- describe, of all the anti-colonial movements, the movements like Santal rebellion, tangka and tebhaga movement, Hajong rebellion etc;
- explain the significance of the participation of the minority ethnic groups in the anti-British movement;
- evaluate the participation and contribution of the minority ethnic groups of plain land and hilly areas in Liberation War;
- be interested in knowing the events of the war of liberation and know the contributions made by different minority ethnic groups;
- prepare a list of the personalities among the minority ethnic groups demonstrating heroism during the war of liberation and subsequently receiving official title of honors;
- interested to know about different events of the liberation war and motivated to remember the contribution of the people of the minority ethnic groups in the liberation war.

Lesson-01: Anti-British Movement

After the struggle against the colonial British administration, the Pakistani administrators were attacking the history and culture of Bengal, in the name of religion. Protest, movement and struggle were started against this attack of Pakistanis on language and culture. The language movement unfolded the secular Bangali nationality based on language, culture, tradition and geography. Through the partition of India in 1947 and to some extent, within the adverse environment, our struggle for social, economic, cultural and political emancipation, that is the war of independence started.

The farmers first hoisted the flag of independence in India against the mal-administration and oppression of two hundred years of English rule. The rebellions of Bangladeshi farmers created a glorious tradition. They had direct participation in the movements like the ascetic rebellion, Titumir rebellion of 24 pargona district, farmers' rebellion under the leadership of Dudumia in Faridpur, Santal rebellion, rebellion of the indigo cultivators, the Choar rebellion of 1779, Khasi rebellion of 1783, Naga rebellion of 1818, Tebhaga movement of 1946. We observe that right from the British period to the war of independence of 1971, the minority ethnic groups had active participation with the main stream population in each and every movement and struggle against mal-administration and oppressions.

All the members of the minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts including those of Manipuri, Mandi, Khasia, Coch, Hajong, Tripura and Santai, Oraon, Munda and Mahle have experience of movement against the British colonial administration. The movements of these people have proud names in the history. As for example: Santal rebellion, Munda rebellion, Hajong rebellion, Tangka movement, etc. Even, in tebhaga movement, too, the minority ethnic groups directly participated. Many heroes and heroins of the minority ethnic groups have taken their places in the history including Sidhu and Kanu, the great heroes of Santai rebellion, Birasa munda, the great hero of Munda rebellion, Kumudini hajong, the famous lady of the Tangka movement. And in the great war of our liberation, the members of the minority ethnic groups have fought along with Bangalees. The women folk of the minority ethnic groups were oppressed. Man and woman of the minority ethnic groups had unparallel contribution in each and every democratic movement. A short statement is given here.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Who first launched rebellion against the two hundred years of British administration and oppression?
Task- 02:	Mention the names of five anti-British movements led by the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh.

Lesson-02: The Santal Rebellion

The Santal rebellion occurred not only once but time and again. The foundation of British administration was shaken by the first Santal rebellion of 1780-85 under the leadership of Tilaka majhee. Later on rebellion occurred under the leadership of Jitu and Samu in 1855, 1871, 1874, 1880-81, and 1933. Of all these rebellions, the Santal rebellion of 1855-56 left wide scale impact.

The Santal rebellion was launched in 1855 against the British government and the zaminders and creditor classes. After much toil and trouble they built up a settlement, named 'damin-e- koh' (now in India) which they could, no more, protect it. English police, creditors and the envious merchants penetrated in that virgin life. These avaricious classes used to transport large quantities of paddy, mustard, and different oil seeds by cart loads first to Murshidabad and then to Calcutta. These commodities were then exported to England from there. The creditors used to pay a little money, salt, tobacco or clothes for the above commodities to the Santals. Thus the exploitation by the creditors and the merchants became dangerous. The creditors purchased Santals as slaves for the whole of their life by giving them a little money or commodities during their bad days. The creditors started money lending business among the Santals. But this lending had no fixed rate of interest. A Santal had to lose his crops of his land, the bullocks of his cultivation and even himself and his wife, too. And whatever he loaned would remain intact, although he would repay ten times the loaned amount. These simple Santals, believing the avaricious outsiders, began to be deceived. Besides majority of the Santals could not have the ability to repay the capital and interest of the creditors. As a result, the day after receiving the loan, the Santals along with his family, had to work as slave in the house of the creditor. The loan could never be refunded in his life time. He would leave at his death a great burden of loan to his lineage. To emancipate themselves from this oppression of the creditors, one day the Santals launched a rebellion against the creditors.

The Santals organized an assemblage in the village of Vognadihi under santal pargona on June 30, 1855 and took oath to establish an independent state of Santals. Two Santal brothers, Sidhu and Kanu led this assemblage. That day they started for Calcutta on foot for realization of their demands. Gradually the two brothers became the emancipators of the santal. They announced among the villagers that their rebellion was God's verdict. About thirty to fifty thousand santal participated in that protest of foot travel with arrows and spears. After this, a conflict started with the government army. This battle spread through the entire santal area. The Santals being aggrieved, killed Bangalee money lenders, the usurers including the darogas (an inspector or sub-inspector or asstt. inspector of police). The British authority plunged upon them to subdue this rebellion with all its arms and soldiers. At this time, a cavalry of 500 soldiers, 40 elephants and two canons were sent from Murshidabad. At first the British

forces, being defeated retreated. Thus the Santals could establish their authority over a vast land inhabited by them. The British authority later on, when the rainy season ended, attacked with reinforced new arms and ammunitions. The Santals were on the hills and the government soldiers, on the plain lands. The clever English soldiers could realize that the canons and guns were useless in the hills. So they put trap before the Santals by allowing them to land on the plains and when they were thus trapped to come down the lands, the english solders led all out attack on them from all sides. The Santals began to die when they went forward to the field with the belief that the bullets could not pierce their bodies with the blessings of gods. At last the Santals were defeated. About twenty thousand Santals died. The Santal leaders Sidhu and Kanu were wounded and arrested. Fundamentally the Santals were defeated by the war strategy, canons and guns of the English soldiers. Thus the dream for independence of the Santals ended in fiasco.

Exercise

Task- 01:	In which year did the first santal rebellion take place?
Task- 02:	Why did the santals rebel on June 30, 1855?

Lesson- 03: The Munda rebellion

The historical Munda rebellion is memorable in the history of anti-British movement in Indian subcontinent. This movement started under the leadership of Birasa munda. He sacrificed his life for the realization of their rights and independence. Birasa munda was born in a munda family in 1875. He received a little education in a school conducted by the missionaries. At that time there was no school for educating the minority ethnic groups. Because the opinion was that the children of the ethnic groups should not be educated. Birasa was considered to be the god to his munda people. Although he was also victim of oppression, hunger, mal-nutrition. The movement of Birasa was not only against the British, this movement was conducted against the Indian money-lenders, priests, land-lords, tea garden owners, who under the power of the British oppressed them by misusing power. Birasa decided that he would establish a state for the Mundas for good administration and principle. In order to expel the British he had been organizing the minority ethnic groups. This rebellion was staged in the southern region of Rachi of India under the leadership of Birasa munda in 1899-1900. He was released after two years of imprisonment in 1897. They were then preparing for an incredible rebellion or "ulgulan". Basically this movement was organized for regaining the rights on the lost lands and to halt the oppression and exploitation of the Jaminders, contractors etc. Birasa and his followers fought by throwing firing arrows to all the government offices, police stations, mission houses in Singbhoom, Tamar and Basiar on 24 December, 1899. But they couldn't stand before the government forces. He was arrested on January 9, 1900. He had a mysterious death after a few days in the jail of Rachi. Though Birasa died, the movement for rights of the Munda did not stop.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Why did the first Munda rebellion occur? Who led it?
Task- 02:	In which year did Birasa have a mysterious death and where?

Lesson-04: Hajong Rebellion and Tangka Movement

The minority ethnic group Hajong has the glorious and heroic history of movement. They moved in different times for their rights against the British and the local zaminders. The role of Hajong in the anti-British movement was very bright. In the raja rebellion, hatikheda movement, farmers' rebellion, tangka movement and, even in the great war of liberation, their participation was proactive and contribution was mentionable.

Hatikheda movement: The Hajong community once considered the zaminders as the god like fate givers. They used to cooperate in works of the zaminders. As an opportunity the zaminders found ways to earn big money by employing them to render service gratis under pressure. At the order of the zaminders they were employed in risky jobs like capturing wild elephants and in return they would get a small plot of land. At the risk of life, they would capture elephants, but they were not given fair wages. So they denied doing this work. Thus the Hajongs became rebellious in 1873.

Gradually Hajongs, denying the work of capturing wild elephants, became interested in other works. At last under the leadership of some Mona Sarder, Hajong declared rebellion in 1893. They said that they would no more participate in capturing wild elephant. The Mandi community, too, being aggrieved already at the oppression of the zaminders, also declared solidarity with the Hajong. When the united rebellion of the Hajong and Mandi became intensified, the zaminders killed Mona Sarder brutally pressing under the feet of elephant.

Tangka movement: Tangka movement was basically a farmers' movement. The duration of this movement was from 1938 to 1949. Tangka means paddy as taxes in condition. As per condition of the tangka practice, the land owner must be given the promised amount of paddy whether there was crop or not. As a result, if in any year, they failed to grow any crop, or droughts or natural calamity destroyed crops, the farmers were to pay the tax as per condition. At this, the farmers of minority ethnic groups including Hajong, were dangerously in economic crisis. Due to some reason, if they failed to pay the taxes, they had to suffer oppression and repression.

