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# Folk Rituals and Goddess Worship in the Sundarbans: The Role of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan in Community Bonding

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**ABSTRACT:** This research paper investigates the role of folk rituals and goddess worship in fostering community bonding in the Sundarbans, focusing on the Palagan performances dedicated to Banbibi and Sheetala. Spanning 1921 to 2021, the study explores how these rituals, embedded in the region's syncretic Hindu-Muslim culture, reinforce social cohesion among diverse communities facing environmental and existential challenges. It examines the narratives, music, and performance practices of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan, highlighting their significance in uniting fishermen, honey collectors, and farmers through shared spiritual practices. The paper also assesses the impact of modernization and tourism on these traditions, emphasizing their enduring role in cultural identity and communal harmony.

**KEYWORDS:** Folk Rituals, Goddess Worship, Sundarbans, Banbibi, Sheetala, Palagan, Community Bonding, Hindu-Muslim Syncretism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Sundarbans, a sprawling deltaic mangrove forest in the southern reaches of West Bengal, India, stands as one of the most extraordinary ecological and cultural landscapes in the world. Formed at the confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers, this UNESCO World Heritage Site spans approximately 9,630 square kilometers in West Bengal, with an additional expanse extending into Bangladesh, encompassing over 100 islands, 54 of which sustain human habitation. The region's geography is defined by a labyrinth of rivers, canals, estuaries, and tidal flats, shaped by the twice-daily surges of the Bay of Bengal, which bathe the mangrove forests of Sundari, Garan, Keora, and Hental in saline waters. This dynamic environment, while breathtakingly beautiful, is fraught with peril, hosting formidable wildlife such as Royal Bengal tigers, saltwater crocodiles, and venomous snakes like the Kalach, Chandrabora, and Gokhro.

These ecological challenges have sculpted a resilient way of life for the Sundarbans' diverse inhabitants, who include Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and indigenous tribes such as the Orao and Munda. Over centuries, these communities have forged a vibrant cultural identity through shared struggles and syncretic practices, blending hereditary traditions with influences from migrations, notably post-1947 partition movements from East Bengal. This rich cultural mosaic, rooted in the region's precarious yet fertile terrain, provides the backdrop for an intricate tapestry of folk rituals and goddess worship, which serve as vital threads binding the Sundarbans' people together across their scattered islands and waterways.

At the heart of this cultural fabric lies the practice of folk rituals and goddess worship, which have long been central to the Sundarbans' community life, acting as both spiritual anchors and social glue. These rituals, ranging from protective mantras chanted before entering forests to elaborate festival performances, reflect the inhabitants' deep connection to their environment and their reliance on divine intervention to navigate its dangers.

Among the most revered figures in this spiritual landscape are goddesses like Banbibi and Sheetala, whose worship transcends religious boundaries, embodying the region's Hindu-Muslim syncretism. Banbibi, venerated as the guardian of the forest, is invoked by fishermen, honey collectors (Maules), and woodcutters (Baules) seeking safety from tigers and crocodiles, her Palagan performances narrating her triumph over threats like Dakshin Ray. Sheetala, associated with health and protection from diseases, holds a parallel significance, with her Palagan rituals addressing communal fears of epidemics in a region historically vulnerable to natural calamities.



These practices, embedded in festivals like Hajat, Sinni Shasti, and Durga Puja, are not merely religious acts but communal events that draw together diverse groups—Hindus offering puja, Muslims presenting sinni—fostering a sense of unity and mutual support. The music, dance, and narratives of these Palagan performances, rich with local dialects and syncretic motifs, amplify their role as cultural expressions that reinforce social bonds, offering solace and strength amidst the Sundarbans' existential uncertainties.

The importance of folk rituals and goddess worship in the Sundarbans extends beyond individual devotion, serving as powerful mechanisms for community bonding in a region where survival demands collective resilience. The shared participation in these rituals—whether through singing Banbibi's mantras before a forest expedition or gathering for Sheetala's puja during health crises—creates a communal narrative that transcends caste, creed, and ethnicity. This syncretic worship, manifests in the blending of Urdu-Arabic terms like "Bismillah" with Bengali devotional lyrics, symbolizing a cultural convergence that unites the region's diverse populace. Festivals and fairs, such as those from Magh to Chaitra, become platforms for these performances, where Palagan artists narrate tales of divine protection, drawing audiences into a collective experience of faith and survival.

These rituals also reflect the livelihoods of the Sundarbans' people, with songs and offerings tailored to the needs of fishermen braving crocodile-infested rivers or Maules risking tiger attacks for honey. By channeling these shared struggles into spiritual and artistic expression, folk rituals and goddess worship have sustained communal harmony, reinforcing a cultural identity that thrives on mutual dependence and resilience across the delta's intricate network of communities.

