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## Exploring the Rich Heritage of Bangladesh's Tribal Communities and Their Culture

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### Abstract

The study has explored the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage in Bangladesh by focusing on three critical factors: land security, mother-tongue education and community engagement. The purpose has been to investigate how these elements are contributing for sustaining cultural identity among tribal groups. A quantitative survey-based approach has been applied with the involvement of 100 respondents from major tribal communities such as Chakma, Marma, Garo, Santal, Tripura, Khasi and Rakhine. Data have been collected using a structured questionnaire and analysis has been conducted through multiple linear regression through SPSS. The findings have revealed that land security and mother-tongue education have shown significant positive impacts on cultural preservation, while community engagement has shown a positive but non-significant influence. Mother-tongue education has been identified as the strongest predictor by highlighting the importance of early education in indigenous languages for sustaining heritage. Land access has also played a crucial role by ensuring continuity of rituals, ecological practices and ancestral connections. However, limited community participation in rituals and crafts has reduced its independent effect on heritage preservation. The study has concluded that cultural sustainability requires both institutional reforms and grassroots participation. So, policies must secure land rights, strengthen native-language education and create inclusive platforms for cultural activities. By doing so, Bangladesh can protect the diverse traditions of its tribal peoples and ensure their active contribution to the nation's cultural fabric.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Heritage, Land Security, Mother-Tongue Education, Community Engagement, Cultural Preservation, Bangladesh Tribes, Tribal Rights.

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### Introduction:

Bangladesh has been home to diverse indigenous communities who have been contributing the cultural richness of the nation. Reports have estimated that there are more than fifty distinct groups who are speaking over thirty-five languages (IWGIA, 2025). These groups, including Chakma, Marma, Santal, Garo, Tripura, Khasi and Rakhine, have carried unique traditions, rituals and folk literature that are connecting past and present generations. Despite their significant contribution to cultural identity, indigenous peoples have been facing challenges in protecting their heritage.

One of the most pressing concerns has been the lack of access to education in mother tongues. Indigenous children have often been forced to learn in Bengali, which has been caused high dropout rates and weak cultural transmission (Islam, 2020). Without institutional support, young learners have been losing both linguistic skills and the deeper values embedded in their native languages.

Land security has also been a critical issue. For centuries, indigenous peoples had been depending on ancestral lands for their livelihood and spiritual practices (*Indigenous Peoples' collective Rights Tolands, Territories Andnatural Resources*, n.d.). However, they have often faced eviction, dispossession and legal exclusion (Roy, 2000). Studies have shown that the absence of collective land rights has weakened their ability to sustain rituals and ecological practices tied to territory (Bappi, 2024).

Community participation in festivals, rituals, crafts and storytelling has been another vital aspect of cultural preservation (Banda et al., 2024). These activities have strengthened identity, social bonds and intergenerational learning. Yet, modernization, migration and lack of resources have reduced community engagement (Paul & Rakibuzzaman, 2024). As a result, younger generations have become increasingly detached from traditional practices.

### **Problem Statement:**

A primary concern is the **limited access to education in native languages**. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, for instance, less than 8% of indigenous children have completed their primary education and only 2% of them have completed secondary education ("List of Endangered Languages in Bangladesh," 2025). Additionally, **land security** is a critical issue here. Many indigenous communities have been facing land dispossession and encroachment, so their traditional livelihoods and cultural practices are under the threat (Rasul & Gurung, 2024). Furthermore, **community engagement in cultural activities** is being declined. Factors such as urban migration, modernization and limited resources are mainly contributing to reduce the participation in traditional festivals, rituals and crafts (Paul & Rakibuzzaman, 2024).

So, this study's aim is to investigate the interplay between these factors – education in native languages, land security and community engagement on the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage in Bangladesh.

### **Significance of This Research:**

The significance of this research is lied in its ability to link socio-economic issues with cultural outcomes. Previous studies have often focused on single aspects, such as rituals or education. However, this study has taken a comprehensive approach by analyzing the combined impact of multiple factors. The findings can inform policymakers, educators and indigenous activists in designing strategies that promote inclusive cultural sustainability in Bangladesh.

### **Literature Review:**

#### **Definitions, Identity and Constitutional Recognition:**

One essential strand in the literature concerns how "indigenous" or "tribal" identity is defined in Bangladesh. Many scholars argue that a lack of constitutional recognition is affecting their identity, rights and land claims. For instance, the paper "*The Imperative and Reality of Constitutional Recognition for Indigenous Land Rights in Bangladesh* (2024)" have showed that indigenous people in Bangladesh do not have legal recognition of collective

land ownership (Bappi, 2024), therefore, forcible eviction from ancestral lands is being occurred continuously.

