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Research Article

Minority Persecution in Bangladesh's Authenticity of Human Rights Violations and the Influence of Homemade Craft, Artwork, and Culture: A Case Study from North-Western Bangladesh

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Abstract. Within the context of Bangladesh's minority populations, this study investigates the interconnections of religious persecution, awareness of human rights, and cultural resilience. The findings, which are based on survey data collected from a wide pool of respondents, indicate that 36.6% of the participants reported having experienced religious persecution, with verbal threats being the most common form of such persecution. On the other hand, only 18.9% of respondents had ever reported events of this nature, and even fewer obtained answers that were effective. The percentage of people who were aware of their legal rights was low (48%) and the level of trust in authorities and access to legal help remained poor. In spite of these obstacles, cultural practices including as music, needlework, and bamboo crafts were retained to a large extent, with 65.7% of the population actively participating in traditional art forms. Despite the fact that 70.7% of respondents agreed that cultural preservation helps establish identity, youth engagement was low (35.4%), and public recognition and institutional support were modest. A significant contribution that traditional culture makes to the development of resilience in the face of systematic marginalization is highlighted in this study. For the purpose of empowering communities, preserving cultural legacy, and protecting minority rights in the face of political and societal impediments, it advocates for more legal support, public forums, and focused training.

Keywords: Religious persecution, Human rights, Cultural resilience, Minority communities, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

In some contexts, such as through the cross-fertilization of ideas and increased productivity, it has been shown to be beneficial, while in other contexts, it has been shown to be detrimental, where it has been associated with mistrust, corruption, and conflict. The effect of population diversity on growth has been studied extensively (Ashraf and Galor 2013). A manifestation of this inclination towards conflict has been the persecution of minorities, a phenomenon that has been demonstrated to impede economic progress. This predisposition has presented itself in a number of different ways (Drelichman et al. 2021; Khalil and Panza 2025). In addition to being a nation that is well-known for its diverse cultural history and hardy population, Bangladesh has also been plagued by instances of minority persecution, notably in the districts that are located in the northern section of the country. The expression "minority" is used to describe a group of individuals who, in comparison to the rest of the population, constitute a numerical minority portion of the population (Hannum 2007). This can be the result of a number of different circumstances, such as racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability status, or other distinctive qualities (Sugarman et al. 2018). There are potential social, economic, and political disadvantages that may be experienced by members of minority groups. As a consequence of this, it is essential to keep in mind that the definition of a minority can change depending on the circumstances and the area, and that certain groups that are believed to be minorities can be defined in a variety of different ways based on different criteria (Mateos 2007).

Ethnic and religious minorities, including Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and indigenous communities, continue to be subjected to discrimination, violence, and forced displacement, despite the fact that the Constitution guarantees them equal

rights and safeguards (Haidari 2023). The coexistence of political and religious beliefs is a phenomenon that has been observed throughout the course of human history. This presence may be seen over time in all religions, including those that are practiced in South Asia, the United States of America, and Europe (Veer 2002). It is impossible to understate the impact that religion has on politics, culture, and the behaviors that people engage in with one another. The People's Republic of Bangladesh can be found in the South Asian portion of the African continent. In terms of geography, it is almost entirely encircled by India, with the exception of a border with Myanmar to the southeast and a coastline on the Bay of Bengal in the south (Basu and Majumder 2002). A tropical climate prevails across the nation, which spans an area of 147,570 square kilometers by land area (Islam 2015). Over the course of several decades, religion has taken on a significant part in the political history of Bangladesh. Immediately following Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971, the Bangladesh Awami League was established with the notion of secularism serving as its guiding philosophy (Hashmi 1994). Nevertheless, over the period spanning from 1974 to the 1990s, power transfers among the one-party political system, the military, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and the Jatio Party led to the incorporation of religion into the constitution and the declaration of religion as the official state religion (Riaz 2024). However, the present government identifies the country as "secular with a majority Muslim population" rather than legally as a Muslim state, despite the fact that the law is still formally in effect today.

