



Original Research

## Influence of Globalization on Youth Perceptions on Changing Muslim Rituals in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

The bulk of people in Bangladesh are Muslims, and they have a diverse set of customs and rituals. The research examines the traditions of Muslims in Mohangonj Upazila, Netrokona, emphasizing the spiritual and psychological advantages of these practices as well as their development and future prospects. In order to collect useful qualitative data for its exploratory and descriptive research, participant observation, case study methods, and unstructured interviews are combined. The five pillars of Muslim faith are iman, prayer, zakat, fasting during Ramadan, and the Hajj. Religious rites, life transitions, legal frameworks, familial rites, gastronomic traditions, and seasonal festivities are examples of customs that are observed. Muslims have several customs pertaining to marriage, birth, and death. As time goes on, the younger community is becoming less focused on most of the rituals, ideals, and practices. Due to their widespread use of smartphones and video games, schoolboys are becoming less observant of religious and cultural traditions. While traditional activities are restricted by a lack of suitable fields and public spaces, the virtual world provides non-traditional platforms for expression. Customs are impacted by a number of factors, including group cohesion, education, migration from rural to urban areas, and the increasing use of ICTs. The disdain for preserving harmony with Muslim ritual traditions is the fundamental reason for these modifications. Lastly, few recommendations on how to make things better have come from the viewpoint of the community.

### 1. Introduction

Ritual refers to the ceremonial actions carried out as part of a customary commissioning. These days, it's also used to discuss customary behaviours. Rituals are actions taken by individuals of various ages and cultural backgrounds that are used to transmit customs from one generation to the next (Ali, 2011; Taylor, 2018). Humans are categorized as both logical and ritualistic beings. Human language and ritual are related in this way. The symbols used in traditional rituals are arranged according to particular ideas (Ashurov, 2019). People's daily behaviour was shaped by these expectations and norms. Muslim communities had the belief that all religious rituals must be carried out without exception. Bangladesh is a Muslim nation where the vast majority of its citizens follow various traditions and customs. Its citizens are devout Muslims who fervently abstain from

all that their sacred religion, Islam, forbids. One generation passes these on to the next quite frequently. While some of these customs are rooted in religion, others are grounded in social and cultural norms. According to Mondal (2017), rituals are seen as a way to pass down social inheritance and are crucial to the maintenance of group identity. Rituals are important for a person's mental well-being, social integration, and sense of community, however global technology has an impact on these practices (Bell, 2009; Beck, 2010). Population shifts and advances in worldwide communication have significantly changed traditional religious rites. As a result, new cultural ideals as well as evolving expectations from the individual and the community supplanted previous values and practices (Andrew, 2023).

The lack of community-wide rituals causes people to lose structured methods for resolving conflicts and anxieties. During significant life transitions, communal ceremonies provide a focal point for community bonding while imposing specific responsibilities on those involved (Erdal, et al., 2017). Ancient ceremonial forms disappear, and something profound is also lost. Ritual convention created a connection between moral principles and the underlying challenges of human existence and behaviour (Varisco, 2010). These kinds of buildings likewise disappear with the ceremony. The fundamental elements of culture are customs. People continue their rituals from the moment of birth till death, although in modern times, they have broken with tradition (Hidayat, 2017). A few decades ago, there were many different customs observed by the people of Bangladesh. We have witnessed several modifications to customary practices recently. This study investigates the factors for the alteration of customs and the lack of motivation among the nation's youth to uphold them. that has been passed down through the generations. Our culture and moral values are degraded when customs are changed.

There aren't many ideas in this research. It will examine the customs surrounding traditional rituals, pointing out significant modifications to them, talking about how the younger generation views them, and determining the reasons behind and effects of these changes (Rook, 1985; Marufuzzaman, 2012). This study investigates the customs that Muslims in Mohanganj, Upazila, and Netrokona practice the most. Rituals were fiercely adhered to for their psychological and spiritual benefits. Determine how Muslims' traditional rituals are evolving and how the next generation views them. The removal of misconceptions about Muslim ritual practices and the alteration of traditional rituals are greatly aided by globalisation and other factors. These days, religion is growing more and more international, which may have an impact on the adaptation or modification of ritual (Beck, 2010).