Another work, *“Colonial governmentality and Bangladeshis in the anthropocene: Loss of language, land, knowledge, and identity of the Chakma in the ecology of the Chittagong Hill tracts (2024)”* has discussed how have national policies, historical colonial legacies and state practices been marginalizing the indigenous identity (Urmee Chakma & Shaila Sultana, 2023). The scholars have showed how these practices have been controlling that who is allowed to speak, who is counted and whose knowledge are being counted.

In addition, the *“Joint Submission on the Human Rights Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh”* has reported that the state does not fully recognize indigenous peoples (IWGIA, 2023).

### **Language, Literature and Oral Traditions:**

*“Humanistic Values of Indigenous Languages in Bangladesh (2020)”* has explored how children from indigenous household's struggle in school because the system is designed for the Bengali language. Many indigenous students are dropped out or get low grades since their native languages are not supported (Islam, 2020).

*“Folk Literature of Bangladeshi Ethnic People: A Study on Manipuri, Chakma, and Tripura Tribes (2025)”* has looked at folk stories, songs and other oral forms among these three groups. It has showed how folk literature preserves values, social norms, cosmology and moral lessons. The study also notes that folk literature often reflects gender roles, land relations, spiritual beliefs and seasonal cycles (Dr. Md Zahidul Islam, 2025).

### **Material Culture, Fashion and Aesthetics:**

The study *“Fashion of Indigenous People in Bangladesh: Exploring Traditional Clothing Process of Chakma Tribe (2021)”* has examined how clothes are made in Chakma communities. It also has showed the weaving techniques, patterns, use of color and how attire can expresses the identity, status and cultural meanings (Mahbub et al., 2021). It also has mentioned that how these clothes are used in festivals and daily life.

*“Indigenous Costume Color of Bangladesh: A Traditional Context for Cultural Revival (2022)”* has focused on the costume color via visual and statistical analysis. It has suggested that costume colors can embody traditional aesthetics. By doing that, they connect present day with past meanings. Also. this study has revealed how color choices are not random and showed the links to locality, mythology, environmental context and symbolic meaning (Minhus et al., 2022).

*“Building Pattern Technique of an Indigenous Community – Does Its Appearances a Distinctive Representation?”* has examined indigenous built forms and discussed architecture and structures of indigenous groups in Sylhet (and elsewhere). It has also suggested that building techniques can reflect on responses to environment, materials and cosmological ideas (Rahman et al., 2021).

### **Rituals, Festivals, Religion, and Worldviews:**

*“Implementation of Indigenous environmental heritage rights: an experience with Laitu Khyeng Indigenous community, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh”* has discussed how environment and spiritual traditions are bound. It is showing that many practices around rivers, forests, hills are not only economic but also sacred (Datta, 2019). It has also showed

how development and conservation projects can often ignore spiritual and ritual dimensions.

There is literature on Rajpunyah, a major festival in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where tribal King's circle heads had collected and distributed taxes and hold fairs ("Rajpunyah," 2025). The festival is a combination of political, ritual, social functions and reinforcing the local authority and identity.

Folk literature also has showed ritual cosmology— stories about ancestors, spirits, guardians of land. These beliefs have been guiding their agricultural practice, land use, relations with non-human nature (forests, animals) etc. Some studies have showed these beliefs are under pressure by religious conversion, loss of land, environmental degradation. For example, "Colonial governmentality (2024)" is showing how land loss can be caused of losing ritual practice and connection with sacred ecology (Urmee Chakma & Shaila Sultana, 2023).

### **Land, Environment, and Livelihoods:**

The constitutional absence of recognition of collective land rights for them has some major consequences. Works like "*The Imperative and Reality of Constitutional Recognition for Indigenous Land Rights in Bangladesh*" is showing how this absence can create evictions, loss of customary land and lack of legal protection (Bappi, 2024).

Environmental justice studies, such as "*Development for whom? an Indigenous environmental justice movement in Bangladesh* (Hasan, 2022)" is showing how extraction, deforestation, infrastructure projects disproportionately can affect indigenous communities. They often have sometimes little participation in decision-making (Hasan, 2022).