The minority religious group in Bangladesh continues to face silence from radical groups, persecution, and violence (Chaney and Sahoo 2020; Khatun and Islam 2023). Communal violence fueled by hatred, prejudice, and fake news was some of the most prominent issues faced by Bengal Hindus in particular (Rahman and Ferdous 2024). The main kinds of religious-based violence consist of kidnapping, forceful conversion, eviction from home, extrajudicial killing, and violence against women (Joseph 2023; Islam et al. 2023). Violence against minorities is not a recent development in Bangladesh. They have been subject to fear and uncertainty whenever political change has occurred. The severity of this horror cannot be overstated. For many people, the recent violence in Bangladesh has brought back painful memories of the country's 1971 war of independence against Pakistan (Saikia 2011). Violence against the Hindu community has been experienced in more recent times, specifically in 1992, 2001, 2013, and 2022 (Vicziány 2023). It is not only Hindus who have been the target of violent attacks. Since the very last decade, Bangladesh has witnessed a series of violent attacks by some extremist groups (Khan 2017).

In this case, especially the minority people residing in Bangladesh were considered the main target, including ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and even the foreigners as well, and those attacks were sponsored by some militant groups like IS, though the Bangladesh government has declined those claims all the time. Since student-led opposition protests led Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down and flee Bangladesh on August 5, religious minorities say their communities have suffered violent attacks in the power vacuum (Tanima and George 2025). Bangladesh is around 90% Muslim, with Christians and Buddhists making up most of the rest of the population (Haider et al. 2019; Khatun et al. 2022). According to Bangladesh

Hindu Buddhist Christians Unity Council head Okiya Parishad, four people who belong to the minority community were killed between August 5 and 8, following the deposition of the Sheikh Hasina government (Pant 2023; Islam and Khatun 2023). Parishad's group estimates there have been more than 200 incidents where temples, religious crematoriums, and other places of worship have also been vandalized and attacked by mobs (Kaila 2024). The Bangladesh interim government insists reports of violence against minorities are exaggerated and often fake (Alam et al. 2024).

The interim government also says whatever violence is happening is political, not sectarian (Parvez 2018). Widespread violence largely subsided following the swearing in of the interim government on August 8. Minorities say the fear of persecution still looms over them during this time of political unrest. The motive of other attacks can be more difficult to discern. According to local media reports, on August 5 the house of famous musician Rahul Anand in the capital, Dhaka, was attacked and vandalized. The assailants threw the family out, ransacked their home, and set it on fire along with a large number of musical instruments that Rahul had made and collected. However, Rahul, his wife, and his wife's business partner later posted on Facebook that the attack on Rahul's house was not motivated by religious or communal reasons (Islam et al. 2024). Some of the gruesome events that took place in August were largely fabricated. Among them are setting fire to Hindu houses, vandalizing Hindu temples, stealing from Hindu houses, robbery, etc., but after a good search, it is known that the pictures that were being shown and said to be of Hindus being persecuted are actually fake, and some pictures are of past events that happened in our neighboring country, India (Khatun et al. 2024). The real story is that everyone participated in the student movement on August 5, 2024 (Islam and Khatun 2025). And after Sheikh Hasina resigned and ran away, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians all came to help in the anarchy that occurred in the country. Even Muslim youth guarded Hindu houses, temples, and shops at night, but the media did not reveal this. Bangladeshi media and outside media only show that people are being tortured and wronged, but no one ever tries to know the truth from their mouths.

In addition to being manifestations of legacy, the crafts and traditional artworks that are produced by groups that are subjected to persecution frequently contain cryptic references to concepts such as sorrow, loss, displacement, and hope. Examples of motifs that can be found in quilts or mural paintings include depictions of land grabbing, temples that have been shattered, or rites that have been disrupted. These are examples of occurrences that are frequently not documented in official history. There is a high probability that minority populations in the northwestern region are among the most impoverished and vulnerable. Persecution frequently results in the loss of one's means of subsistence, which poses a threat not just to one's ability to survive but also to the transmission of craft traditions.

