1. Brief on Ethnological Museum:

The Ethnological Museum in Chittagong is located at Agrabad commercial area of Chittagong district under the Department of Archaeology. The idea of Ethnological Museum in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) originated in 1963 and as a part of this scheme, construction of the building started. Also collection of materials for museum display continued as a simultaneous process. The first phase of the museum building was completed within 1965 to 1968, but due to faulty structural design of the building, the museum galleries could not be open for public. Finally the museum was inaugurated in 1974 after the liberation war of Bangladesh. The main objective and goal of the museum is to represent the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) of different ethnic communities of Bangladesh. The idea was that the visitors and tourists who would come and visit the museum can have an overview of all traditional and existing culture of nation. Beside the inclusion of ethnic culture of foreign countries will help the visitors to enlighten their knowledge and also to make a comparative study of the existing culture of Bangladesh. At present the museum houses 11 (eleven) display galleries including a central display hall.

Photo-1: Ethnological Museum at Chittagong  Photo-2: Ethnological Museum at Chittagong
2. Representation of Ethnic Cultures of Bangladesh in Ethnological Museum:

There are many ethnic communities in Bangladesh who are still carrying their individual culture and tradition. Among them an overview of cultural heritage of 27 ethnic communities were represented and preserved in the display galleries of this museum.

The preserved cultural heritage of 27 ethnic communities are: Santal, Oraon, Garo, Hajong, Koch, Khashia, Monipuri, Chakma, Chak, Tanchangya, Khyang, Marma, Murong, Bawm, Tripura, Rakhain, Lusai, Kuki, Pangon, Khumi, Mandai, Rajbangshi, Palia, Pangkhoya, Tripura, Bangali.
Photo -7: Wall painting on Murong

Photo -8: Wall painting on Chakma

Photo -9: Wall painting on Marma

Photo -10: Wall painting on Khumi

Photo -11: Bangali village people in glass showcase

Photo -12: Raas Dance festival of Monipuri
### 2.1 List of some cultural festivals and events of multi ethnic community:

Most ethnic communities perform some yearly religious, social and cultural festival and events are follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the festival</th>
<th>Name of ethnic group</th>
<th>Purpose of festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biju</td>
<td>Chakma</td>
<td>New year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangraing</td>
<td>Marma</td>
<td>ChaitraSankranti(year ending) and New year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumulang</td>
<td>Murong</td>
<td>Rice yielding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siasat-Ply or Shachia Kum</td>
<td>Murong</td>
<td>Cow killing (religious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champua</td>
<td>Murong</td>
<td>Plantain leaf cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baisu</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>New year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raas Dance</td>
<td>Monipuri</td>
<td>love story of sri Krisna and Radha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanganna</td>
<td>Garo</td>
<td>Year ending and new year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jall kely (water festival)</td>
<td>Rakhain</td>
<td>New year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joom chash festival</td>
<td>Chakma, Tripura, Marma</td>
<td>a special mode of cultivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Murongs intangible cultural events:

Ethnological Museum represents their some intangible cultural heritage which is transmitted from generation to generation and promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. I want to discuss on Murongs cultural festival events mention their beliefs, myth, rituals. Mros/Murongs celebrate the festival of sacrificing cows called Shachia Kum or Siasat-Ply.

3.1 Siasat-Ply / Shachia Kum (Cow Sacrifice) Festival:

In Mro language, Sia means cow and Sat means killing with spear. This is why cow sacrifice festival is called Siasat. Ply means dance. Another name of this festival is Shachia Kum. Such a festival is arranged by affluent landowners after Joom crop is harvested, usually during December –February. Mro youth in traditional costume dance in tune with the ‘pung’ flute around the cow already tied up; As the host orders, a young man kills the cow with spear. As the cow bleeds the Mros rejoice. They eat the cow’s meat in great delight. They draw the animal’s tongue out, cuts it and hoists it on a three-pronged spear as punishment since the cow used its tongue to eat up their book of religion.

Photo-13: a case containing the cow

Photo-14: the head man pierces the cow skin with a stake before the cow falls its death during the Murong holiday

Photo-15: a complete case containing the cow

Photo-16: cow killing process
3.1.2 Beliefs and Myth: The Mros worship ghosts and spirits. They sacrifice cows and pigs on such occasions and eat their meat. They have no temple or fixed places for worship. Although the Mros are believers in Buddhism many of them have lately been converted to Christianity. Despite being Buddhists, they worship many inanimate objects. ‘Thurai’ is their principal deity and they believe that he created the world. According to them, Thurai once called a meeting of all peoples to grant them books of religion but there was none to represent the Mros.

After waiting for a considerable time, Thurai decided to send a book to the Mros. Coming to know of this the Mros began dancing and singing in joy and organized a festival of food and
drinks. Thurai sent the book of religion, written on banana leaves, on the back of a cow. On its way to the Mro village through the hills, the cow became tired and hungry and ate up the banana leaves that contained the book. Consequently, the Mros did not receive their book of religion. When the Mros went to Thurai to represent their case he ordered them to kill the cow. Till this day the Mros celebrate the festival of sacrificing cows.