The farmers used to pay taxes in terms of paddy. As per the condition they were to pay 10 to 15 maunds of paddy for every 1.25 acres of land, which in taka were more than two-folds. In Garo hill area, this pact was known as tangka practice. This practice was in use in north Kalmakanda, Haluaghat, Durgapur, Nalitabari, Sribardi upazila of greater Mymensingh district. This custom was, widely used, especially in the estate of

Susong zaminder whereas at that time the land tax for every 1.25 acres was only taka five to seven. And paddy would sell at taka 2.25 for every maund. As a result the farmers had to pay per plot of 1.25 acres an additional tax of taka fifteen to twenty. This practice would benefit not only the zaminders, but also the middleclass and the creditors.

The Tangka practice was a great curse to the farmers. Hajong started a united resistance movement to free themselves from this cursed practice. At first they held discussion sitting in houses of every village to bring home the bad effect of Tangka practice. When united in opinion, they stopped paying tangka paddy to the zaminders. The result was the immense sufferings of the tangka cultivators. Because to realize the tangka paddy the zaminders began to apply force as much as possible. It was the Hajong farmers who plunged into the movement. At the outset they had to fight with the zaminders. Then they fought with the British government and lastly they had collision with Pakistan. Comrade Mani Singh led Hajong to the tangka movement and for abolition of zamindery system.

The pain due to the oppression for Tangka and the great longing for freeing from it, tremendously shook not only the Hajong community, but even, the Muslims also. They could not find any means to get rid of this. But when movement started, Hajong farmers came forward to the main role, that's, at the lead. That's why tangka movement became virtually to be Hajong movement and so oppression, repression and persecution all fell upon the Hajong community.

Immediately before the World War-II, the Tangka movement began to crystallize in dasal village. Then very quickly the flow of the movement spread through the villages of the Hajong populated region. In the mean time, the World-War-II, started. The political environment, too, changed. At first Comrade Mani Singh alone was working among the farmers. Later on some more workers such as Bhupen Bhattacharjya, Promoth Gupta, Jaladhar Pal etc joined him. Besides, Rabi Niogi, Pulin Bakshi, Altab Ali helped them on different occasions.

A conscious and active organization developed among the Hajong farmers. A farmers' assembly was organized in 1839 in Kishoregonja. Several hundreds of farmers participated in this assembly. Later on, as soon as they were preparing for a movement in the High school field of Susong Durgapur, the government became alert. A camp with forces of the Eastern frontier rifles under the leadership of a magistrate was opened on 1st January, 1946 at Birisiri of Durgapur. Members of this camp began to search in different villages and hunt for the Hajong rebellions and other farmers. Police raided Baheratali village, but couldn't arrest any one of the accused. The furious police forces captured Kumudini Hajong, a newly married wife of Lankeswar Hajong and started for the camp. When this news spread among the Hajong community, more than one

hundred women and men of the community intercepted the police forces. At this time, Rasimoni hajong, a rebellion plunged on the police forces. The police, too, fired mercilessly. As a result, Rasimoni Hajong, at a time, fell down. With the strokes of the spears of the furious Hajongs, two members of the eastern frontier forces were killed on the spot. Others, leaving Kumudini Hajong, protected themselves by fleeing from the spot. Being a woman, Rasimoni Hajong, sacrificing her life for saving the life of another woman, became memorable in the history of the Hajong movement.

Lesson-5 : Tebhaga Movement

Tebhaga movement is the struggle of the share croppers in order to realize their demand of two-thirds of the agricultural product. In 1946-47 the share croppers launched massive movement against the land owners and for equal distribution process of the produced crops. In 1946 during the cultivation period of aman paddy, the share croppers themselves got into the field to cut the paddy and organizes Tebhaga movement.

This is treated as rebellion for two reasons. **Firstly**, they demanded the equal distribution process was unjust. The sharecroppers put in all labors and other related investment in the production process; the role of the land owners in terms of capital, labor and infrastructure remain very minimal. For this reason, the land owner should get one third of the crops, not half of the product. **Secondly**, the share croppers demanded the produced crops be deposited in the houses of the share croppers, not at the land owners. The land owners will not be entitled to have the share of the straw.

The movement took a serious tum in the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Khulna, Mymensing, Jessore and 24 Pargana. The land owners refused to accept the demands of the share croppers. They got many activities of the movement arrested by police and kept them under seize. As an advanced step of the movement, the farmers declared some areas as Tebhaga zone or area free from land owners. The Tebhaga committees took local control over those areas. Being pressed by the Tebhaga movement many land owners withdrew their cases filed against the activities supporting the movement and compromised with them. The most leading figure of this movement was Ilamitra- known as queen mother of Nanchol. To save from the Zamindars and the Creditors the All Indian Peasant Association was first established in 1936. The peasant community started to organize themselves slowly to do away with the Zamindari system to ensure the right of two-third share of the crops of the peasants. At this stage Ila Mitra came to join the movement. And within a few days she came into the front line of the leadership. When the Tebhaga movement came to its peak, the police went to arrest Doma Singh a leader of the movement in Thakurgaon. Hundred of peasants resisted this move by the police. During the resistance, Safar Chand, Mukat Singh and Nentheni Singh died in police fire. When the intensity of the movement was

weakened, Ila Mitra the queen mother of Nanchol came into front line. In a very short time she became very popular and was regarded as queen mother.

Exercise

Task- 01: Why did the 1st Hajong rebellion occur? Who led it?

Task- 02: What was tangka movement? By whom was this movement organized?

Lesson- 06 and 07 : Language Movement and Minority Ethnic Groups in the War of Liberation

The contribution of the members of the minority ethnic groups was not less in the war of liberation that was originated through the language movement. They held processions and meetings in the small towns for mother tongue.

Birkumar Tangchanga was a student of class ten of Shilok High School of South Rangunia at the time of language movement of Bangalees in 1952. He led the language movement with other student leaders. He led a procession on the street organizing the students of the school with the slogan: we want Bengali as the state language. Manipuri students reading in schools and colleges participated in the processions and raised slogans on the demand of language. In continuity to this, the Manipuri young students participated in the war of liberation of seventy one for the independence of the motherland.

The minority ethnic groups, too, actively participated in the war of liberation. Many freedom fighters from the minority ethnic groups sacrificed their lives in the struggle for independence. At that time, majority of the minority ethnic groups took shelter in India as refugees. The occupied army of Pakistan burnt their houses, looted their assets and oppressed the women, children and the old inhumanly. The contribution of the minority ethnic groups in our great war of liberation has been described here in brief.

Santals in War of liberation: There was a glorious role of the minority ethnic groups including the Santals of north Bengal in the war of independence in 1971. With the spirit of Santal rebellions, they struggled in every movement. The minority ethnic groups of Santals, hands in hands with the Bangalee freedom fighters, fought in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur etc regions to free the country from the hands of the occupation army of Pakistan.

The fighters of the minority ethnic groups were honored with the offer of state titles for their uncommon contributions in the war of liberation. The woman-folk of the Santals also cooperated in the war of liberation during the time.

Oraons in War of liberation: The minority ethnic community Oraon took part in the war of liberation. Hundreds of Oraon youths of Nachole and Niamatpur regions joined actively in the war. Of them, Kashinath Tappa of Tukiapara of Niamatpur P.S. of

Naogaon district and Mokim Oraon and Ganesh oraon of Nachole upazila of Chapainawabgonj district are noteworthy. Many including Sricharan oraon of Belpur of Chapainawabgonj district were martyred for joining in the war of liberation. On the other side, the Oraons fought sometime separately, sometime jointly with the Bangalee freedom fighters in the Rangpur -Dinajpur regions. Being organized from Baladi pukur and its adjoining areas under the leadership of the freedom fighter Budu oraon, they attacked Rangpur cantonment with their spears and arrows. Many members of the Oraon minority ethnic groups died in the fight.

Chakma in War of Liberation: During Pakistani period, People of Chattogram region also moved with the common people of the then East Pakistan on the 6-point issue. At that time, the Chakma students youths like other communities also participated. As part of noncooperation movement, the people of chattogram Hill Tracts as of other parts of the country, closed roads and shops. When war of liberation started, they, too, participated and many Chakma helped the freedom fighters. Manabendra Narayan Larma, the then member of the provincial council decided together with his colleagues to actively participate in the war of liberation. To participate in the war, he encouraged the youths. Kokondakhya Roy (uncle of raja Tridib roy), an Awami league candidate of 1970 provincial council election, also went to India to participate in the war. At this time students youths including some hundreds of Chakmas went to Tripura state to join the war. All in the East Pakistan Rifles (E.P.R) including the Chakmas of the minority ethnic groups joined the war of liberation. Of them, Ramani Ranjan Chakma died in a fight with the Pakistani forces in the Ramgar sector. Sepoy Mehranjan Chakma was reported to be missing from the Bogura sector. Then 20/22 persons including Bimaleswar Dewan and Tripura kanta Chakma, all employees of the East Pakistan police forces or government offices, received training from India and participated in the war. Baren Tripura, Kripasukh Chakma, and Ananda Banshi Chakma were among them.

Tripura in War of liberation: The Tripuras like all other minority ethnic groups in Chattogram Hill tracts also played a significant role in the war of liberation of Bangladesh. The battle held in Chattogram Hill Tracts, especially in Khagrachari district, with the Pakistani occupation army, was commanded by Hemada Ranjan Tripura as company commander. The company commander Hemada Ranjan Tripura with complete one platoon of freedom fighters attacked the head quarters of Pakistani army at the then subdivision of Ramgar on the 13th August, 1971. They had a guerrilla attack on the Pakistani army on the 10th September. Hemada Ranjan Tripura conducted several expeditions on the Pakistani army and killed 13 members of Pakistani soldiers including one captain. Many people of Tripura community including Ranjit Tripura, Ranabikram Tripura participated in the war. Besides, Baren Tripura was an organizer of freedom fighters. He played a very important role by staying in Tripura state of India during the war of liberation.