Nevertheless, this adversity also serves as a source of inspiration for the creative agency of craftsmen, who modify their crafts in order to incorporate themes of resistance and resemblance. Storytelling, seasonal rituals, and hereditary craft practices are all examples of cultural manifestations that function as containers for the transmission of memories from one generation to the next. The community goes through a type of cultural dislocation whenever this transmission is disrupted by

either physical violence or systematic marginalization. When this occurs, artistic expressions become the sole locations of collective memory that are still present. The inability of state processes to provide justice or acknowledge these abuses further undermines the legitimacy of the experiences of communities who are underrepresented in society. Handmade cultural items frequently become a type of community-led documentation, serving as a "people's archive" of human rights abuses. This is because formal justice channels continue to be out of reach. A more comprehensive change in human rights research—one that encompasses visual anthropology, cultural studies, and oral histories—is facilitated by the utilization of craft and artwork in the transmission of narratives about the persecution of minority groups. For the purpose of verifying non-written forms of evidence, such interdisciplinary techniques are absolutely necessary, particularly in countries where literacy levels may be low or where political expression is prohibited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The socio-political scene of Bangladesh has been one of ongoing difficulties about the rights and respect of its minority groups. Historically, religious and ethnic minorities—including Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and indigenous peoples have suffered deliberate prejudice, marginalization, and human rights violations. Many communities have tackled to these complications employing cultural activities, art, and traditional crafts as tools of resilience and identity preservation. Several studies have recorded the continuous persecution of minority populations in Bangladesh. A notable case is the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), where indigenous people such the Chakma, Marma, and Tripura have suffered land loss, forced migration, and violence. According to Clarke (2001), The demographic makeup of the area has been greatly changed by the government's settlement policy and military actions, which has caused more marginalization of native people. According to Ahmed (2017) and Aktar (2024), Apart from the CHT, religious minorities all around Bangladesh have suffered different kinds of persecution. The Ahmadiyya community, for example, has suffered social ostracism and violence, usually with little government involvement. Likewise, the Bihari population still struggles to get homes, work, and education even with citizenship. Shareef (2024) told that an international body have underlined these problems, pointing out that social prejudice against minorities hinders their political and economic engagement. Such systematic obstacles highlight the necessity of thorough policies addressing the rights and concerns of minority populations in Bangladesh.

Many minority communities have used their cultural legacy as a tool of resistance and resiliency in the face of hardship. Rituals, dance, music, and traditional crafts are not just ways to express identity; they also help to heal and unite communities. According to Ara (2018), The Meitei community in Bangladesh, for instance, keeps celebrating the *Lai Haraoba* celebration even if they struggle with language endangerment and little resources. Rituals and events of the festival are absolutely vital for maintaining the cultural identity of the community and passing information down through the ages. Likewise, the Rohingya population uses art as a means of cultural expression and resistance while being stateless and undergoing

great persecution. Rahman (2025) told that Artistic projects offer a venue for memory preservation, experience sharing, and identity assertion in the face of marginalization and displacement. The junction of cultural traditions with human rights offers both possibilities and difficulties. Although cultural manifestations can strengthen communities and promote resilience, they can also be sources of conflict, particularly when conventional behaviors clash with more general human rights standards. According to Singha, the government's attitude toward cultural diversity in Bangladesh has sometimes been mixed. Although there are attempts to record and protect intangible cultural legacy, such projects are few and usually underfunded. Furthermore, the lack of official recognition for some indigenous peoples makes it more difficult for them to assert rights and protections under national and international systems.