## **2. Research Methodology**

In the Netrokona district of Mohanganj upazila, Bangladesh, the Muslim community is investigating the ways in which their customs are changing. This study uses a qualitative methodology to investigate this phenomenon. This research is exploratory and descriptive in nature, and it gathers meaningful qualitative data by combining participant observation, case study techniques, and unstructured interviews. To achieve a full understanding of the study, the cohort

consists of individuals from a wide range of demographic backgrounds, including boys and girls as well as persons of different ages and genders.

Participants are chosen using non-probability techniques such as judgmental or purposive sampling. By using this technique, researchers can choose volunteers who are accessible within the study area and who possess relevant insights. Purposive sampling is a technique used to deliberately select regions within the Mohanganj upazila in order to gather a variety of viewpoints regarding the development of customs among Muslims. Community people are intimately involved in the data gathering process through participatory observations and unstructured interviews. Furthermore, key informant interviews are a fantastic way to acquire in-depth knowledge from those with a great deal of experience or specialized knowledge of customs. With the use of this analytical framework, the study seeks to illuminate the intricate relationships between socio-cultural, economic, and religious factors impacting the alteration of traditional behaviours in the studied area. This study tries to give a thorough insight of how Muslims in Mohanganj are altering their customs by using qualitative approaches. By bringing the community's voices to the fore, the study hopes to significantly contribute to the larger conversation on cultural dynamics in rural Bangladesh.

### *2.1. Geographical Location*

The Mohanganj upazila of Netrokona District, located in Bangladesh's Mymensingh division, is the research area. It belongs to the Netrokona district and is one of the ten upazilas. Being the commercial hub of Lower Bangladesh, sometimes referred to as the Haor area, Mohanganj is widely regarded as the region's centre.  $24.8667^{\circ}\text{N}$   $90.9667^{\circ}\text{E}$  is the location of Mohanganj. With  $243.2\text{ km}^2$  in total area, it is home to 24011 households. Barhatta and Sunamganj Upazilas to the north, Khaliajuri and Sunamganj Upazilas to the east, Madan Upazila to the south, and Atpara Upazila to the west define the boundaries of the upazila.

### *2.2. Demography*

The population of Mohanganj was 167,507 (BBS, 2011). Of the total population, males made up 50.28% and females 49.72%. Muslims made up 84.09% of the population, followed by Hindus (15.82%), Christians (0.05%), and other groups (0.03%). For those seven years of age and older, Mohanganj has a 42.13% literacy rate. This study looked at how Muslims in Mohanganj Upazila, Nebraska, are altering their customs.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### *3.1. Most Rituals Muslim customs*

Muslims fervently adhere to their traditional religious rituals and hold the five pillars of Islam in

the highest regard. The cornerstones of their faith are iman, prayer, zakat, fasting during Ramadan and the Hajj (the journey to Mecca) (Figure 1). Each rite has profound spiritual meaning and fosters a sense of dedication and community among believers (Islam et al., 2018). The people in the examined area shared a number of habits, including the faithful attendance of daily prayers, the practice of almsgiving as an essential component of their faith, and the practice of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. In addition, the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is a significant event that symbolizes both a spiritual quest and an expression of devotion to Allah. These customs serve as a reminder of Islam's core values of justice, piety, and a close adherence to the Quran. Local communities observe the following established rites, which strengthen the bonds between individuals and their faith:



**Figure 1: Five pillars of Islam**

### 3.2. Birth rituals:

Muslims celebrate the birth of a child in certain ways. That is the fundamental ritual that a Muslim baby follows. First and foremost, a Muslim family prays a particular prayer known as *Ajahan* to welcome a new child into the world. This prayer can be said by any male relative. This prayer should be heard by the newborn. The child's father whispers them into his or her right ear; if not, another family member does so. The first food a newborn should ingest should be sweet (Sunny et al., 2017). They believe that it ought to be better for newborns, whose speech might be quite good. Then, seven days later, they are ready to shave the baby's head. After seven days, plan some activities. Furthermore, it is customary to conduct the *aqeeqah* (after birth program) on the seventh

day. In the name of Allah, they offer an animal sacrifice that is solely beneficial to this child. The entire family decides on a suitable Islamic name for the child together.