"*Implementation of Indigenous environmental heritage rights* (Datta, 2019)" has explored how local environmental heritage, natural resources, customary rights are undermined by state and non-state interventions including land grabbing, imposition of forest laws and development projects without informed consent (Datta, 2019).

### **Challenges, Social Change and Cultural Erosion:**

In "*Humanistic Values of Indigenous Languages* (2020)", scholars have reported that education system is forcing indigenous children to use Bengali rather than using their own mother-tounge so they have been losing their languages, identity, many students can not complete their school properly (Islam, 2020).

"*Colonial governmentality and ... Chakma ...* (2024)" have also showed how national ideologies privilege Bengali language, culture and nationality which are marginalizing non-Bengali languages and norms. It is also showing how indigenous people are expected to assimilate (Urmee Chakma & Shaila Sultana, 2023).

Studies of material culture are mentioning the decline trend in traditional crafts (Sharmin, 2020). Here, it is found that many weaving or dress practices are no longer profitable. On the other side, younger generations do not always learn these skills for their livelihood.

Religious conversion, migration (especially of youth to cities), media consumption, exposure to non-indigenous norms is also reported as such influences that transform or sometimes erode traditional culture in their tribal life (Santo Chicham, 2022).

## **Rights, Representation, and Political Participation:**

Another major focus is the legal, political and social rights of indigenous peoples including policies, participation, representation, advocacy and how communities themselves act.

Many Indigenous groups do not have constitutional recognition as “indigenous/tribal,” which affects their ability to access state protections (Bappi, 2024). However, “The Joint Submission on the Human Rights Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh (2023)” has provided outlines gaps in access to justice, discrimination, lack of legal protection and poor participation in public affairs. It has estimated there are more than 54 indigenous peoples are speaking more than 35 languages (IWGIA, 2023).

Environmental justice movement work (Hasan 2022) is showing that indigenous communities are mobilizing. They have been resisting exploitation of land without their consent. Moreover, they demand free, prior, informed consent (FPIC). Again, they demand more say in how development or conservation happens (Hasan, 2022).

## **Research Gap:**

- ✓ Limited empirical research on the combined effect of land security, mother-tongue education and community engagement on preserving tribal cultural heritage in Bangladesh.
- ✓ Most studies focus on individual aspects such as education or rituals but rarely quantify their collective impact on cultural preservation.
- ✓ Lack of updated statistical data linking socio-economic factors with actual participation in cultural activities among different indigenous communities.

## **Objectives:**

- ✓ To examine the **impact of access to ancestral land** on maintaining traditional cultural practices.
- ✓ To assess how **education in native languages** influences cultural knowledge and transmission among tribal youth.
- ✓ To investigate the relationship between **community participation in festivals, rituals, and crafts** and overall cultural preservation.

## **Hypotheses:**

- ✓ **H1:** Greater access to ancestral land is positively associated with stronger cultural preservation.
- ✓ **H2:** Higher participation in mother-tongue education is positively associated with stronger cultural preservation.
- ✓ **H3:** Increased engagement in cultural activities is positively associated with stronger cultural preservation.

## **Conceptual Framework:**

The following diagram is showing the conceptual framework of the study.

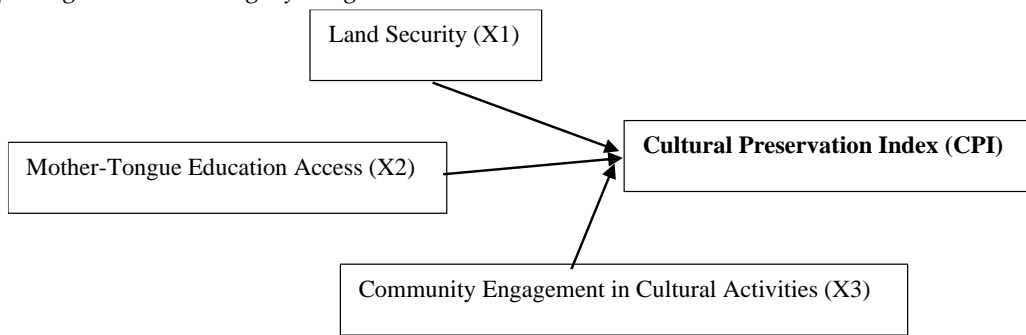


Fig 1: conceptual framework

**Cultural Preservation Index (CPI):** It is measuring the extent to which tribal communities maintain and practice their heritage, including language, rituals, crafts, festivals and folk literature.