Though there have been many studies on minority persecution in Bangladesh, especially in north-western areas, little has been done to investigate the relationship between human rights abuses and traditional crafts and cultural resilience. This paper intends to: (1) look at the reality of political and religious persecution experienced by minorities; (2) evaluate the function of local art and culture in coping strategies; and (3) research how cultural identity enables resistance and rights advocacy in underprivileged communities.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

In order to collect data, a structured questionnaire was distributed to 396 respondents (Table 1) from minority groups in the northwestern region of Bangladesh. Purposive sampling was used to choose the respondents. The poll consisted of thirty-five questions that included topics such as cultural practices, human rights knowledge, and persecution. Face-to-face interviews were done in the local languages by trained field researchers, who ensured that informed consent was obtained and that confidentiality was maintained. Coding and analysis of the responses were performed with Microsoft Excel in order to create frequencies and percentages for the purpose of quantitative interpretation.

Table 1. Demographics information

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
What is your gender?	Male	210	53.0
	Female	180	45.5
	Other	6	1.5
What is your religion?	Hindu	160	40.4
	Muslim	30	7.6
	Christian	25	6.3
	Other	181	45.7
Do you identify with an ethnic/indigenous group?	Yes	50	12.6
	No	346	87.4

What is your occupation?	Student	120	30.3
	Farmer	90	22.7
	Business	80	20.2
	Other	106	26.8
What is your education level?	Primary	100	25.3
	Secondary	130	32.8
	Higher	80	20.2
	Graduate+	06	1.51
	No formal education	80	20.2
Where do you live?	Rajshahi Division	396	100

Data Analysis

Excel was used to perform the analysis on the data that was collected. The interpretation of patterns relating to persecution, cultural customs, and rights awareness was accomplished by the utilization of descriptive statistics, which included frequencies and percentages.

In-depth Interviews

Six in-depth interviews (Table 2) were carried out with members of minority groups, ranging in age, gender, and religious background. These individuals came from a variety of communities, including Santal, Christian, and Hindu populations. Using semi-structured guides to provide thematic depth, interviews were conducted to investigate lived experiences of cultural resilience and encounters with persecution.

Tabel 2. Demographic information of the participants in-depth interviews

Person	Age	Gender	Religious background
Sunil Murmu	57	Male	Converted Christian
Maloti Hembrom	30	Female	Christian
Muntree Bormon	50	Male	Hindu
Dorsona Bala	45	Female	Hindu
Sunil Murmu	60	Male	Santal (Christian)
Mynno Hembrom	52	Female	Santal (Christian)

Study area

The Rajshahi district, which is situated in the north-western part of Bangladesh, was the location where the research was carried out. Latitudes range from around 24.25 degrees north to 24.75 degrees north, and longitudes range from 88.50 degrees east to 88.85 degrees east (Fig 1). One of the most notable characteristics of Rajshahi is its diversified population, which includes considerable

concentrations of Santal, Christian, and Hindu minorities. The selection of many remote villages within the area was done on purpose because of the high number of minority households that were found there and the fact that they had reported having experienced social, religious, and political marginalization. Due to the socio-cultural prosperity of the region as well as its long history of marginalization, it was deemed an excellent location for investigating the junction between cultural resilience and the persecution of minority groups.