### 3.3. *Wedding rituals*

One further essential aspect of Islam is marriage. We discovered that Muslims follow a variety of wedding customs, which they make a tremendous effort to adhere to. Parents of young people frequently arrange weddings. Family members search for the ideal spouse. A Muslim husband and prospective bride must agree on financial matters before getting married. Muslim families work together to complete this task and maintain positive relationships. This currency is called *mahr*. *Mahr* is the agreement that a husband and wife make. It is required of all Muslim spouses. Muslim brides and grooms frequently host their wedding ceremonies at their homes. The bride's outfits and accessories for the *Nikah* (marriage) are sent by the groom's family. Relatives and family members collaborate to create a happy marriage (Sazzad et al., 2023). The main ceremony a *Maulvi* (Islamic knowledgeable person) performs at a wedding. *Maulvi* is essential to the success of a happy marriage. The bride's wail is the bride's father. To get her permission, the groom's family offers her a *Mohr*. The *Maulvi* recites prayers from the Quran. After the wedding, the bride visits her parents' home four days later. She receives a hearty greeting.

### 3.4. *Death rituals*

Every Muslim considers death to be the ultimate goal. We discovered a few typical death rites that the majority follow. whenever a community member passes away naturally. Other community members made the announcement of a death and scheduled *Salat al-Janazah* (prayer after death). Every family member and neighbor tries to participate in this prayer. The corpse has to be cleaned (“*Ghusl*”) and covered (“*Kafan*”) in preparation for burial. Community member reciting the Quran in memory of the deceased. Every community member offered the *Salat al-Janazah*, a revered prayer. The body has to be taken to the cemetery for burial after *Salat al-Janazah*. The phrase “*Bismillah wa ala millati rasulillah*” (in the name of Allah and in the faith of the Messenger of Allah) should be recited when the body is lowered into the grave (Sazzad et al., 2023). To make the grave visible, a little stone or memorial may be erected there. Neighbors will feed the family during the first few days of the mourning period (typically four days) following the funeral and burial. This norm is expected of widows, who must grieve for four months and ten days. She is not allowed to leave the house during this time, and she is not allowed to see any men other than the doctor.

### 3.5. *Changing Core Rituals of Muslim Community*

We currently reside in Bangladesh, a modern nation that is rapidly expanding. Our society has undergone a number of changes. We currently disregard our cultures, values, folklore, and rituals from the past (Islam et al., 2023). The majority of rituals, values, and customs are products of

religion and society. We note a number of significant modifications to the rites practiced by the Muslims in Mohangonj Upozila, Netrokona.

Festive occasions, rituals, and social customs are routine activities that shape the life of communities and groups and are important to and shared by a large number of its members. They are intimately related to how a group views the world and how it perceives its own customs and culture. Over time, the fundamental rights and customs evolved. Before twenty or thirty years ago, every home would prepare *ruti* (bread) and *halowa* (sweets) in celebration of *Sob-e-borat* though there were much whether it was proved by Islamic documents or not. They all went to the mosque for prayer and shared this food with each other, however these days, things have progressively altered. While some Muslims in Mohangonj observe these customs, others do not.