Tanchanga in War of Liberation: Kalamon Tangchanga joined actively in the war of liberation in 1971. He was martyred at Bandarban. When the war of liberation started in Bangladesh, lacs of Bangalees, leaving their homeland, took shelter in India due to the oppression of Pakistani soldiers and the Punjabi and Pathans. Many men and women had to cross over Rajsthal, Bandarban and Raingkhyang forests for taking shelter in east regional Mijoram of India. The Tangchangas offered foodstuffs and shelter to these helpless refugees and guided them to reach the destination. The ex-UP chairman of Bandarban Anil Tangchanga was a freedom fighter.

Marma in War of Liberation: Singhamong, Abio, martyred Mongchien and Akyamong etc, the inhabitants of Maheshkhali upazila of Cox's Bazar district made heroic contribution in the war of liberation. Of them, Mongchien was martyred in a direct battle with Pakistani army. Taking risk of life, he fought in many places of Cox's Bazaar and in the hilly areas. In 1971 he was a young man of 21. On 8th December he was martyred by the strike of the bullet of the occupation army. He was buried in the Maheshkhali islands.

Monipuri in War of Liberation: The spontaneous participation of the Manipuris in the war of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 was really visible. After the deliberation of 7th March, 1971 of Bangabandhu, the leaders and workers of Awami League of the Manipuri society, kept constant contact with top leaders of the party to know the duty under the changed circumstances. Besides, barricading the roads as a preventive measure to the enemy movement, the Manipuris at Kamalgonj, Srimangal, Baralekha, Kulaura of the then Moulbibazar subdivision; Companygonj, Biswambapur of Sylhet district; Chunarughat of Habigonja subdivision etc inhabited by the manipuris, helped the refugees to go safely to the neighboring state of India.

Krishna Kumar Singh, a government officer of Vanubil Manipuri village went to India by crossing the Bianibazar border to receive training on liberation war. Satish Chandra Singh of Tilakpur village was a student of B.A. class. The day following the establishment of a tent of Pakistani army at Srimangal town, he went to Tripura and joined the muktibahini. Nilkanta Singh received training of liberation war and showed a heroic role in the direct fight with the Pakistani army in the Hakaluki haor. The martyred Girindra Singh was caught while working as guide to the freedom fighters. Rabindra Singh was a student of mathematics honors course in M.C. College. He, too, participated in the war of liberation. Thus many Manipuris made heroic contribution in the armed war of liberation. The Manipuri artists of music sang in the refugee camps to encourage the war. Of them, the mentionable ones are Sadan Singh, Anita, Rani etc.

Khasis in War of Liberation: Information about the contribution of the khasis is not available. They said that the khasis helped in exchanging information and supply of foodstuffs to the muktibahini from the border. But someone like Yonis khasi joined physically. One of the greatest woman freedom fighters in the history of the war of

Forma-8, Language and Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups, Class-7

liberation was Kakan Bibi and she belonged to the Khasi minority ethnic group. Her actual name was Kakeu Niata.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Where did the minority ethnic group Santals fight?
Task- 02:	Who illuminated the war singing in the refugee camps among Manipuri artists?
Task- 03:	Who attacked the Rangpur cantonment? Who led it?

Lesson-08: Heroic Contribution of Kakonbibi in the War of Liberation

Although she appeared to be like a Bangalee in her statue, Kakonbibi was a member of minority ethnic group. That's why a Pakistani major remarked on seeing her: she does not seem to be a Bangalee, she might belong to other race. In fact she was not a Bangalee, she was a Khasi woman. This virtuous woman was born in a Khasis family. The contribution of a woman named Kaket of Doarabazar of Sylhet is known to us. She is that Kakonbibi. She is known in the area as the 'khasia muktibeti' that means she established herself beyond her ethnicity. We came to learn about this bright star of liberation war much later.

Kakon was born in a matrilineal khasia family. Her khasia family name was Kakeu Niata. She was born in 1948 in a solvent farmer family in Naotrai village near the Sunamgonj border. Of the three brothers and two sisters, Kakeu was the youngest. She lost her father while she was in her mother's womb. After one year and a half of her birth, she lost her mother, too. So her shelter was the maternal grandmother. Later on, she moved to her elder sister's protection. She lost her parents in childhood and was the youngest. So she received maximum affection of brothers and sisters. There was no want or needs in the family. Kaple Niata, the elder sister, married a Muslim commander of Ansar force. She began to reside at Katalbari with her sister. There she spent most of her childhood and youth. Suddenly with the encouragement of her sister, she changed her religious belief and became a Muslim. Her new name was 'Noor Jahan'. She came back to Sunamgonj. She married one Shahiduddin of Banglabazar. She lost several issues one after the other and when another was in the womb, Shahiduddin divorced her. Later on, with the initiative of the elder sister's husband, Kakonbibi married Abdul Majid khan, a Pakistani national employed as border guard at Bogla camp. A few days later, the war of liberation started. After that Kakon's husband left with other soldiers for Akalia camp of Sylhet and so Kakonbibi became alone in the Bogla camp. She started searching for her husband. While doing so, on one occasion she was caught by the rajakars. She was assaulted physically in different ways. Pakistani soldiers brought her to Tengra camp. There the Pakistanis suspected her to be an agent of muktibahini and so much oppression was done on her. Kakonbibi thought that she couldn't survive the unbearable physical and mental torture. The major of the camp said: you will be

saved, if you give your real identity. Kakonbibi let him know that her husband was a Punjabi soldier. Then the Pakistanis verified her statement and decided to use her against the muktibahini. Kakonbibi agreed first with much fear. They gave a piece paper to Kakonbibi and asked her to show the paper whenever she is caught by any Pakistani army. But when caught by any muktibahini, she was not to speak of the paper. Kakonbibi could see herself the magnitude of the terrific oppression done on the Bangalee women captured by Pakistani soldiers through her visit to the Pakistani camps. She told everything including all information of the Pakistani soldiers to the muktibahini members. Thus she began to help the muktibahini in secret. She would remove the arms and ammunition from Pakistani camps in secret, put them into the boat and then row the boat by herself to the muktibahini. She participated in the battles at Mahabhatpur, Kandagaon, Basrai tengratila, Betirgaon Noorpur, Doarabazar, and Teblai. She remained with the muktibahini the whole of the day when muktibahini fought a direct fight against the Pakistani army at Sunamgonj. The camp of the Pakistani soldiers was at Dakhkhindiaya. That was a woody place. She organized the muktibahini members by letting them know the exact location of the camp. So they attacked from two sides to capture the enemy camp. Kakonbibi played a notable role in destroying the Barkafon bridge of Sylhet by the muktibahini. Destroying this bridge was a strategy of the war. In November, 1971, Kakonbibi was arrested for espionage. Inhuman torture was done on her. The contribution of this heroic woman of minority ethnic groups will be written in golden letters in the history of our Independence.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is the good name of the freedom fighter Kakonbibi?
Task- 02:	In the war of liberation, what role is played by Kakonbibi?

Exercise

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who led Hajong rebellion?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Bhupen Bhattacharya | b. Comrade Manisingh |
| c. Panchanon Thakur | d. Altab Ali |

2. The objective of the movement of the minority ethnic group was chiefly

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a. against the British administration | b. for good administration |
| c. realization of their rights | d. against the oppression of the zaminders |

Read the following paragraph and answer question numbered 3 and 4:

Parul came to learn from her grandfather that the women of the minority ethnic groups, too, took part with men in different movements along with our liberation

war. The Pakistani soldiers tortured one woman of minority ethnic group in Tengra camp for espionage. She has become immortal in the history of liberation war.

3. What is the name of that freedom fighter woman?

- a. Kakonbibi, b. Taramonbibi,
c. Chayadebi, d. Ferdousi bibi.

4. The reason for suppression of women as described by grand father is-

- i. free mindedness
ii. love for the country
iii. hatred against the Pakistanis

Which one below is true?

- a. i and ii b. i and iii
c. ii and iii d. i, ii and iii.

Read the following paragraphs and answer question numbered 5 and 6:

Event-1: Shishir, a youth from Mymensingh region, used to capture elephants from the jungle at the order of the owner of his land. But without getting fair wages, he rebelled.

Event-2: Amar of Bandarban area was bound to pay two-thirds of his production to the owner of his land. So he, too, rebelled at this.

5. In event 1, which rebellion has been meant?

- a. Hajong and Garo b. Tripura and Garo
c. Manipuri and Hajong d. Garo and Manipuri

6. The main objective of the rebellion of Amar and Shishir was-

- i. to build up a society free from prejudices
ii. realization of fair wages
iii. to free from the exploitation of the feudal lords.

Which one below is true?

- a. i b. ii
c. iii d. i, ii and iii

Creative Questions

1. Tipu was watching a documentary film on the TV. A group of minority ethnic groups was fighting against a great foreign power for their rights. That great power used to take away their produced goods to their own country. They imposed such a big burden of debts upon them, which couldn't continued through generations. Two brothers of the minority ethnic groups protested against this oppression. That foreign power was compelled to withdraw at their protest and the rights of the minority ethnic group was established.
 - a. Who was Chapatti Nakma?
 - b. What do you mean by tangka system?
 - c. Which movement of the minority ethnic group of Bangladesh has the similarity with the event described in the documentary film as watched by Tipu?
 - d. Analyze the anti-British role of two brothers of that documentary film as watched by Tipu.