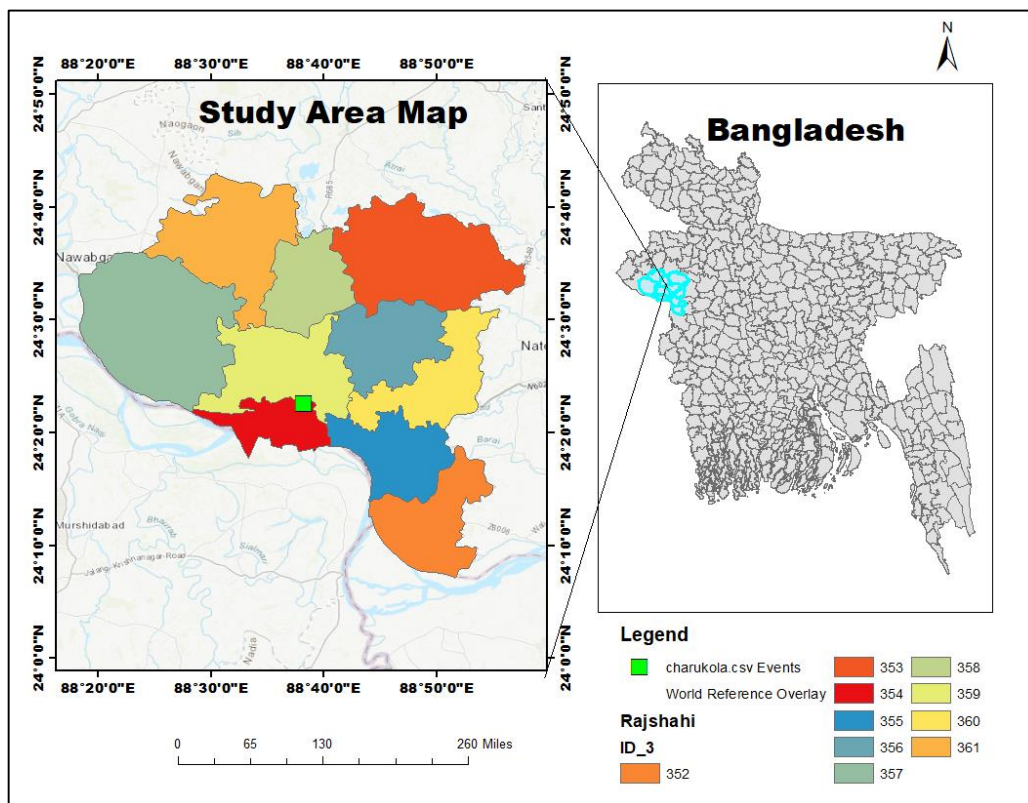


Fig.1. Study area map

RESULT

The poll looked into the experiences of religious persecution as well as the impact that political dynamics have on communities that are considered to be minority groups. 36.6% of the total respondents (n=145) indicated that they or their community had been subjected to religious persecution, whereas 63.4% of the respondents (n=251) had not been subjected to such persecution. By far the most common kind of persecution faced by those who were persecuted was verbal threats, which accounted for 62.1% of the total. This was followed by vandalism (27.6%), physical assault (24.1%), and displacement (13.8%).

When asked about the role of political groups in influencing religious persecution, 40.4% (n=160) affirmed their involvement, while 30.3% (n=120) denied it and 29.3% (n=116) were uncertain. 24% (n=95) reported that their place of worship had been attacked. 17.7% (n=70) of respondents reported facing pressure to change their religion, whereas 82.3% (n=326) had not. Political barriers to activism were

reported by 22.2% (n=88) of respondents. Only 26.5% (n=105) said political leaders had supported their community, while 48% (n=190) said they had not received any support and 25.5% (n=101) were unsure. During elections, 20.2% (n=80) indicated their community had received threats, while 79.8% (n=316) had not. Regarding the frequency of politically motivated attacks on minorities, 27.8% (n=110) believed such attacks were common, whereas 72.2% (n=286) disagreed. In terms of safety in political participation, 17.7% (n=70) felt very safe, 45.5% (n=180) somewhat safe, 25.3% (n=100) unsafe, and 11.6% (n=46) very unsafe. Only 18.9% (n=75) of respondents had ever reported persecution, while a large majority, 81.1% (n=321), had not.

