

## How Cultural Harmony can Build Through Folk-Culture: Folk-Belief and Folk-Rituals Explanation.

Sauda Zaman Risha  
*Student, Folklore Department, University of Rajshahi*

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### ABSTRACT

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The study is designed and carried out to explore the perception of cultural harmony and folk culture. Bangladesh is a country of colors, it contains a shape like a rainbow. Its glory of color remains in various kinds of festivals and festivals. The soil of Bangladesh is a pure land, on that surface there take birth so many legends such as Hasan Raja, Lalon Shai, Shah Abdul Karim, etc. At the sunset hour, a bell rings at the temple with the sound of Shonkho. At the same time, the azans sound creates a soft melody. Surroundings of Bangla full of a pure heart with Eid, Puja, Christmas day, Boudhya Purnima, etc. though all events are from different religions and different beliefs, all Bangladeshi people accept those with respect. It's the real wind of peace that spreads a message of cultural harmony. The present study was exploratory in nature and a survey method was applied for collecting data from the field.

## 1. Introduction

Culture is a term that refers to a large and diverse set of mostly intangible aspects of social life. According to sociologists, culture consists of the values, beliefs, systems of language, communication, and practices that people share in common and that can be used to define them as a collective. Culture also includes the material objects that are common to that group or society. Culture is distinct from social structure and economic aspects of society but it is connected to them—both continuously informing them and being informed by them.<sup>1</sup>

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts. "Culture encompasses religion, food what we wear, how we wear it, our languages, marriage, music what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones and a million other things,"<sup>2</sup> Sociology understands culture as the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful. Sociologists study cultural meaning by

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<sup>1</sup> Nicki, L.C. (2019, August 2). *Defining culture and why it matters to sociologists*. Thought Co. <https://www.thoughtco.com/culture-definition-4135409>.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmermann, K.A. (2017, July 13). *What is culture?* Livescience.com. [https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html?fbclid=IwAR2FEWGxzNsOgDi8Iep1\\_ymPGn6P4Y43STqk3NzL7S-NE\\_ZCXMUVDzwNgIE](https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html?fbclid=IwAR2FEWGxzNsOgDi8Iep1_ymPGn6P4Y43STqk3NzL7S-NE_ZCXMUVDzwNgIE).

exploring individual and group communication; meaningfulness is expressed in social narratives, ideologies, practices, tastes, values, and norms as well as in collective representations and social classifications.<sup>3</sup>

Cultural harmony is something that connects people of different backgrounds in terms of social behavior, religion, knowledge, language, etc. This is the idea of a positive change. Cultural harmony is something that teaches us to accept with respect the moral-cultural behavioral ways of others. They might be different as a matter of fact, they are most contrasting but the solution to any sort of confrontation is through cultural harmony.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Folk-belief and Folk-rituals explanation**

In the case of Bangladesh, cultural harmony starts with folk culture. It can be highly remarked as folk-believe and folk rituals.

The term folk, implying informality, lack of sophistication, and lack of skill, is, quite rightfully, contested by scholars sensitive to conventional constructions of the beliefs and practices of women and lower-status men. The terms folk religion, common religion, popular religion, customary religion, practical religion, domestic religion, peasant religion, local religion, and the "little tradition" are all used, sometimes interchangeably, often ambiguously, by anthropologists and historians of religion. The literature suggests no consensus about who the folk of folk religion is. For example, William Christian stresses the agricultural identities of those who engage in folk religion; anthropologist George Foster defines folk religion as an urban phenomenon; and for fellow anthropologist Robert Redfield, the folk of the little tradition is the unreflective masses. Neither is their consensus regarding the content of folk beliefs and practices. Anthropologist Edmund Leach, for example, stresses concern with life here and now. Social scientists Michael Hornsby-Smith, Raymond Lee, and Peter Reilly describe the magical or superstitious nature of folk practices and anthropologist Eric Wolf sees folk beliefs as utilitarian and moralistic but not ethical or questioning.<sup>5</sup>

This profusion of terms and conceptualizations suggests that the label folk has a great deal to do with who is doing the labeling and in what context. For this entry, folk beliefs and ritual practices are defined as the beliefs and practices of individuals, families, and communities as they are expressed and enacted in situations outside of the control of formal religious or political authorities. This does not mean, however, that folk practices and beliefs are never coercive. Quite to the contrary, formal authorities sometimes provide

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<sup>3</sup> American Sociological Association. (n.d.). Culture. *American Sociological Association*.