2. Sangita Sinha was reading a book on the minority ethnic groups. On reading the book, she came to know that a minority ethnic group of the north-eastern region of Bangladesh weave their own cloths by themselves. That region was under the estate of a zaminder. The rent collector of the zaminder would receive rent from the subjects without giving receipts and later on, occupy their lands on default of rent. The farmers of that minority ethnic group jointly rebelled against the zaminder and realized their rights.
 - a. What is Tula rebellion?
 - b. Introduce Birasa munda.
 - c. Explain the rebellion described in the book as read by Sangita Sinha.
 - d. Joint efforts of the farmers are at the root of the success of the movement as read by Sangita Analyze.

Chapter Five

Indigenous knowledge of Minority Ethnic Groups

People of all cultures depend on the local knowledge to know about their own environment. People establish relation with the local nature with this knowledge obtained through culture. Indigenous or local knowledge evolves from the experience of the way of life of people. Collected from life and nature, the essence of all these universal thoughts and ideas, knowledge and experience is the indigenous knowledge. In the absence of usual conservation and cultivation the stock of indigenous knowledge, developed from time immemorial, is disappearing rapidly. This repertory of knowledge and wisdom having unlimited value is a national wealth. On the other side, the modern technology also could not, even today, provide man with a place for final hope. So, along side the technological development, this repertory of folk knowledge, too, should be preserved for the interest of the country. In the day to day way of life of the minority ethnic groups, the use of indigenous knowledge and its cultivation is prevalent. In this chapter, we shall study various aspects of the indigenous knowledge of different minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh.



Fig. 5.1 : Weaving cloths in own loom

On completion of this chapter, we would be able to–

- prepare lists of proverbs and folk tales of minority ethnic groups;
- identify areas of the application of folk knowledge of minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh;
- explain the importance of application of the indigenous knowledge of minority ethnic groups in the field of treatment;

- analyze the influence of the indigenous knowledge on the social life of minority ethnic groups;
- pay respect to cultural activities and cultural knowledge of the minority ethnic groups.

Lesson-01: Indigenous knowledge

A group of people build up their own way of life and culture through living in a region for hundreds of years by coping with the local environment. They discover the sources of foods, and devised the means of their collection and methods of preparation. In this way, they build up their abodes for living with the help of their knowledge gained through experience or living by agreeing with their surrounding environment. In these respects, people of all cultures have their own local knowledge. People use indigenous or local knowledge in various works including cultivation, health care, food habits, education and managing natural resources. Thus people of all cultures depend on local knowledge to know about their own environment. They establish relation with the nature through the knowledge gained from culture. The knowledge gained from the culture of a community of people about the environment of the region they live in is the indigenous or local knowledge.

Indigenous or local knowledge develops from the experience of the way of life of people. Neither a university, nor any research institute is the source of this knowledge. Rather local or indigenous knowledge is transmitted through discussion or verbally from generation to generation. Generally the indigenous knowledge is not available in printed form in any book or treatise. That's why, the local or indigenous knowledge is confined to a definite region or culture. Indigenous knowledge is developed in a certain socio-culture at its locality level, which is a unique tradition of that socio-culture. The knowledge of a farmer of from our country relating to cultivation may be called local or indigenous knowledge. The farmer knows how to preserve seeds, how to prepare a seed-bed for good saplings, nature of lands for good crops, when the land is to be given manures etc. In the same manner, a simple villager can understand how much is the possibility of rainfall or storm just on seeing the position and color of the cloud in the sky. These are all examples of local or indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge has some common traits, such as:

- It is definite for definite regions or areas;
- This knowledge is essential for way of life and to survive continually;
- This knowledge is not limited in books or available in printed form;

- This knowledge is transmitted and extended verbally, colloquially, or through discussions;
- This knowledge is developed based on human experience, adjustment or adaptation, tests or experiments.

Differences between indigenous knowledge and modern knowledge:

Indigenous knowledge	Modern knowledge
Indigenous knowledge is transmitted verbally from generation to generation.	Modern knowledge is written. Modern knowledge is taught in schools, colleges and universities.
Indigenous knowledge is acquired through day to day affairs and experience of such works.	Modern knowledge is analytical. Modern knowledge is collected through analysis by reason.
According to this knowledge related to the social perspective, all the elements of nature are internally related. So indigenous knowledge is collective and is not divided into branches and sub-branches.	Modern knowledge is divided into different branches or classes or subclasses such as the different branches of modern sciences.

At present, the dominance of modern knowledge has neglected the indigenous knowledge. Very easily we forget that people, by applying these indigenous knowledge and strategies and adapting with nature, society and environment lived through hundreds of years. As the indigenous knowledge is related to the survival of man, at the local level people in many fields decide and live with this knowledge. The mentionable fields are: (1) cultivation and food security, (2) health care of people, (3) education, 4) management of natural resources, and 5 other programs based on society.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What do you mean by indigenous knowledge? Discuss in brief the characteristics of indigenous knowledge.
Task- 02:	Write down the differences between the indigenous knowledge and modern knowledge.

Lesson-02 and 03: Indigenous knowledge of Minority Ethnic Groups in Proverbs and Hearsays

All community people of the world have some proverbs and hearsays. These proverbs and hearsays are store house of indigenous knowledge. They had been using them for long time, generations after generations. Fundamentally they are verbal literature and are the main branch of folk literature. Much of the intelligence, experience, thoughts, and indigenous knowledge of a community people may be witnessed in their proverbs and hearsays. General people transmitted around their experience through

proverbs and hearsays so that others may learn from them. Even the literates, too, have much to learn and know from them. It is very difficult to determine when, where and how these proverbs and hearsays were created. But the universality is one of the qualities of the proverbs and hearsays. There is the proof of general intelligence and at the same time, the application of humors and ridicules are observed. Proverbs and hearsays have some general characteristics, such as:

- They contain experience of thousand of years, seasoned in indigenous knowledge and wisdom;
- They express values and moral saying;
- They are acceptable to all and are followed
- They are expressed in simple sentence or rhyme in brief space;
- They bear the tradition of the ethnic group;
- They are published in ornamental language (such as: simile, figures of speech (rhetoric).

Like other communities, the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh, too, have their own rhymes, proverbs and hearsays. But as they were never written, they cannot be traced today. For examples, some of the proverbs and hearsays of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh are quoted here with their inner meanings:

Minority ethnic groups	Proverbs and hearsays	English translation	Inner meanings/Bangla proverbs
Chak	Dukha ahann-e chuk-khalud-e.	Good results are obtained through pains.	In Bangla, there is also a proverb like this; Sweets are the fruits of pains.
Pangkhoa	La ek hau.	If one in the team is bad, the whole team earns bad name.	
MRO	Vasai wakkoi per tai taya ful doi.	A dead elephant cannot be covered with a winnowing tray.	Truth can never be hidden.
Moityaya	Obic posi morol munna chay.	The wealth of a miser is eaten by termites.	One should not grasp tight his wealth without good use of, as it is spoiled and at last comes of no use.
Bishnupriya	Okanoir jota chirhoin.		If unskilled labors are employed, surely the labor is lost and there is disorder.

Hajong	Dinuni asa, ratini gasa.	Days are for work, nights are for rest.	Initiative is needed for good work and this comes in day time.
Khasi	U bam hati kit kulai.	Eat like elephants, run like horses (work).	Labor needs energy which comes from diet (fuel).
Mandi	Song-a prap, pangsa, nigamo mangsa mangsa, mande rasong glang-a.	Biggest of the trees is the banyan, biggest of the animal is the elephant.	A man of personality is the real man.
Khumi	Sikhi dei lekha seunga bai.	To lay banana leaves on the ground before hunting deer.	To become ghost before death.
Marma	Kharuh motoik-e omui mukh.	Nobody calls mother without getting stumble.	Endangered man looks for near and dear ones.
Tripura	'Lai-a busu kalai khai lais-e pag', 'busug' lai kalai khai he-i lai se pag'.	If thorns fall on the cut leaves, they are torn. Again if cut leaves fall on the thorns, they are torn, too.	Whatever happens when a strong falls on a weak, is the same when the reverse happens.
Oraon	Gar se nikal se konah kamn-e jaek samay khali khailya dekh-e barat kharap.	When someone gets out of his house to go for some work and sees an empty pitcher, his start is ominous.	
Santal	Puthi khan tuthig-e sarasa, daram khan karamg-e lat geya.	Better listening than reading; work is better than religion.	
Chakma	Bhat mijailya kha de such, manuch mijailya cha-de such.	Boiled rice of mixed rice is better to eat, it is happily to see mixed color people (people of different color and castes).	It is monotonous and disturbing, if there is no variety.

Exercise

Task- 01:	Are the proverbs and hearsays indigenous knowledge? Mention the characteristics of the proverbs and hearsays.
Task- 02:	Analyze the inner meanings of the proverbs and hearsays of any three minority ethnic groups.

Lesson- 04 and 05: Indigenous Medical Knowledge of Minority Ethnic Groups

Man suffered from health problems and tried to win over diseases since ancient time. As with time, the type and intensity of diseases changed, so the methods of treatment, too, were modernized in keeping with the needs. But before the discovery of different medicines and scientific instruments in the modern time, man had to solely depend on the indigenous knowledge for healing. They would use shrubs and herbs of woods, barks of trees, leaves and fruits, roots and barks, minerals, insects and home-made drinks for the treatment of their different diseases. What are the medicinal values of a tree or a material and in which disease they were to be applied were well known to them. Because, as regards the use of natural or herbal medicines and knowledge of indigenous healing, they had the experience of thousands of years.