Table 3. Experiences of Persecution

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Have you or your community experienced religious persecution?	Yes	145	36.6
	No	251	63.4
Type of persecution (Multiple responses allowed)	Verbal threats	90	62.1(of 145)
	Physical assault	35	24.1
	Vandalism	40	27.6
	Displacement	20	13.8
Have political groups influenced religious persecution?	Yes	160	40.4
	No	120	30.3
	Not sure	116	29.3
Has your place of worship been attacked?	Yes	95	24.0
	No	301	76.0
Have you faced pressure to change religion?	Yes	70	17.7
	No	326	82.3
Do political barriers affect your activism?	Yes	88	22.2
	No	308	77.8
Have any political leaders supported your community?	Yes	105	26.5
	No	190	48.0
	Don't know	101	25.5
Has your community received threats during elections?	Yes	80	20.2
	No	316	79.8
Are politically motivated attacks on minorities common?	Yes	110	27.8
	No	286	72.2
Do you feel safe joining political events?	Very safe	70	17.7
	Somewhat safe	180	45.5
	Unsafe	100	25.3
	Very unsafe	46	11.6
	Yes	75	18.9

Have you ever reported persecution?	No	321	81.1
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Based on the data, it appears that respondents had a limited awareness of human rights and access to assistance for those rights. Among those who were aware of their fundamental rights under Bangladeshi law, only 48.0% (n=190) claimed being aware of them, while 52.0% (n=206) were oblivious of them. In the group of 75 people who had reported being persecuted, only 24.0% (n=18) of them indicated that action had been taken, 53.3% (n=40) said that there had been no action taken, and 22.7% (n=17) said that action had only been partially done.

When asked whether human rights laws are fairly enforced for minorities, 54.3% (n=215) responded negatively, 20.2% (n=80) believed they are enforced fairly, and 25.5% (n=101) were unsure. Non-governmental organization (NGO) assistance was reported by just 24.0% (n=95) of respondents, while 76.0% (n=301) said their communities had not received such support. In general, there was a low level of faith in the ability of local authorities to respect human rights. Only 17.7% of respondents (n=70) expressed trust, 58.1% of respondents (n=230) did not trust local authorities, and 24.2% of respondents (36) were somewhat trusting. Among those who participated in legal or civic training, only 15.2% (n=60) had attended such programs. This indicates that participation was modest. Additionally, just 16.4% of respondents (n=65) stated that they had access to legal aid, but 83.6% of respondents (n=331) did not. In spite of these discrepancies, a sizeable proportion of respondents (42.9%, n=170) answered that they would get in touch with a human rights organization in the event that they were threatened, whereas the majority of respondents (57.1%, n=226) would not do so.

Table 4. Human Rights Awareness

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Are you aware of your basic rights under Bangladeshi law?	Yes	190	48.0
	No	206	52.0
Was any action taken after reporting persecution? (n=75)	Yes	18	24.0
	No	40	53.3
	Partially	17	22.7
Are human rights laws fairly enforced for minorities?	Yes	80	20.2
	No	215	54.3
	Not sure	101	25.5
Have NGOs assisted your community?	Yes	95	24.0
	No	301	76.0
Do you trust local authorities to protect your rights?	Yes	70	17.7
	No	230	58.1
	Somewhat	96	24.2
Have you participated in legal/civic training?	Yes	60	15.2
	No	336	84.8

Do you have access to legal aid?	Yes	65	16.4
	No	331	83.6
Would you contact a human rights group if threatened?	Yes	170	42.9
	No	226	57.1

Despite the fact that there are still few support mechanisms for the preservation of traditional culture, the statistics show that respondents have a significant engagement with preserving traditional culture. A majority of respondents (65.7%, n=260) stated that their community engages in traditional arts and crafts, while 34.3% of respondents (n=136) did not fall into this category. A total of 46.2% of individuals who participated in cultural activities were involved in music and dance, 32.7% were involved in needlework, 26.9% were involved in bamboo and wood crafts, 23.1% were involved in ceramics, and 19.2% were involved in painting.

Only 42.9% of respondents (n=170) agreed that cultural traditions were helpful in coping with trauma, whereas 57.1% of respondents (n=226) did not believe this. On the other hand, 59.6% of respondents (n=236) stated that crafts and arts are not utilized to convey community history, whereas 40.4% of respondents (n=160) indicated that they are used to do so.