**Land Security (X1):** This variable is measuring the extent of access to and control over ancestral land for cultural and livelihood purposes

**Mother-Tongue Education Access (X2):** This independent variable is showing the availability and participation in early education in the community's native language

**Community Engagement in Cultural Activities (X3):** It is showing the frequency and participation of community members in festivals, rituals, craft-making and oral storytelling

### Methodology:

This study has been adopted a **quantitative survey-based approach** to examine the factors influencing cultural preservation among Bangladesh's tribal communities. The target population are the members of major tribal communities such as Chakma, Marma, Garo, Santal, Tripura, Khasi and Rakhine. A total of **100 respondents** were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The survey has captured demographic information, including age, gender, education, occupation, tribe and household income, as well as measures of cultural preservation, land security, mother-tongue education access and community engagement in cultural activities.

The **dependent variable** in this study is the **Cultural Preservation Index (CPI)**, which is reflecting the extent to which respondents maintain and practice their heritage, including language, rituals, crafts, festivals and oral traditions. The **independent variables** are **Land Security (X1)**, **Mother-Tongue Education Access (X2)**, and **Community Engagement in Cultural Activities (X3)**. All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

For data analysis, **multiple linear regression** was employed to assess the relationship between the independent variables and the CPI. The regression model is specified as follows:

$$CPI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

where  $\beta_0$  represents the intercept,  $\beta_1$ - $\beta_3$  are the coefficients for the independent variables and  $\epsilon$  is the error term. Data were analyzed using SPSS and composite scores for each variable were calculated by averaging the relevant survey items. Reliability of the constructs was confirmed through **Cronbach's alpha** and the model fit was evaluated using **R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> and F-statistics**.

**Findings & Analysis:****Table 1: Demographic Information**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)
Age (years)	18-25	20
	26-35	25
	36-45	20
	46-60	20
	60+	15
Gender	Male	55
	Female	45
Tribe / Community	Chakma	20
	Marma	15
	Garo	15
	Santal	10
	Tripura	10
	Khasi	10
	Rakhine	10
	Other	10
Education Level	No formal education	15
	Primary	25
	Secondary	30
	Higher Secondary	20
	Graduate & above	10
Occupation	Farmer	35
	Artisan / Craftsperson	20
	Teacher / Educator	10
	Student	15
	Govt. / NGO Employee	10
	Other	10
Household Income (BDT)	<10,000	20
	10,001-20,000	30
	20,001-30,000	25
	>30,000	25

**Table 2: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.993 <sup>a</sup>	.985	.985	.10468	.985	2118.178	3	96	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CE, LS, MT

The regression model has been highly significant and has explained a very large proportion of the variance in cultural preservation. The **Model Summary** shows that 98.5% of the variation in the Cultural Preservation Index (CPI) has been explained by land security (LS), mother-tongue education (MT) and community engagement (CE). The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is also confirming the stability of the model. The **F-statistic (F = 2118.178, p < 0.001)** is indicating that the model as a whole has been statistically significant (Frost, 2017).

**Table 3: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	69.630	3	23.210	2118.178	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1.052	96	.011		
	Total	70.682	99			

a. Dependent Variable: CPI

b. Predictors: (Constant), CE, LS, MT

The **ANOVA results** further are confirming that the predictors have a strong combined effect on cultural preservation. The regression sum of squares (69.630) has been far greater than the residual sum of squares (1.052), which shows that the model fits the data well (The Investopedia team, 2025).

**Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.249	.063		-3.958	.000
	LS	.213	.061	.205	3.497	.001
	MT	.717	.085	.684	8.465	.000
	CE	.123	.104	.110	1.186	.239

a. Dependent Variable: CPI

The **Coefficients table** is providing the insight into the contribution of each factor. Land security has shown a positive and significant effect ( $\beta = 0.205, p = 0.001$ ) as it is suggesting

that greater access to ancestral land is associated with stronger cultural preservation (*The Beta ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient in Multivariate Linear Regression*, 2023). Mother-tongue education has been the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) which is indicating that education in native languages plays a critical role in sustaining cultural practices and traditions (*The Beta ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient in Multivariate Linear Regression*, 2023). Community engagement has shown a positive but non-significant relationship ( $\beta = 0.110$ ,  $p = 0.239$ ), which implies that while participation in cultural activities supports preservation (*The Beta ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient in Multivariate Linear Regression*, 2023), its effect is weaker compared to land security and mother-tongue education in this dataset.