In modern times medical science has developed widely. The method of treatment has become easy and developed. But there is some adverse reaction of some modern medicines on human body. Not only that the modern medical services are greatly expensive. Moreover modern medical services in the villages, or in the far reaching areas, are very limited as yet. That's why people living in those areas are greatly depending on the local and indigenous medical services. The components used in the indigenous medical services are easily available, from the local environment. The basis of indigenous method of healing is the wide knowledge of the healing power of different herbal medicinal plants and natural elements. The minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh have thousand years' knowledge based on experience on this subject. There are some basic reasons for the popularity of indigenous healing, such as: (1) people have faith in its success through long term use; (2) the indigenous healing services and knowledge are the important components of the local culture; (3) healing is obtained easily at the locality and at cheaper price; (4) modern medical services are not locally or easily available for all .

Minority ethnic groups successfully heal different diseases by the medicines prepared by themselves, such as: fever, cold, cough, throat soaring, jaundice, healing the poisonous bite of snakes and other animals, small pox, chicken pox, gout, dyspepsia, diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, piles, different dermatological diseases, dandruffs, gynecological diseases, infertility, diabetes, dental diseases, cuts, healing the sprain or broken bones etc. Indigenous knowledge based midwifery is one of the healing services working in the society of the minority ethnic groups. There are specially trained and experienced persons in their society for intensive supervision at the time of the birth of a child and for taking proper care of the newly born baby and the mother. The opportunity for institutional education was not possible for many of them. Nature is the ideal teacher for them. They are generally old women and they have a title, too, such as: in Chakma society they are known as 'ojha'. In Manipuri

community they are called 'maibi'. Besides there are local Kabirajs', too, who are enriched with old knowledge and experience of different diseases and their antidotes. If the indigenous healing techniques are improved with the help of modern medical methodologies and proper research, it will make mentionable contribution to the country.

Some healing processes used by minority ethnic groups of Chattogram hill tracts for different diseases are mentioned below:

Name of the diseases.	Herbal elements used for manufacturing medicines.	Method of preparation and their uses
Jaundice	(1) Mormochya amilya (a kind of sour leaves of creepers, which grow in the jungles of CHT only). (2) Mogoi kangarha (a small crab available in the hilly streams and rivers, the color being grey).	Two components are selected and washed well, boiled thoroughly with definite amount of salt and water, stirred well to make a good soup. The tap warm soup to be taken several times a day.
Cold and cough of babies	(3) Roots and leaves of thora trees, kura chita sak, and iron oxidation.	Components are pounded well and the extraction is heated with a red hot iron. Each time one or two chatak is to be taken.

Exercise

Task- 01:	Why is the healing knowledge of minority ethnic groups so important? Give your own opinion.
Task- 02:	Which components are generally used for manufacturing herbal medicines by the minority ethnic society?

Lesson- 06: Indigenous Knowledge of Cultivation of Minority Ethnic Groups

The minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh depend on cultivation, jhum cultivation and horticulture for their livelihood. The ethnic groups are used to cultivate in plane land and also jhum practice. But those who like to reside at the top of the hills, jhum cultivation is their main livelihood. Those who live in plane land are equally conversant with jhum and plough cultivation. As for example, the habitations of Pangkho, Mro, Bom, Lusai, etc. of Chattogram Hill Tracts are basically either on the

slopes or tops of the high hills. On the other hand, Rakhains, Chakma, Marma, Mandi, Hajong, etc. communities live in the relatively low hills, plane or river bank regions. Leaving aside some exceptions, the life and living style of the minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh still remain the same even today. So the geographical conditions of the regions where they reside now determine the type of their cultivation.

In cultivation, the farmers of minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh apply indigenous knowledge for ages together. This indigenous knowledge has notable role in producing foodstuffs free from insecticides. For example, the jhum cultivation in the hills does not use any manure or insecticides manufactured in the industries. They generally use bio-fertilizers prepared by themselves and apply their own techniques for prevention of insects. In cultivation on plain lands, too, they follow the same rules of not applying the artificial manures and insecticides. The paddy or com seeds they use for jhum cultivation, are really inartificial indigenous products. The minority ethnic groups have been using them and preserving them by themselves across generations for hundreds of years.

In cultivation of the minority ethnic groups, there is the influence of indigenous knowledge and experience gained through hundreds of years. They know how to produce different crops from same plot, and how to harvest crops one after another plot saving from the attacks of insects all along the year and use them. They follow some rules and culture so that the biodiversity along side the varieties of crops, may be preserved. For example, there are some areas or forests, where they do not cultivate jhum. They believe that the jhum cultivation in those areas is ominous. The experienced persons can understand where to avoid jhum cultivation by observing the snake burrows, old places of bats or a certain special type of crosswise location of the hills. Besides, the jhum cultivators protect some big and special type of useful trees and plants, bamboo roots, and some special animals and birds and insects carefully. After jhum cultivation on a plot, they leave it as uncultivated for four or five years for regaining its fertility. All these are their innovations of indigenous knowledge gained through thousand years, which they learned from their families and nature.

Like other countries of the world, in our country, too, wide discussions on the preservation of biodiversity, climate change, environment friendly agriculture etc are being held. The problem that lies in most of the cases of these developmental discussions is the fact that the indigenous knowledge of people of thousand years is neglected. As a result, these developmental programs do not give good results as desired. The same is true about the bright and dark sides of jhum cultivation, too. Population in the hills and forests has increased due to different reasons. Besides, there are different controls and restrictions in these areas. So jhum cultivation has been reduced greatly. With the increase of disorder in the society and contest of unauthorized occupation of forest lands, the general rules of jhum cultivations are not followed.

Consequently, the cultivators are not getting good results from jhum cultivation as desired.

Besides the Sundarbans, there are hills and forests in Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet and Madhupur of our country. These forests and hills are our national resources. These forests and biodiversity in them are gradually being lost and different natural calamities are on the increase in our country. In maintaining natural balance and disaster management, the indigenous knowledge of the local people may be employed widely. The members of the minority ethnic groups, who reside in the lap of forests and nature, know well how to protect and take care of their own shelter place. We want to protect us from gradual increase of global warming, climate change and natural calamities. Then we must preserve our nature including the hills, forests, rivers, seas and water bodies carefully and keep it free from pollution. This has no alternative. That is the reason why, the indigenous knowledge of the minority ethnic groups must be employed in order to save nature, biodiversity and local environment friendly mixed cultivation system.

Exercise

Task-01:	What type of cultivation process is Jhum Cultivation? Give some examples of the use of indigenous knowledge in Jhum Cultivation.
Task-02:	How can the indigenous knowledge of minority Ethnic groups be used to preserve nature and biodiversity? Give your opinion.

Exercise

Multiple choice Questions

1. **Which special knowledge of the minority ethnic groups plays more Important part in producing uncontaminated foodstuffs?**
 - a. Religious belief
 - b. Indigenous knowledge
 - c. Witchcrafts
 - d. Technological knowledge
2. **Indigenous knowledge is to know about-**
 - i. the environment of own habitation
 - ii. local knowledge of the own environment
 - iii. own useful articles

Which one of the following is true?

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. i and ii
- d. ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer the question numbered 3 and 4:

There are myrobalan, neem and bean trees in the garden of Jomela. She uses these medicinal plants in simple diseases of her children. The minority ethnic groups like Jomela continue this practice of healing.

3. Which type of healing is Jomela offering?

- a. Indigenous
- b. Allopathic
- c. Kabiraji
- d. Homoeopathic

4. The reason of dependence of the minority ethnic group on this system of healing is:

- i. inadequacy of modern treatment
- ii. considering this system more effective
- iii. transcend once of the treatment from forefathers

Which one of the following is true?

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. i and iii
- d. ii and iii

Creative Question

1. Anupam Chakma cultivates paddy, pumpkin and papaw at the same time in the same plot. He rots the creepers and leaves and applies them to the plots. After harvests by turns, he goes to cultivate some other fellow lands.
 - a. What is maibi?
 - b. Explain the idea of indigenous knowledge.
 - c. Explain the kind of cultivation method of Anupam chakma.
 - d. Is the cultivation method of Anupam chakma environment friendly?
Give reasons in favor of your answer.

Chapter Six

Minority Ethnic Groups in The Conservation of Biodiversity and Environment

The main problem in today's world is environmental degradation and increasingly waning of biodiversity. In Addition to this, the global warming is increasing and our eternal climate is rapidly changing. It is essential to protect the natural environment and biodiversity for a nice and safer world. The minority ethnic groups have been living from time immemorial in close contact with nature. They have the long standing gathered experience or indigenous knowledge of environment and biodiversity. We will be apprised of the role of the minority ethnic groups played in conserving the environment and biodiversity in this chapter.



Fig. 6.1 : Biodiversity in hilly areas

On completion of this chapter, we would be able to–

- explain the idea of biodiversity;
- state the importance of the conservation of biodiversity and environment;
- identify the role of minority ethnic groups in preserving the biodiversity and environment;
- look for ways and means for locally preserving the biodiversity and environment and prepare a statement;
- show respect to the cultural programs and indigenous knowledge of the minority ethnic groups;
- show interest to participate in different social and state programs on the conservation of biodiversity and environment.

Lesson-01: Biodiversity

Life evolved on the earth many years ago. Later on, crores of living creatures of different species evolved through evolution. The biodiversity of this earth consists of the beauties of different animals and plants of various types and physical shapes. The united living of different species of living things in various environments or diversified assembly and the process of combined way of life is biodiversity. The abundance of lives in this earth we see has the foundation in the biodiversity. Had there been no biodiversity, balance in nature and environment could not have been maintained. It is due to biodiversity in nature that we obtain all elements and services for living. We receive from nature the necessary oxygen, food, fuel, water etc for our survival and soil, shelter, medicines or elements for manufacturing medicines useful for survival. We get interest to see the beauties of nature. We enjoy the shade of a tree and pleasant weather. These elements are essential for man to live.