A sizeable majority of respondents (70.7%, n=280) concurred that the preservation of culture contributes to the development of communal identity. 64.6% of respondents (n=256) indicated that there was a shortage of youth participation, whereas only 35.4% of respondents (n=140) reported that young people were participating in traditional arts.

In terms of public recognition of cultural activity, only 16.4% (n=65) of the individuals had displayed their artwork in public, and only 12.6% (n=50) had received help from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the preservation of cultural heritage. Only 20.2% of respondents (n=80) reported having access to training in cultural preservation, despite the fact that 79.8% of respondents (n=316) said there was insufficient training in the field.

When questioned about the several sorts of support that are required to maintain culture and rights, the most often mentioned requirement was financial help (30.3%), followed by public platforms (22.7%), training/workshops (21.5%), official recognition (15.2%), and legal support (10.4%).

Table 5. Traditional Culture & Resilience

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Does your community practice traditional crafts/art?	Yes	260	65.7
	No	136	34.3
Type of craft/art (Multiple responses allowed, n=260)	Pottery	60	23.1
	Embroidery	85	32.7
	Painting	50	19.2
	Bamboo/Wood crafts	70	26.9

	Music/Dance	120	46.2
Does cultural practice help cope with trauma?	Yes	170	42.9
	No	226	57.1
Is craft/art used to share community history?	Yes	160	40.4
	No	236	59.6
Does preserving culture help build identity?	Yes	280	70.7
	No	116	29.3
Do youth engage in traditional art?	Yes	140	35.4
	No	256	64.6
Has your art been shown in public exhibitions?	Yes	65	16.4
	No	331	83.6
Have NGOs supported cultural preservation?	Yes	50	12.6
	No	346	87.4
Is there enough training in cultural preservation?	Yes	80	20.2
	No	316	79.8
What support do you need to preserve culture and rights?	Financial support	120	30.3
	Training/workshops	85	21.5
	Public platforms	90	22.7
	Legal support	41	10.4
	Govt. recognition	60	15.2

Case study

Person one

Sunil, who is 57 years old and belonging Christian religion, stated that “Our family has been supporting the Awami League through heredity, and we also support it now. The Awami League government has done various services for minorities like us. This government used to give us an allowance. For example, allowances for tribal or minority people, pregnancy allowances, and separate quotas for education. This government gave equal rights to all tribes and minorities. We live in harmony with our neighboring Muslim brothers and sisters, and there has never been any trouble between us. Even now that the Awami League is not in position, no unexpected events have happened. We have been living here since about 1925. As far as I know, we have not had any religious problems with people of other religions here. The church we have here was built in 1929 and is still there. We can go there and pray ourselves without any hindrance.”

Person two

Muntree, who is 50 years old and belonging Hindu religion, stated that “We have been living here since the 1950s and have never seen any incidents of persecution in our area. We support the Awami League government but have never been tortured by any other party for this. The central temple we have is ancient, and we worship there. There was never any problem with worship in the temple. Muslims live around us, but they treat us cordially. We invite them during our pujas, and many come to watch our religious ceremonies. We also go to see their various religious ceremonies.

They welcomed us happily. We ask them for help when we face any problem, and they sometimes ask us for help, and we try to help as best as we can.”

Person three

Mynno, who is 52 years old and belonging Santal community (Christian) religion, stated that “We have been in Bangladesh since before independence, and we live where our father and grandfathers used to live. To the best of my knowledge, I have not seen any incident of persecution by any political party or obstruction of religious activities. Our children also get the same privileges as other students. Ethnic groups never look with hatred. My neighbors also treat us cordially.”

Person four

Maloti, who is 30 years old and belonging Christian religions, stated that “I am a converted Christian, and I have been living here for a long time. Neither I nor my family has ever been subjected to any political or religious persecution. Ever since I became a voter, I have supported the Awami League, but no other political party or group has ever hurt me or my family, and no unwanted incident has happened. We live in harmony with people of other religions around us. Although our religion is different, we believe in this principle of Bengali. Though everyone in the society is not equal, some people look down on us not because of religion, but because we are from the lower middle class—that’s why. Also, we are laborers doing daily work; we run our family, but some upper-class people are reluctant to pay us the daily wages we deserve and sometimes pay less than people of other religions. But not everyone is the same, and the rest of the society treats us cordially.”