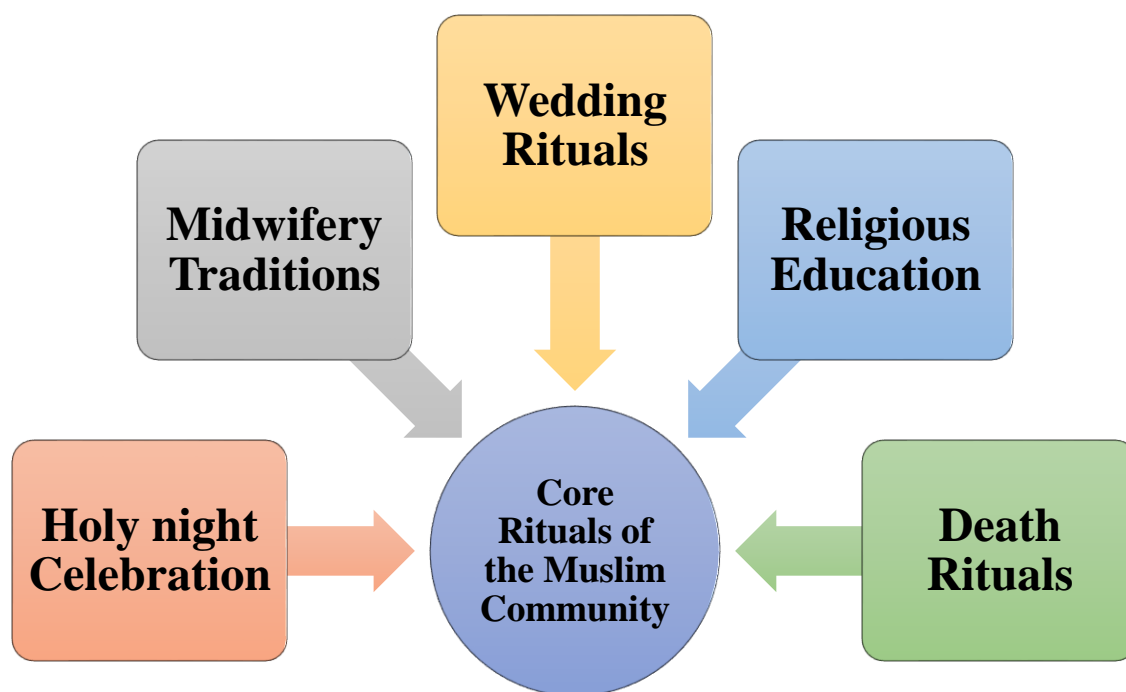
People these days are too busy to focus on anything but their own personal pursuits. Relocating from *Mofossol* town (local city) to city town for better living conditions was prompted by employment opportunities (Marufuzzaman, 2012). Their shared concern is undermined by social media, easy transportation, complexity, and disengagement from religious activity. According to one important informant, "he gets stuck with himself and gradually loses connection with his traditional activities due to the rapid changes of communication and global technology." Better education is made possible by information and communication technologies, yet the amount of basic religious instruction provided by mosque imams is decreasing daily in this system. The alteration of these rites is motivated by all these factors.

We discovered that rural residents are unaware of the birth case status. They believe that midwifery is overly dominant and that she has good spiritual communication (Figure 2). Calling a midwife rather than a doctor or taking her to the hospital is a healthier plan for their unborn child. People these days are aware of the correct birth case procedure (Kuddus, et al., 2022). Moms get a variety of training programs from governmental and non-governmental institutions. Before about 40 or 60 years ago, society followed customary wedding customs. With the aid of contemporary medical facilities and worldwide technology, these customs have evolved over time.

Traditional wedding customs have changed significantly in recent years, reflecting a change in both personal tastes and cultural norms. This article examines how marriage rituals are evolving, highlighting the decline in planned weddings, the increase in social events focused on the community, the elimination of the dowry system, and the creation of new traditions that enhance the wedding experience as a whole. Young people today are becoming more and more inclined to select their life companions. Families, who were once ardent supporters of planned marriages, are now aware of and supportive of this move towards individual decision-making (Chakma et al., 2022). The notion that the bride and groom's family should host all ceremonial festivities has changed throughout time. Rich community centers are becoming more and more popular, and many families are choosing to hold their weddings there (Alam et al., 2023a; Alam et al., 2023b). Though some are able to bear the expense, families in rural areas have come up with a touching

way to share the load by banding together and actively taking part in the ceremonial festivities. The dowry system, which was previously strongly embedded in several civilizations, is progressively disappearing. Considered a social blight, attempts are underway to end this custom. There are still pockets of resistance in rural areas, too, where some families may still turn to dowries because to financial hardships. The movement in society against this system represents a step in the right direction towards marriage equality. Early marriages are becoming less common as a result of increased social awareness and shifting mentalities. Nowadays, the emphasis is on creating a culture in which people are encouraged to pursue their education, professions, and personal growth ahead of making marriage-related commitments.