Our biodiversity comprises trees, animals and birds, microbes, and their offsprings and innumerable species. All these are held soil, gaseous layers and atmosphere, water, ice, water vapour etc. All these elements build up an environment suitable for living. This environment supplies energy to all other animals including humans and plants for survival. According to the scientists, the number of species of animals in the animal kingdom is about three crores. According to the description of the United Nations Biodiversity convention, it has been possible to identify only seventeen lacs and fifty thousand species on earth. Major portion of the diversity of the animal kingdom has been unknown to us.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is meant by biodiversity?
Task- 02:	Give a general idea about the biodiversity of the world. How is the biodiversity changing in this world?

Lesson-02: Types and Classifications of Biodiversity

In general, by global biodiversity, we understand all the species of animals and plants and the composite consisting of them surrounding the environment. In the same manner, by biodiversity of a certain region, we mean different species, their heredity and diversity of the ecological system of that region. So clearly by biodiversity, three types of diversities are meant. These are: (1) diversity of animal species, (2) diversity of the ecological system and (3) diversity of heredity.

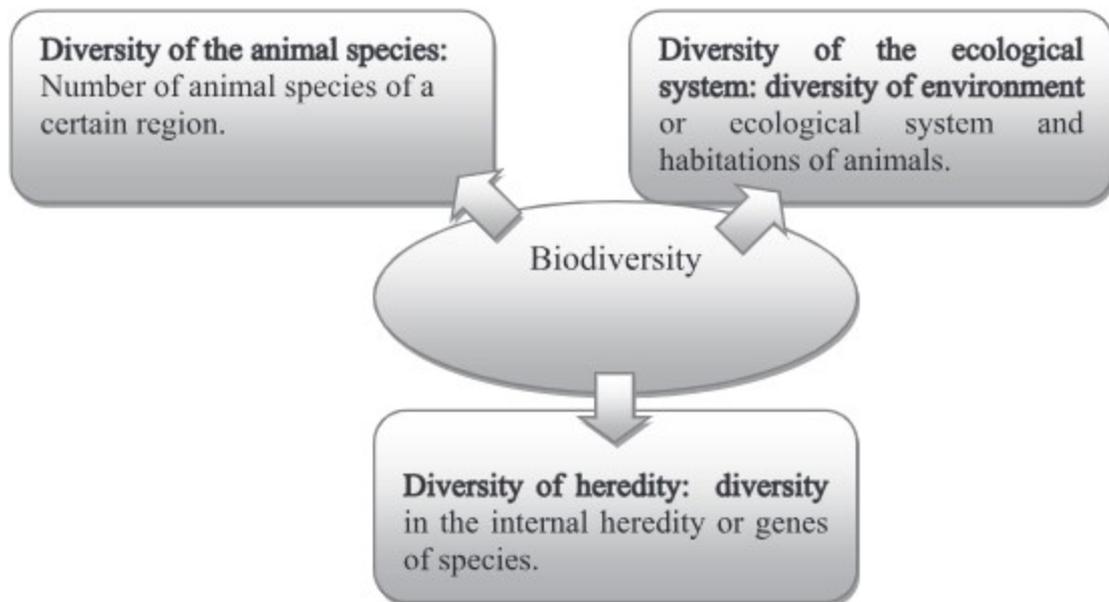


Fig.6.2: Types and classifications of biodiversity

1. Diversity of animal species: There are variations in all the living beings i.e. animals, plants, microbes, etc of a region. The diversity of animal species can be measured by the number obtained by counting these different species.

2. Diversity of the ecological system: There develops a relation in the animal species living in a certain region. They build up close and dependable relation with the non-living elements of the environment at the same time. This relation is called the ecosystem. So an ecosystem develops with the total relations of all the animals and non-living elements of the environment of a certain region.

A certain region is favorable for living of a certain species of animals. These animal species for their own survival depend mutually as they depend on the nonliving environment of the geophysical region. Thus an ecosystem is built up. For example, (a) desert ecosystem, (b) an ecosystem of forests, (c) aquatic ecosystem of sea regions, (d) ecosystem of the coastal areas and (e) ecosystem of the temperate rain forest region.

3. Diversity of heredity: Generally by the diversity of gene or heredity is meant the diversity of any one of the animal species in the animal kingdom. The external appearance of each life depends on the DNA or genotype inside the body cells. In the same manner, due to the differences in the genotypes, there is wide diversity in the internal structure of each and every species of animal kingdom. Even, in humans, each one of us has separate shapes and appearances based on the diversity

of the genotypes of the body cells. As a result, people of so many varieties in appearances ,colors heights and shapes are found in today's world, too. So by the diversity of heredity, we understand the internal diversity of every species including humans of animal kingdom.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Discuss the kinds of animal diversity ?
Task- 02:	What is diversity of heredity?

Lesson- 03: Relation between Environment and Animal Diversity

Our environment consists of everything around us. All living and non-living things of this animal kingdom form the natural environment. All the organic and inorganic elements are included in the environment. All the living beings including humans, trees, microbes etc are the organic elements. And the inorganic elements are water, soil, air, sunlight, ice, gaseous sphere, minerals, weather etc. In a word, all these form our environment.

All the elements on the earth are joined and related to one another. Jointly each of the elements is dependent on the other part. That's why, whenever there is any change in an element of the environment, the influence is observed on the others. No event in the environment occurs in single manner or in isolation. Comprising all these elements, environment works as a perfect single system. Our mankind is a part of this environmental system. All the members of the animal kingdom are mutually dependent for survival.

The assemblage of different animals on the earth is the biodiversity. Biodiversity is the part and parcel of environment. The relation of biodiversity with environment is unbreakable. Besides the dependence of all animals including humans on one another is also part of biodiversity. The animals, being dependent on one another, build up a balanced natural condition or environment. Without biodiversity, we cannot imagine a green beautiful nature. As the biodiversity does not exist without natural environment, similarly environment is incomplete without biodiversity. Both of them are complementary to one another.

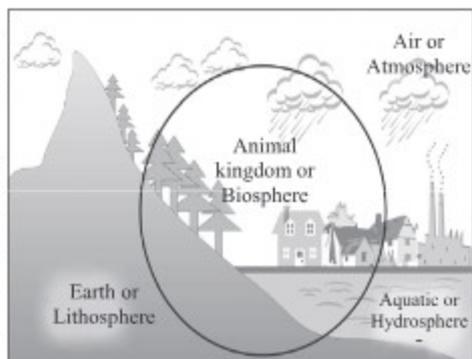


Fig. 6.3: Relation of animal kingdom with other elements of the environment.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is the animal kingdom?
Task- 02:	What is meant by environment? What elements comprise the environment?

Lesson-04 and 05: General Idea about the Biodiversity and Environment of Bangladesh

Though a small country, there is much diversity in geophysical formation and environment in Bangladesh. To the north of our country is spread the Himalayan range and to the east the branches of the hills of Myanmar. These hilly areas are full of plants and these areas are considered to be important for biodiversity. Three kinds of biodiversity are discussed here, such as: (1) diversity of animal species, (2) diversity of ecological system and (3) diversity of heredity.

1. Diversity of animal species: There are about 5700 species of land plants, 113 species of mammals, 628 species of birds, 126 species of reptiles, 22 species of amphibians, 708 species of fishes, 2493 species of insects, 19 species of microbes, 164 species of lichen, moss, algae in Bangladesh. Besides, there are many anonymous species of plants, animals or microbes in Bangladesh. According to the biologists, we have lost within last one century 10% of the plant species and 12 to 18 species of wild animals forever. Besides 40 species of land mammals, 41 species of birds, 58 species of reptiles, 8 species of amphibians, and 106 to 187 species of plants are facing extinction today. Moreover many migrant animal species have been added to the diversity of our animal species, such as: one of the plant species is water hyacinth, an immigrant plant species. The water bodies like water holes, ponds, and big rivers also become covered by water hyacinths and to clear these water bodies from these weeds is very difficult.

2. Diversity of ecological system: We see many ecological systems in Bangladesh. We can identify mainly four ecological systems on the basis of biodiversity in Bangladesh, such as:

(a) **Ecological system of the coasts and sea:** Of the coastal ecological systems, the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world is famous for biodiversity. Besides there are many islands scattered in the Bay of Bengal. Of them, the Narikal zinzira, the only coral island of the country, is very important for conservation of biodiversity. Different kinds of birds and migratory birds throng together.

(b) **Delicious or sweet water ecological system:** There are innumerable rivers and rivulets, canals and beels, haors-baors and water bodies in Bangladesh. Every year a

greater portion of the country is submerged by floods. As a result a delicious or sweet water ecological system based on rivers has been developed in the main land. There are many internal water bodies in the main land of the country. The water bodies cover about 75 lacs of hectares of the country. All these water bodies and the haors to the northeast of the country are full of biodiversity.

(c) **Ecological systems of highlands and hilly forests:** Chattogram hill tracts, and hilly forests of Sylhet, barindra, highland forests of Madhupur are under the ecological systems of highlands and hilly forests. Diversity of plants, creepers and shrubs can be seen in the hilly ecosystems. Madhupur ecosystem includes, besides sal (*shorea robusta*), 170 species of birds and 28 species of reptiles.

(d) **Man-made ecosystems:** With the march of time, man has made many changes in nature. As a result the same type of biodiversity in all places of a definite ecosystem cannot be seen always. For example, the Kaptai lake is an artificial lake built in the hilly ecosystem. So, biodiversity in the Kaptai lake is same as those in other hilly ecosystems.