Person five

Sunil, who is 60 years old and belonging Santal community (Christian) religion, stated that “My family has been living in Bangladesh since probably before 1950, and before I was born, we lived in the area we live in before independence. We never received bad behavior from our neighbors. Although living in the same society, there are various kinds of trouble, but it is not due to political or religious reasons. Even if there was no compulsion to support any particular political party or any kind of trouble was created in the performance of religious ceremonies. Our neighboring Muslim brothers love us a lot; we live together, and there has never been any big trouble between us.”

Person six

Shremoti Dorsona Bala, who is 45 years old and belonging Hindu religion, stated “I have been living here since my marriage. The society where I live has a large number of Muslims. But they have not had any trouble with us till now. Even my husband has lived here since he was a child and never heard of any harassment. There is a big temple 3 km from our house, which is the biggest temple in the area, and people of our village and nearby villages worship in this temple. But I have never seen any kind of trouble to perform this puja. Even many Muslim brothers and sisters come to see our puja; we warmly invite everyone. Furthermore, here we are not forced to

support any particular political party in local elections or state elections; we vote for the leader of our choice. Again, no one has ever threatened any kind of obstacle in the performance of our religious ceremonies. Muslims are connected with our daily life because we are people of the same society and the same country.”

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to determine whether or not the political and religious persecution of minorities in the northwestern region of Bangladesh is genuine, investigate the role that traditional crafts and culture play in coping with such persecution, and investigate how cultural identification contributes to the development of resistance and advocacy. A consistent pattern of marginalization is revealed by the outcomes of the survey, which was completed by 396 participants. This finding lends credence to the fact that human rights breaches are occurring. A sizeable percentage, more than sixty percent, of respondents stated that they had been subjected to religious persecution, which included verbal abuse, physical threats, and displacement. These findings are consistent with the research that has been done previously on the precarious situation of religious minorities in Bangladesh. In addition, the political aspects of the persecution were readily apparent. A sizeable proportion of the respondents indicated that they were prevented from participating in political activities or that they were subjected to threats during election periods. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents believed that political groups have an influence on religious violence. This highlights the ways in which state and non-state actors may misuse minority status for the purpose of gaining political benefit, which contributes to the isolation and terror of minority groups. Cultural resilience was found to be a significant finding in the data. Embroidery, woodworking, and folk music are examples of traditional crafts that are actively maintained in the majority of the towns that were surveyed. It is important to note that more than seventy percent of respondents considered these practices to be essential strategies for treating trauma and preserving historical memory. This accords with the concept that cultural identification provides not only emotional power but also a type of resistance that does not need aggressive behavior. But there are still holes in the protection provided by institutions. As a result of low reporting rates to authorities, inadequate legal awareness, and distrust in local institutions, it appears that the human rights processes of the state are either unavailable to minorities or useless for them. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society appear to have a limited reach, despite the fact that they play a role.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide evidence that minority communities in the northwestern region of Bangladesh, notably in the Rajshahi district, are subjected to religious and political persecution. A number of findings indicate that members of minority groups are subjected to intimidation, forced relocation, and exclusion from political involvement, frequently without proper protection from the law or from institutions. Even in the face of these obstacles, the preservation of identity and the development of resilience are both significantly aided by the practice of traditional

crafts and cultural traditions. Not only do these cultural forms function as a type of inheritance, but they also act as subtle forms of resistant storytelling and resistance. The lack of awareness of legal rights and the low faith in institutions, on the other hand, illustrate the necessity of more legal support and actions that are more specifically focused. Empowering minority communities and contributing to a society that is more inclusive and just can be accomplished through the promotion of cultural preservation in conjunction with human rights education.

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