### Hypotheses Results:

**H1 is Accepted** as Land security has shown a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.205$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and confirming that access to ancestral land contributes meaningfully to cultural preservation (Abhigyan, 2024).

**H2 is Accepted** since mother-tongue education has been the strongest and most significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) (Abhigyan, 2024). This is showing that education in indigenous languages is playing a central role in sustaining heritage.

**H3 is Rejected** as community engagement has shown a positive but non-significant effect ( $\beta = 0.110$ ,  $p = 0.239$ ) (Abhigyan, 2024). While participation helps, it does not independently predict cultural preservation when other factors are controlled.

### Discussion:

According to reports from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Bangladesh is home to over **50–54 distinct groups** who are speaking more than 35 languages (IWGIA, 2025). This linguistic and ethnic diversity have been reflecting the rich heritage of the country's tribal communities. However, despite such diversity, their official population has been consistently underestimated in national records.

The **2025 census** has reported approximately **1,650,478 indigenous people**, which is close to 1% of the national population (*The Indigenous World 2025: Bangladesh - IWGIA - International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*, 2025). The **Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)** has provided a similar figure of **1,650,478**, broken down as 824,751 males and 825,408 females (Business post bd, 2022). These numbers align closely with the **2011 census**, which recorded around **1,586,141 people or 1.8% of the population** (Business post bd, 2022). The minimal growth over a decade is suggesting stagnation and, in some regions, even a declining trend. For example, in the **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)**, the population of indigenous peoples has decreased from **920,217 in 2011 to 852,540 in 2022** (Priyam Paul, 2025). This declining trend is reflecting on migration, displacement and land-related challenges that have been documented in multiple studies.

In contrast, activist groups have consistently argued that the official numbers do not reflect the real situation. Their estimates are that the indigenous population closer to **4–5 million**, significantly higher than the government's reported **1.65 million** (Pavel Partha, 2024). This discrepancy is pointing to a deeper issue of recognition and inclusion, which directly impacts policy planning, resource allocation and representation.

Another critical development has been in the **legal recognition of indigenous groups**. Initially, the **2010 Small Ethnic Groups and Minorities Cultural Institution Act** recognized 27 communities. This number has now been officially increased to **50 groups** (Siddiqui,

2024). This recognition is an important step forward, but there remains a gap between legal recognition and practical implementation, particularly in areas such as land rights, education in mother tongues and preservation of cultural practices.

Regional distribution also presents important insights. Reports indicate that the **plains host around 80% of the indigenous population**, while the **Chittagong Hill Tracts contain the remainder** (IWGIA, 2025). This distribution is significant because it is highlighting the cultural variation within indigenous groups.

### Recommendations:

1. **Ensure constitutional and legal recognition of indigenous peoples and their collective land rights:** The recognition of indigenous communities in the Constitution and national laws is necessary for their cultural survival. Without legal protection, they will remain vulnerable to eviction, land grabbing and discrimination (*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Alternative Report Submission: Violations of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Bangladesh*, n.d.). Recognition should not only be symbolic but must include rights to collective ownership of ancestral land. This step will secure their identity, strengthen their confidence and create a legal foundation for protecting their cultural heritage.
2. **Develop and implement primary education programs in mother tongues of tribal groups:** Education in indigenous languages is one of the strongest tools for preserving culture (Tara Chouhan, 2025). The government should introduce curriculum and textbooks in the mother tongues of major tribal groups. This will reduce dropout rates among indigenous children and help them connect with their heritage while also learning the national curriculum. When children learn in their own language, they can transfer cultural knowledge more effectively to the next generation.
3. **Train teachers from indigenous communities to strengthen culturally relevant pedagogy:** Only textbooks in local languages are not enough. Teachers must also be trained to respect and apply indigenous worldviews in classrooms. Recruiting teachers from tribal communities will bridge the cultural gap between students and formal education (Jessy T.M & A. Vijayanand, 2023). Training should focus on bilingual education, oral traditions and indigenous history, so that the education system becomes more inclusive and relevant.
4. **Provide financial and institutional support for traditional crafts, music, and festivals:** Cultural practices such as weaving, folk music and rituals are losing ground due to modernization and economic challenges (Mridha, 2023). Government and NGOs should provide financial aid, training workshops and fair markets for indigenous crafts. Institutional support should also be given to organize cultural festivals and document oral traditions. Such initiatives will help preserve traditions and also create sustainable livelihoods for tribal artisans and performers.
5. **Encourage community-driven cultural centers for intergenerational learning:** Local cultural centers can act as safe spaces where elders, youth and children come together to share knowledge (Pup, 2025). These centers should focus on language teaching, craft-making, storytelling and spiritual practices. If these are designed and managed by the communities themselves, such centers will ensure ownership and sustainability. Intergenerational learning will bridge the gap between past traditions and future needs.
6. **Establish monitoring bodies to protect indigenous land from encroachment:** Land encroachment has been one of the biggest threats to indigenous survival (Human Rights Research Center, 2025). Independent monitoring bodies, with representation from tribal