3 Diversity of heredity: Diversity of heredity can be observed both in domestic animals and birds, and cultivated crops or plants in Bangladesh. There is a wide diversity in the heredity of our plants and animal assets. Because the local community people conserved the variation in the internal heredity of species for hundreds of years carefully. At present government and non government organizations have come forward to conserve the biodiversity of both, either cultivated or domesticated. Plants, paddy, oil seeds, potato, jute, all these have diversity based on heredity. Paddy has the largest diversity based on heredity. About 6000 types of paddy can be seen in Bangladesh. In case of the domesticated animals and birds, the diversity of heredity in the cattle is the most. Observable is the diversity of heredity among the dogs, cats, and hogs also in hilly areas.

Exercise

Task- 01: What is your idea about the diversity of animal species?

Task- 02: How many ecosystems are observed in Bangladesh?

Lesson- 6 and 7 : Local Reasons for Damaging Biodiversity in Bangladesh

Today biodiversity has been facing threats in Bangladesh and throughout the world. The destructive and aggressive activities of man have been damaging the natural environment in different ways. For the same reason different species of animal kingdom have been disappearing. Demand of man has been on the increase and with that has been increasing the limit of earthly pleasures and luxury. Due to this lust for enjoyment and luxury of man, use of natural resources has been increased. At the same time population

of the world has been increasing day by day. To supply food and other necessities of man, the plants and animals are disappearing very rapidly i.e. biodiversity. The earth thus is being endangered by the gradual absorption.

The analysis of the general threats to biodiversity in Bangladesh reveals that they are of two types. **Firstly**, the threats due to the impact of the activities of the people of different countries, such as: global warming and climate change, desertification or gradual conversion of agricultural lands into desert etc. In Bangladesh, too, the biodiversity is being damaged due to such changes. **Secondly**, the local biodiversity is being damaged due to the activities of Bangladeshi people. Moreover, for control of this damage there is no sufficient policy and legal arrangement. The table below enumerates the local reasons for the damage of biodiversity:

Table-6.1: Local reasons for the damage of biodiversity:

Local reasons	Examples
Population increase at wild rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. demand of habitations and food for increased population; 2. introduction of equipments and technology dependent agriculture instead of local culture of cultivation. 3. change in the management and use of land. 4. increase of poor population.
Environmental pollution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. wide use of fertilizers and insecticides. 2. environmental pollution through emission of untreated effluent and abuses of factories and industries;
Ownership and management crisis of lands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limitations in framing laws for controlling land use harmful to biodiversity and ownership types. 2. The legal framework in force and some policies of different departments are not in keeping with biodiversity conservation and ideas of environmental science. 3. Reduction of the use of indigenous knowledge in land management.
Lacking of awareness of conservation of biodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development by any means is the interest of the administrators and policy makers. 2. Economic development to the last breath is the struggle of the poor community of people.
Limitations in the efficiency of different organizations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limitations in the distribution of power and responsibility of different organizations. 2. Lack of usual management of the reserved areas and free forests. 3. Experience and efficiency of different organizations are not as much conservative as they are productive.

The threats to the loss of biodiversity of an area are presented in a flow diagram below:

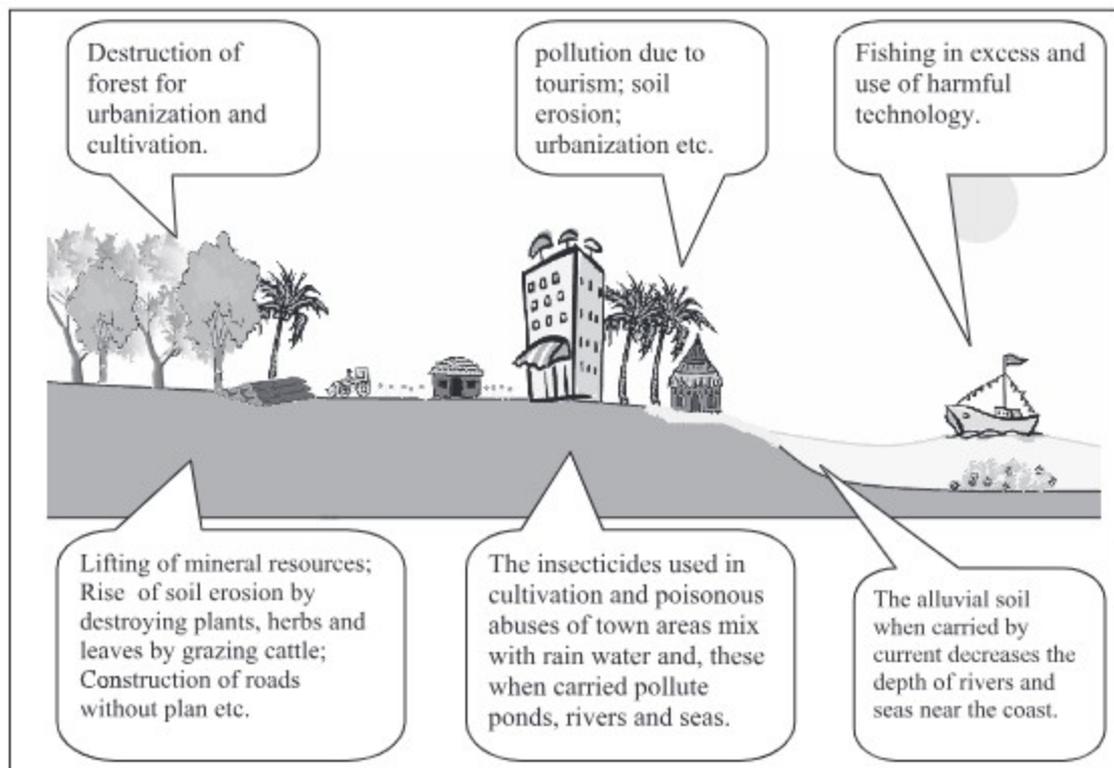


Fig.6.4: Multiple reasons of damaging the biodiversity of a local area.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	State the local reasons for damaging the biodiversity of Bangladesh.
Task- 02:	Describe an event which depicts the damage of biodiversity due to the destruction of environment in your area.

Lesson-08: Benefits and Necessities of Biodiversity in Human Life

The usefulness of biodiversity for living of man is endless. Though this necessity is not measurable on financial scale, yet for the welfare and enriching of humans, the role of biodiversity is very important. From different angles, too, we can realize the benefits and usefulness of biodiversity, such as: (1) direct or visibly practical usefulness of biodiversity (2) indirect practical usefulness, and (3) non-practical usefulness.

Table-6.2: Usefulness and necessities of biodiversity

Usefulness of Biodiversity	Examples
(1) Direct or visible practical usefulness of biodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food. 2. Articles for construction of abodes. 3. Fuels. 4. Paper and articles made of papers. 5. Threads, fibres and fabrics. 6. Raw materials for industries and factories. 7. Medicines and medical articles.
(2) Indirect practical usefulness of biodiversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balance in the global nature, such as: to protect climate and atmosphere favourable to humans. 2. To cover the surface of the soil and prevent erosion through breeding of different plants. 3. To conserve pure and sweet drinking water in nature by natural purification. 4. Transmission of pure oxygen in nature through purification by plants. 5. Control the successions of the process of natural nutrition cycle and purification. 6. Increase of breeding of different species of plants through pollination and dispersion of seeds. 7. Control of the breeding of insects harmful to agriculture. 8. Subjects of education and scientific research. 9. Source of tourism and recreation. 10. Source of cultural, intellectual and aesthetic sense and inspiration. 11. Supplies of the sources of information to know about nature. 12. To act as a natural library or data base of gene or heredity. 13. Ability to sustain disasters of man, group of men, community and society.
(3) Non-practical Usefulness of biodiversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Importance as future opportunity, possibility and hopes. 2. Importance of knowing about the presence and existence of biodiversity. 3. Importance of leaving the present biodiversity for future generations.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	What is the direct usefulness of biodiversity?
Task- 02:	What is the indirect usefulness of biodiversity?

Lesson- 09: Need for Conservation of Biodiversity and Environment in Bangladesh

Survival of humans depends on the support of the ecosystem. In Bangladesh all people man including farmer, fisher, foresters handicraftsman collect the elements necessities for living from the environment or local ecosystems. So the guarantee and security of livelihood in Bangladesh solely depends on biodiversity. Therefore it is necessary to conserve carefully the environment and biodiversity for our welfare. Even during the greatest height of scientific achievement today, human beings and other living beings cannot live a moment without the generous presence and grants of nature. Most of the elements of livelihood including the life saving drugs, fuels, building habitations etc come from nature even today. That's why, it is the duty of human not to destroy nature and to conserve carefully its biodiversity. Man did not create nature or biodiversity. He himself is a part of nature and biodiversity like other living beings. Nevertheless, it is man who affected maximum damage to nature and biodiversity. The need for conservation of biodiversity and environment are mentioned below:

- Biodiversity and environment sustain us. The guarantee and security of our livelihood is completely dependent on environment and biodiversity.
- Biodiversity and environment supply man with food, water, pollution free air, light, oxygen, fuel, etc necessary natural elements.
- One fourth of the surface of the earth is cultivable and is one of the main sources of food crops. If biodiversity and environment survive, the fertility and qualities of this vast land will be retained.
- Most of the ingredients for manufacturing garments for man, drugs and medicines, and major components of manufacturing medicines are even today collected from nature. That's why, conservation of natural environment and biodiversity is essential.
- Environment and biodiversity can protect us from natural calamities, like water surges, cyclones, droughts, floods, cold waves etc.
- Human dependence on the artificial fertilizers and chemicals will be reduced, if environment and biodiversity are sustained. As a result, it will be possible to produce different bio-implements including bio-fertilizers with the use of developed technology.