[https://www.asanet.org/topics/culture?fbclid=IwAR0\\_6Ib-OIj8JS9RkQ024bxBhnjNNg2NV9JE2f2JAxU1Sr-KkPCI9fpQaAY#:~:text=Sociology%20understands%20culture%20as%20the,make%20their%20social%20environments%20meaningful](https://www.asanet.org/topics/culture?fbclid=IwAR0_6Ib-OIj8JS9RkQ024bxBhnjNNg2NV9JE2f2JAxU1Sr-KkPCI9fpQaAY#:~:text=Sociology%20understands%20culture%20as%20the,make%20their%20social%20environments%20meaningful).

<sup>4</sup> Exclamation, B. (2019, July 22). *Cultural harmony-A great necessity-Beyond exclamation*. Beyond Exclamation.

[https://beyondexclamation.com/cultural-harmony-great-necessity/?fbclid=IwAR2b2vxU07ndvs5o7KnBbY\\_Yacl4V0HL3\\_xymeaoOmhI87h1yHEsAtxNSD8](https://beyondexclamation.com/cultural-harmony-great-necessity/?fbclid=IwAR2b2vxU07ndvs5o7KnBbY_Yacl4V0HL3_xymeaoOmhI87h1yHEsAtxNSD8).

<sup>5</sup> Folk beliefs and rituals. In *Encyclopedia.com | Free online encyclopedia*. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/folk-beliefs-and-rituals?fbclid=IwAR3WL2E3gGbApkQA8fLb6C6tjUVXh7mImSMHH-8Fr6u8NCL40Y6wYW9758>.

a means of escape for women or girls whose legal or sexual autonomy is constrained by folk practices such as genital mutilation or clitoridectomy.<sup>6</sup>

Folk-believe has attached closely to folk-rituals. This article will prove that folk – culture which is represented by folk-believe and folk-rituals is a creating factor of cultural harmony in Bangladesh. By following tendentious sampling rules, this article will take the legendary folk character ‘Bonobibi’ as a research sample.



Bonobibi is a sign of women's empowerment in folk culture. It is a praying goddess in the south of Bengal. In this region, people have a strong belief in her super-natural power. They believe that she is the mother of Sunderbans. If a man has a strong belief in bonobibi, he will have protection from Sundarban's goddess, Bonobibi. The reality is that Sundarban is full of danger, tigers and so many ferocious animals are there. Because it's nearer, people are bound to go there because of circumstances. As people live a challenging life for a livelihood, they don't have any alternative way to survive their livelihood through sundarban. They collect honey, wood, fish, golpata, etc from there. The south part of Bangladesh's geographical terrain is not friendly at all and its economic zone is full of hardship. The Sunderban area's people don't have any further options to survive. That is why they can't avoid the jeopardy area. They have to survive with their dangerous nature. Getting rid of unexpected accidents and dare seems a blessing here.

According to survival mentality, they depend on the supernatural power of their belief. That is why they created many folks to believe in it. Like – if a man has faith in bonobibi and remembers bonobibi before entering Sunderbans, he will stay safe by the blessing of bonobibi. They don't make a fire in Sunderbans without using holy words of bonobibi. They don't rely on any human dust in Sunderban's soil because they believe that its soil is similar to the temple area of bonobibi. They don't use words such as 'khaoa', 'jaoa', 'as due to folk-believe.