groups, civil society and government agencies, should be formed. These bodies must have authority to investigate land disputes, prevent illegal grabbing and safeguard communal land rights. Monitoring should be transparent and supported by legal enforcement mechanisms.

- 7. Promote inclusive participation of indigenous groups in policymaking and cultural institutions:** Indigenous peoples must not remain passive subjects of policy; they must be active participants. Government bodies, cultural institutions and development programs should reserve seats or quotas for tribal representatives (Aylwin Oyarzún, 2009). Their voices should be used to take decisions on education, land rights, environment and culture. By ensuring participation, indigenous peoples will gain agency and policies will become more responsive to their realities.

### Conclusion:

The study has examined the preservation of tribal cultural heritage in Bangladesh through the lens of land security, mother-tongue education and community engagement. The findings have confirmed that both land access and native-language education have been decisive in sustaining cultural practices. Among these, education has been emerged as the most powerful factor, as indigenous languages are not only carrying communication value but also transmit social norms, values and identities. Land security has also been remained central, as ancestral territories connect cultural practices with ecological traditions and spiritual beliefs.

Community engagement has shown a positive but weaker role. While festivals, rituals and storytelling have helped to preserve identity, their independent effect has been limited in comparison to structural factors like land and education. This outcome has suggested that community activities require institutional and economic support to achieve stronger cultural impact.

The conclusion of the study has emphasized that cultural preservation cannot be achieved without addressing structural inequalities. Lack of recognition, insecure land rights and limited access to education in mother tongues have continued to weaken tribal heritage. Therefore, sustainable cultural preservation must be rooted in legal protection, educational reform and inclusive participation.

Bangladesh's indigenous peoples have held traditions that enrich the national identity. Their preservation is not only a matter of cultural diversity but also of justice, dignity and equality. By ensuring land rights, expanding native-language education and promoting community-led initiatives, policymakers and institutions can safeguard the living heritage of tribal groups. The study has affirmed that protecting indigenous culture is essential for building an inclusive and culturally vibrant society in Bangladesh.

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## Appendix:

Variable	Question Code	Question	Likert Coding	Notes
Cultural Preservation Index	CPI1	I actively apply traditional knowledge or practices in daily life.	1=Strongly Disagree ... 5=Strongly Agree	Include in CPI composite score
	CPI2	I can accurately explain the historical/cultural significance of rituals.	1-5	
	CPI3	I/family participate in creating or maintaining traditional crafts/artifacts.	1-5	
	CPI4	I can recite/teach at least one folk song/story/oral tradition.	1-5	
	CPI5	I encourage younger generations to participate in cultural heritage activities.	1-5	
Land Security	LS1	My community has full control over ancestral land.	1-5	Include in LS composite
	LS2	Land ownership supports continuation of rituals/festivals.	1-5	
	LS3	Confident land remains under indigenous control next generation.	1-5	
	LS4	Limited/contested land negatively affects cultural activities.	1-5	Reverse-coded before calculating LS composite

	LS5	Land access allows maintenance of ecological practices tied to culture.	1-5	
Mother-Tongue Education Access	MT1	Children have opportunities to learn in native language at school.	1-5	Include in MT composite
	MT2	Educational materials are available in native language.	1-5	
	MT3	Early education in mother tongue enhances heritage understanding.	1-5	
	MT4	Schools encourage use of indigenous language in activities.	1-5	
	MT5	Mother-tongue education positively influences youth participation in cultural traditions.	1-5	
Community Engagement in Cultural Activities	CE1	I regularly participate in rituals, festivals, or ceremonies.	1-5	Include in CE composite
	CE2	I contribute to craft-making, folk art, or traditional music.	1-5	
	CE3	Storytelling/folk traditions strengthen community bonds.	1-5	
	CE4	I collaborate with others in organizing/preserving cultural programs.	1-5	
	CE5	Engagement increases my personal understanding/appreciation of heritage.	1-5	