- Lacs of plants, creepers and shrubs have been left in nature without tests of their chemical or medicinal values as yet. If environment and biodiversity are sustained, these plants also will survive. Then only these plants will be used for the health and development of human society through scientific research in future.
- Environment and biodiversity are also essential for recreation, formation of artistic attitude, development of culture of man. At present as means of increasing consciousness related to the recreation and environment, worldwide eco-tourism has been gaining popularity day by day.
- In fine, it is urgently needed to conserve our natural environment and biodiversity in order to develop a nice, happy and rich future.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Discuss the usefulness of conservation of environment and biodiversity.
Task- 02:	Arrange the necessities of biodiversity according to their importance.

Lesson-10: Conservation of Environment and Biodiversity by the Minority Ethnic Groups of Chittagong Hill Tracts

The members of the minority ethnic groups in the world live very close to nature. They have intimate relation with nature for their livelihood and way of life. The minority ethnic groups have been conserving the nature of the world through thousands of years by maintaining close and complementary relation with nature and have been conserving the biodiversity of the world. The minority ethnic groups have been playing an active role in protecting this world including its environment and biodiversity for generations together. The minority ethnic groups of Bangladesh are not exception in this regard.

The minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts have been working for conservation of nature and biodiversity along side the different programs of different departments of the government according to their ability. In spite of their economic limitations and different political instability, they are working for village based social community forest. The village common forest (VCF) of the minority ethnic groups is the traditional method of protecting biodiversity. Collective ownership is one of the characteristics of these forests. The related members of village or community people can collect different ingredients for living including elements of herbal medicines, wood, bamboos, canes etc. from the social village forests. The minority ethnic communities of the three districts of Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) have been preserving these forests for ages together. Around the village of the minority ethnic community, they make forest all together and conserve biodiversity. This kind of forest

are maintained by the traditional rules of the minority ethnic communities. With the growth of population and in absence of favorable government principles, the numbers of such forests are decreasing day by day. The numbers of such village based social forests in Chattogram Hill Tracts that stand even today cover about 202 hectares.

There are at an average 173 species of plants and 60 species of animals in the village based social forests of Chattogram Hill Tracts. In protecting environment, biodiversity and natural wealth, the village based social forests have set up unique example in this field.

Besides the village based social forests, the minority ethnic communities of Chittagong Hill Tracts conserve the environment and biodiversity in their day to day life affairs. As for example, at the time of jhum cultivation they obey some restrictions. They do not destroy some definite plants, medicinal herbs or wild animals. They rather allow them to live for their future generations. In tapping forest resources also they obey seasonal variations. They are to follow some traditional restrictions as to which resources cannot be tapped in which season or which ones can be. These customs are applicable for both plants and animals.

Bangladesh government, in the mean time, has declared majority areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts as reserve forest or conserved forest areas for conservation of environment and biodiversity. In general the overall forest lands, comprising all classes, in the three districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandaban, is 10, 99, 584 hectares. Of these, about 3, 34, 160 hectares are under the control of forest department as reserve forest or conserved forest areas. This is one-fourth of the total area of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The people of minority ethnic community are always active to protect these forests. Besides, there are two sanctuaries for wild animals in this region. One of them is situated at Pablakhali within the Kasalong reserved forest areas of Rangamati district. This sanctuary was established in 1962. The area of this sanctuary is more than 42, 067 hectares. The other lies at a distance of five kilometer away from Kaptai town of Rangamati district. This is known as Rampahar Sitapahar national garden. The area of the garden is 3,026 hectares. But in absence of proper care and management, these reserved forest lands and sanctuaries are being destroyed gradually.

Exercise	
Task- 01:	Describe the method of conservation of biodiversity by the ethnic communities of Chittagong Hill Tracts.
Task- 02:	What is the role of the government in conserving the biodiversity in Chittagong Hill Tracts?

Lesson-11 and 12 : Conservation of Environment and Biodiversity of the Minority Ethnic Groups in the Plain Regions

The Programmes on environment and biodiversity in Bangladesh are being implemented unhindered. Less is not the contribution of the minority ethnic communities of the country, too. Some activities at the local level, at the initiatives of the minority ethnic groups for conservation of environment and biodiversity have been conducted. At the same time, they participated in all the government programs, too.

The inhabitants residing in different types of forests are basically minority ethnic groups. They have the habitations in different haors-baors or in marshy lands, too. The main support of life and living of the ethnic communities residing in these regions are the natural resources like wood, bamboo, fishes etc from the local forests and marshy lands. They collect resources from these natural lands or forests. They have their own mechanisms, too, to conserve resources or biodiversity for their future generations.

The minority ethnic groups collect different natural resources from the forests owned by the society, or other forests. But still some traditional customs, values, religious and cultural behaviors, social norms etc followed by them play a very important role in conserving the environment and biodiversity. They believe the forests to be very holy. That's why they follow definite rules in collecting resources from forests and nature. They do not collect them indiscriminately. For example, we can mention minority ethnic groups like Munda, Bawali, Mawali etc of the Sundarbans. The traditional rule they follow is that only the old trees from dense forest can be cut. The raw or small trees cannot be felled down. There are some trees which can never be cut down; because they are holy. They believe that cutting holy trees is a great sin. This may cause many dangers. In the same manner, one must follow the same rules, too, at the time of hunting or collecting honey or fishes. Honey can be collected only without killing bees. All fishes, big or small, cannot be caught randomly. In hunting, pregnant deer or other animals, in similar congenitively mother fishes, birds etc are totally prohibited. There are such forests where the minority ethnic groups occupied regions that are considered very holy. The minority ethnic groups of Chattogram Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrakona, Mymensingh, etc of Bangladesh have been following these customs and norms of their own for ages together for conservation of environment and biodiversity. In the societies of different minority ethnic groups of these areas including Chakma, Tripura, Mandi, Manipuri, Hajong, Banai, Rajbangshi, Coch, Hodi, Dalu, have such customs, beliefs, values, social norms, traditions, religio-cultural behavior and cultivation methods, which are completely relevant to the conservation of environment and biodiversity. As for example, they conserve many species of plants and animals in compliance with their customary rules. Because in their absence, they cannot do many important works right from house building to manufacturing medicines, dyes, threads, furniture making, religious worship, beautification of the environment, protecting

houses from the disturbances of insects, receiving blessings and access to the forefathers through different rights and rituals etc. The life and livelihood of the minority ethnic groups are so closely related with these elements of forest and nature that they think they are inseparable from nature. In order to save the natural environment and biodiversity of Bangladesh, the minority ethnic groups must importantly be associated.

Exercise	
Task-01:	State how the cultures of minority ethnic groups play important role in conserving environment and biodiversity.
Task-02:	How do the values of minority ethnic groups help to protect bio-diversity? Explain.

Exercise

Multiple choice Questions

1. How many types of biodiversity are there?

- a. 2
- b. 3
- c. 4
- d. 5

2. If biodiversity is conserved-

- i. herbal medicines become easily available
- ii. Flourish the aesthetic arena of human mind.
- iii. use of plants will increase

Which one is true below?

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. i and ii
- d. ii and iii.

Read the following paragraph and answer the question numbers 3 and 4:

Lipi visited a forest on education tour. The tide water submerges major portion of the forest.

3. The forest Lipi visited is-

- i. evergreen
- ii. mangrove
- iii. deciduous

Which one of the following is true?

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. i and ii
- d. ii and iii

4. What is the main characteristic of the above forest?

- a. Forest grown in the saline water
- b. Remains green round the year
- c. Plants grow very long
- d. Same kind of plant can be seen

Creative Questions

1. Maya travelled to the house of her classmate Kalpana Chakma at Bandarbands. Kalpana showed a forest to Maya and said; cultivation is prohibited in this forest. While Maya wanted to eat a fruit, Kalpana said to her, without permission of the village head nothing from this forest can be taken. They noticed while walking in another forest that people were preparing for jhum cultivation by felling forest. But they did not cut some trees.
 - a. What is a mangrove forest?
 - b. What do you mean by natural security measure?
 - c. Explain the kind of the forest as first seen by Maya.
 - d. Of the two forests, which one is more effective in biodiversity conservation?
Give your opinion.

2.

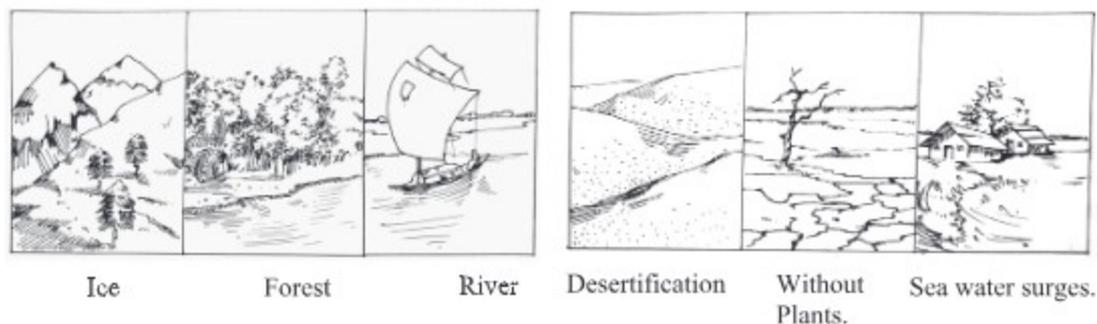


Fig-1: full of natural biodiversity.

Fig-2: without biodiversity.

- a. What is natural environment?
- b. What do you mean by diversity in ecological system?
- c. Give an explanation of the type of biodiversity as expressed in the fig-1.
- d. Analyze the role of human beings in creating fig-2.

The End

2025 Academic Year

Seven-Language and Culture of Minority Ethnic Groups

স্বাস্থ্যই সকল সুখের মূল।



For free distribution by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.