3.2 Worshiping and Rites:

The Mros worship or perform puja twice a year—in the months of Falgun and Ashar. Puja in Mro language is called ‘khang’. Cakes are made in every house with new jhum crops. The festival continues for three days. Cows, pigs, goats and chickens are sacrificed in the name of their deity. Such worshiping is arranged to seek the deity’s protection against evil spirits. They perform basumati puja if an epidemic breaks out in their village.

3.3 Champua Festival:

The Mros observe champua or banana leaf cutting festival. This festival rhymes with cow sacrifice festival. Cows are killed as the animal ate up the banana leaves that contained their books of religious and banana leaf cutting is celebrated as it contained their sacred book. On the day of festival young Mro boys and girls go far into the forest and cut the banana leaves amidst dancing and singing. This is called champua festival.

3.4 Krama Puja /Religion festival:

Krama religion was introduced by Mro youth named Menley. It is the Mros found in their meditation before a hill suffering erosion due to torrents of water that the stones of the hill will give them solace and that behind the hill is a deity. In course of such meditation in the eighties of the twentieth century, Menley reached a miraculous juncture. He asked and got from the deity alphabets for the Mros and after this introduced karma religion.
3.5 Roikkharam festival:

This is a festival relating to piercing of the ears. Ears of both boys and girls have to be pierced. Children of the age of three years have to do it. A trained physician performs it. At the festival a pig and a chicken are killed to feed the neighbors who are also offered liquor to drink. Ear piercing through this festival is done to accept the child into the Mro society.

4. Display Techniques and Materials:

In order to represent day to day life, social, cultural and religion thought and practices the display designer used map, photograph, picture chat, diorama, wall paintings, model or replica, glass showcase, panels and short text labels as exhibition tools.

4.1 Map: In order to display, we used map brief introduction of the ethnic communities were given based on their current geographical location. For example; the ethnic groups who reside in Chittagong Hill tracks and in the neighboring districts are showing in the map.

Photo-22: Swoing location map with panel   Photo-23: Swoing location map in the showcase

4.2 Diorama: The diorama display of presents the household activities, cultural and religion festival, their house, scene of rice cultivation and paddy crushing to take grains out of the plant.

Photo-24: Cow killing festival of Murong   Photo-25: Joom cultivation use diorama
4.3 Wall Painting : Visitors can see the wall painting made by the Italian artist V.Caroli. The upper walls of the central gallery are painted with location map, people, their life style and dwelling places and cultural event of different ethnic communities (please see photo no 5 to 10).

4.4 Model / Replica : Visitors can see the display gallery different type of model and replica. For example on the west wall of the foyer a model of Chakma platform house can seen by the visitors.

Photo-26: a model of Chakma platform house

Photo-27: Bawm people from Bandarban (Machang Ghar)

4.5 Showcase : Visitors can see many showcase display with location map and text labeled as Miscellaneous objects of multi ethnic communities contains the cloths, weapons, fishing materials, musical instruments, ornaments, handicrafts.

Photo-28: musical instruments

Photo-29: musical instruments and handicrafts

4.6 Picture Chart : The northern walls of the reception foyer before entering into the central hall contain one picture chart stating the racial classification of human being in world context. The classification as stated in the chart in Negroid, Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Australoid.
4.7 **Photograph:** Museum displays in a panel used many photograph of different type of activities of ethnic communities. Visitors can enjoy to see that photographs with location map and text label.

![Photograph display with text label](image1)

**Photo-30: photograph display with text label**

![Photograph display with text label and map](image2)

**Photo-31: photograph display with text label**

**Photo-32: photograph display with text label**

**Photo-33: photograph display with text label and map**

5. **Challenges and Recommendations:**

Many traditional cultural heritage are becoming extinct due to rapid intrusion of different modern cultural fusion with passing time. The adopting the modern culture to compete with their Bangali or others neighbors. Under the circumstance, Ethnological Museum has taken an attempt to collect, preserve and develop of display of multi-ethnic culture and is the primary duty of the museum.

To overcome the challenges, I would like to share some recommendation to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage are follows:

a. To conduct an intensive survey the entire ethnic cultural heritage of Bangladesh.

b. Prepare a detail data base and digital documentation aid to establish the Audio–Visual Archives.

c. Necessary infrastructure develop are very needed and establish the modern laboratory with well equipment.
d. Need to ensure the Audio – Visual presentation for visitors and also should establish the virtual museum through the website.

e. To conduct the community awareness, research and promotional programme.

Besides this, Ethnological Museum keenly urge, if any idea and expertise recommendation to preserve our valuable intangible cultural heritage.

6. Conclusion:

We hope that UNESCO will give assistance and provide necessary training to our personnel, beside our government; so that we may succeed in saving our precious cultural heritage.

Reference:


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Acknowledgement for photo no -13 to 20 to http://www.demotix.com