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Abstract Book

**Faculty of Social Sciences
Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh**

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**Socio-economic and Cultural
Transformation of the Garo
Community: A Qualitative Study in
Mymensingh District, Bangladesh
Md. Azharul Islam Sakib¹, Rashed Hossain²**

The Garo, a matrilineal ethnic community of Bangladesh, has undergone significant changes due to modernization, economic diversification, and external influences such as urbanization, government policies, and NGO interventions. Due to these changes, the Garo people lose their traditional shifting cultivation and forest-based activities. Therefore, the current study sought to identify the socio-economic and cultural transformations of the Garo community in Mymensingh district.

This study employed a qualitative research design with the application of narrative approach. We collected data through 10 in-depth interviews and 5 key informant interviews using convenience sampling and the sample size was determined on the basis of data saturation. Among 15 participants, only 7 interviews were recorded and others were noted by the interviewer. Afterwards data were transcribed into English and analyzed thematically.

After analyzing the data, we found two main themes, including socio-economic transformations and cultural transformations, as well as several sub-themes under these main themes. With regard to socio-economic transformation, the findings of the study found that access to higher education and literacy rates have increased, and men joined diversified jobs such as small businesses, day labor, government sectors, NGOs, and so on. On the other hand, women have joined specifically in the nursing sector, beauty parlors, and handicraft sectors. Regarding cultural transformation, the study found that while major festivals like 'wangala' were still celebrated, the duration of celebration decreased as well as Bengali and pop culture influenced the traditional festivals. The findings of the study also revealed that healthcare facilities have also expanded, and traditional treatment methods were replaced by many governments and private hospitals.

The study highlights the importance of sustainable development policies, education, and economic support to ensure a better life for the Garo people along with protecting their cultural identity.

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