The family that lost a member of their family rigorously prohibits lighting a fire in their home and does not permit cooking for four days. The neighbors divided up the food. These days, some families tolerate these, while others do not, and neighbors follow suit. Because they're too busy to stop their neighbors for the cost of their meals. They think we take action on the same days. The widow had lost her husband. Widow is in difficult circumstances. She wore a white *sharee* until the customary forty days had passed after her husband's passing. However, as of right now, it is decreasing daily. Widows do not make an effort to follow the previously practices funeral customs though it had no evidence in Islamic documents. They think that participation in it is optional. While some of them last for two or three days, others maintain correctly.



**Figure 2: Core Rituals of the Muslim Community**

### *3.6. Perception of young generation about traditional rituals*

The most significant asset in our nation is its youth. Younger folks are constantly trying to adopt new trends. They uphold every aspect of western civilization. We discovered that the youth of Mohangonj Upozila lack a thorough understanding of their customs. While some of them adhere to customary traditions, others follow rituals that are performed in the other way. Essentially, the majority of youth are engrossed in using their smartphones. They watch blue films and browse the internet all the time (Hossain et al., 2023). They occasionally use different drugs and persuade others to do the same. A fascinating observation is that the majority of schoolboys in Mohangonj Upozila use smartphones and spend a large portion of their time playing video games on them. Many causes have contributed to the younger generation's disengagement from traditional customs. The institutions of education—family, school, culture, and societal values—play a critical role in helping young people develop moral and ethical principles. Nevertheless, despite efforts to educate, widespread problems in modern society include terrorism, drug addiction, violence, selfishness, and thievery (Baskara, et al., 2014)

"It is younger children who are totally distracted from mainstream culture and are following western trends and engaging in unethical activities which are strictly prohibited in our culture," stated one respondent. These kinds of ideas are expanding quickly every day. This circumstance has a few fundamental causes. First of all, some people have unintentionally strayed from long-standing cultural customs due to a lack of appropriate religious understanding. Second, the youth's preferences and habits have been greatly influenced by the ubiquitous impact of Western culture. Furthermore, a lack of appropriate parental direction and nurturing has resulted in young people looking for other ways to express themselves. This change has been further hastened by the increasing usage of social media platforms, smartphones' ubiquity, and simple access to the internet (Hossain et al., 2023). The virtual world provides a different, frequently unconventional, platform for expression and connection. Moreover, the lack of appropriate fields for play or public areas restricts the chances for participation in traditional activities, which encourages a generation that is more drawn to creative and modern modes of cultural expression. Individuals do not adhere to their religious practices.

Young people's tendency to completely accept Western culture as a sign of intelligence frequently comes at the expense of honoring customs that they view as antiquated or ineffective. These people frequently ignore the negative effects of breaking long-standing traditions on both society and themselves in their quest for unending bliss and ultimate happiness. This change is being accompanied by a concerning increase in youth-related criminal activity. The denial of conventional norms is associated with moral decay, which drives some people to commit drug misuse, join gangs, and become more irritable. As they immerse themselves deeper and deeper in lifestyles influenced by the West, they get more and more detached from ethical and societal norms. As a result, a generation is coping not only with the loss of cultural roots but also with possible detrimental effects on their general well-being and the community.