The base part of folk belief depends on a vast mythological proportion. It is as if banabibi is a Muslim character. She comes from Soudi Arabia. Her two brother's name is Ibrahim and Shah jongli. She has super natural power and she is very much a man. She serves helpless people. Dakkhin ray is an opponent who takes advantage of helpless people. Shah jungle fights against dakkhin ray so many times by bonobibi's humble request. For example, a helpless boy, dhukhe whose widow mother sends him to a village with dhana

<sup>6</sup> Folk beliefs and rituals. In *Encyclopedia.com* | *Free online encyclopedia*. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/folk-beliefs-and-rituals?fbclid=IwAR3WL2E3gGbApkQA8fLb6C6tjijUVXh7mImSMHH-8Fr6u8NCL40Y6wYW9758>

chacha and mona chacha. Dhana Chcha and Mona Chacha leave him to dakkhin ray to establish their purpose. But dukkhe's mother has taught him to remember bonobibi in danger, as the mother teaches dhukkhe to remember bonobibi with deep faith. Then bonoibi saves dukkha from dakkhin ray's grasp. Finally, bonobibi sends dukkha to his mother with a lot of gifts. A crocodile is being used here as a vehicle of dukkha."

Surroundings people believe mostly in bonobibi's myth and folk beliefs. They follow some rituals based on these. They make prayers to bonobibi before entering the Sunderbans. Even they have a special occasion on bonobibi's yearly worship. It happens on the 1st day of poush (Bengali month). The common rituals are reciting pachali, making bonobibi's prosad and participating in a ritual dance among all the presence. They create a festive wind at that time of that event.

The most important fact is that all religions of the Sunderban area have deep faith in bonobibi. Though bobobibi is a Muslim legend, folk believe she prays for other religions. Worship of the banabibi has become a yearly reunion of local people. There is no religious conflict. Even there is no debate on bonobibi's existence. This is a melodious tune of cultural harmony.

With all the above discussion, it does not doubt that our sample legendary folk character 'bonobibi' is a simile point for all religious people. It creates cultural harmony. Here given some arguments on it–

1. Without a strong belief in bonobibi, all religious people want to come on some belief. These credits go to folk belief. Because folk believes in talking about mass people's beliefs not only among categorized people. Folk believes they can reach the house of the lord and the house of the slave. That is how folk belief can break social classing barriers and become an important element of building cultural harmony.

2. Folk rituals are the proving sign of cultural harmony. All religious people come to a common point by forgetting their miss match on religion, culture, color, race, etc. Their only valuable address is that they all are human beings. They celebrate some events, follow some rules, eat some food and feel some flavor of joy. That is how folk rituals become proof of cultural harmony.

And finally, it can be said strongly that folk beliefs and folk rituals maintain a good combination between them. Folk culture has become a cultural harmony creating factor by representing a combination between folk beliefs and folk rituals.

The worst wars or riots have been triggered in history by the difference in opinion regarding culture and religion. People were willing to kill each other to establish superiority over each other. Cultural harmony is the first and the last solution to this problem. It promotes peace and understanding among two races – the only way to live in a unified way despite being different. Globalization and cultural harmony have opened new dimensions for democracy. The exchange of ideas and forms of art enriches people individually as well as a nation and even internationally. It brings progressiveness of thought and ideas. It exposes the evils and drawbacks of a particular culture and helps to open minds about it.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Exclamation, B. (2019, July 22). *Cultural harmony–A great necessit–Beyond exclamation*. Beyond Exclamation. [https://beyonandexclamation.com/cultural-harmony-great-necessity/?fbclid=IwAR2b2vxU07ndvs5o7KnBbY\\_Yacl4V0](https://beyonandexclamation.com/cultural-harmony-great-necessity/?fbclid=IwAR2b2vxU07ndvs5o7KnBbY_Yacl4V0)

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, some lines will repeat from the above study. Every country's environment has a demand for the cultural harmonical wind to have to break less sleep in the night. This important demand can be filled up and its easy creating factor is folk culture. We wish that every side of the world had a melodious tune in regular life with cultural harmony.

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**SPECIAL ISSUE: DR. MORVE ROSHAN K.<sup>1\*</sup> & Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman<sup>2</sup>**

**1. Assistant Professor (Adjunct), University of Lodz, Poland & Honorary Research Associate, Bangor University, United Kingdom. Email: [morveroshan@rediffmail.com](mailto:morveroshan@rediffmail.com)**

**2. Associate Professor, Department of Folklore, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