### 3.7. *Root causes of changing traditional rituals*

In an increasingly interconnected society, individuals are growing closer to one another and adopting unusual attitudes, rituals, and relationships, among other things. Customary practices that the locals revere. The universe is characterized by change. The transition from primitive to modern society was one of change (Islam et al., 2023). We have discovered a number of factors contributing to the alteration of customs, including education, the migration of people from rural to urban areas, group cohesion, and the widespread use of ICTs.

Our minds become more open and we are able to think more deeply about any subject thanks to education. It's the process of broadening one's knowledge and purging bias from society. People respond well to education because it helps to alter our customs. We discovered that we may eradicate religious discrimination from our culture by pursuing education. For instance, women are not permitted to leave the house, attend formal schooling, work, etc. It's interesting to note that Islam never condones bigotry of this kind. It was once thought that women should exclusively work from home and should never leave the house. This prejudice is removed through education. Similar to how education eliminates discrimination from our customs (Sazzad et al., 2023). Anyone who moves from one location to another loses track of their prior practices. It's the time in people's lives when things are changing. We discovered that when someone moves from a rural to an urban region, they eventually become accustomed to the urban rituals and lose sight of the country ones. They attempted to carry out urban rituals most of the time. Another element in altering customs is collective solidarity. Any community member who discovers that a certain ritual is beneficial to them or detrimental to them will discuss this with other community members. At that point, the community makes a choice regarding causing problems. Similar to *Eid ei milladunobi*, Muslims' primary rituals involved celebrating *millat* and *qiam*. However, some Islamic scholars agree, while others do not. Certain communities adhere to certain customs, while others do not. In this sense, customs evolved gradually. Another factor influencing the alteration of customary practices is information and communication technologies. Through our nation, technology aids in the penetration of western culture (Baskara et al., 2014). The majority of younger people have forgotten our indigenous culture in favor of westernized society. We discovered that the younger generation plans contemporary events instead of remembering the customs of their religion. It is the main reason why customs have changed.

### 3.8. *Consequences of changing traditional rituals*

One important result is the clearing up of misunderstandings about these traditional methods, which helps the community to have a better understanding of them. This change in rituals, meanwhile, can also present risks since individuals might unintentionally take up customs that run against to their own cultural values. When people stop performing customary rituals, they may become less moral and disregard basic religious observances (Sazzad et al., 2023). Furthermore, when ritual authenticity is undermined, popular culture runs the risk of becoming less rich.

Furthermore, the younger generation may be deviated from the correct path by the effect of altered rituals, which could lead to an increase in various criminal actions. This change adds a degree of complication to the cultural fabric by challenging the fundamental meaning of religious activities in addition to changing how rituals are actually perceived.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The primary goal of this study has been to investigate how the Muslims of Mohangonj Upazila, Nanokona, have changed their ancient rites. Social customs, rituals, and celebrations take on an astounding array of shapes and sizes: religious ceremonies; life transitions; rituals related to birth, marriage, and death; customs pertaining to traditional legal systems; kinship and ceremonial kinship ceremonies; culinary customs; seasonal celebrations; customs exclusive to men or women; A great range of facial expressions and bodily components are also included, such as unique meals, processions, animal sacrifice, recitations (such as *Sob-e-Borat's tabaraq*), unique clothes, and animal sacrifices at *Eid-ul-Azaha* (second yearly festive of Muslim).

Due to their heavy reliance on the widespread participation of practitioners as well as members of the community, social practices, rituals, and celebratory events are significantly impacted by the changes communities experience in contemporary society. These Muslim rituals are notably affected by processes like migration, individualization, the widespread introduction of formal education, the expanding influence of major world religions, and other repercussions of globalization. Aside from modern technology advancements, the primary cause of the alteration of customary rituals that compromise human health on a physical, psychological, and spiritual level is the disregard for cultural values and ways to maintain harmony with Muslim ceremonial practices.

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#### **Author Contribution**

Each author took involved in the creation of the study design, data analysis, fieldwork, and execution stages. Every writer gave their consent after seeing the final work.

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The authors declare that none of the work reported in this study could have been impacted by any known competing financial interests or personal relationships.

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