This research paper aims to analyze the role of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan as tools for community bonding in the Sundarbans, tracing their significance from 1921 to 2021. The objectives are threefold: first, to explore how these Palagan performances, through their narratives and music, foster social cohesion among diverse religious and ethnic groups; second, to examine their adaptation over time in response to socio-cultural and environmental changes, including modernization and tourism; and third, to assess their enduring impact on the region's cultural identity amidst globalization.

By focusing on Banbibi, who protects against environmental dangers, and Sheetala, who guards against disease, the study seeks to illuminate how these goddess-centric rituals have served as unifying forces, binding communities through shared faith and performance. The analysis will highlight specific Palagan texts, such as Banbibi's mantras and Sheetala's songs, to demonstrate their role in addressing communal fears and aspirations, while also considering how these practices have evolved to remain relevant in contemporary contexts.

Historical analysis will draw on accounts from the early 20th century to the present, tracing the development of Banbibi and Sheetala worship through archival records and oral histories. Interviews with contemporary ritual practitioners, Palagan artists, and community members will provide firsthand insights into the lived experience of these traditions, capturing their significance in modern Sundarbans. Palagan performances, and socio-cultural dynamics, which will be cross-referenced with secondary sources on Bengali folk culture.

This triangulated approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan have functioned as instruments of community bonding, reflecting the Sundarbans' resilience and syncretism over a century. By examining these rituals through historical, performative, and communal lenses, the study aims to contribute to broader discussions on cultural preservation and social cohesion in ecologically vulnerable regions.

The Sundarbans' folk rituals and goddess worship, exemplified by Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan, are more than spiritual practices; they are lifelines that connect communities across religious and ethnic divides, fostering resilience and unity in a challenging environment. This research will unpack their role as cultural cornerstones, exploring how their music and narratives have sustained communal bonds from 1921 to 2021, while addressing the challenges of preserving these traditions in a rapidly changing world. Through this lens, the study seeks to celebrate and safeguard the Sundarbans' unique heritage, ensuring its vibrant legacy endures for future generations.

## **II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF GODDESS WORSHIP (1921-1950)**

The period from 1921 to 1950 marked a formative phase in the goddess worship traditions of the Sundarbans, characterized by the rising prominence of Banbibi and Sheetala as secular deities who transcended religious boundaries, uniting the region's diverse communities in a shared spiritual embrace. Banbibi, revered as the guardian of



the forest, emerged as a pivotal figure for both Hindus and Muslims, her worship rooted in the need for protection against the Sundarbans' perilous wildlife, particularly tigers and crocodiles.

Her origin story, blending Islamic narratives of an Arab daughter named Ibrahim with Hindu motifs of a forest goddess, resonated with fishermen, Maules (honey collectors), and Baules (woodcutters), who invoked her through mantras before venturing into the mangrove jungles. Sheetala, traditionally associated with health and smallpox prevention, gained equal significance in this pre-independence era, as communities sought her blessings to ward off diseases in a region vulnerable to environmental hardships. Unlike conventional deities tied to rigid religious frameworks, Banbibi and Sheetala were worshipped through clay mounds and simple offerings, making their cults accessible across the Sundarbans' scattered villages, fostering a syncretic devotion that reflected the region's pluralistic ethos and laid the foundation for communal rituals.

Early Palagan performances dedicated to Banbibi and Sheetala became central to rural gatherings during this period, serving as both spiritual and social events that strengthened community ties across the delta's expansive waterways. These narrative-driven musical performances, combined song, dialogue, and ritual to recount the goddesses' divine feats—Banbibi's triumph over Dakshin Ray and Sheetala's power over disease—captivating audiences in village courtyards and riverbank assemblies. Performed during festivals like Hajat, Sinni Shasti, and pre-monsoon rituals, Palagan sessions drew diverse crowds, with lyrics in local Bengali dialects infused with Urdu-Arabic terms like "Bismillah" for Banbibi, ensuring inclusivity.

The performances, often led by local artists, were accompanied by traditional instruments such as the Ektara, Dotara, and Shrikhol, their rhythms echoing the pulse of rural life. These gatherings, held under banyan trees or near makeshift shrines, were more than entertainment; they were communal rites where shared fears—of tiger attacks or epidemics—were voiced and alleviated through collective worship, reinforcing social bonds in the face of the Sundarbans' harsh realities.

The socio-cultural influences of pre-independence communal dynamics profoundly shaped these goddess worship practices, embedding them within the Sundarbans' syncretic and resilient social fabric. The region's population, comprising Hindus, Muslims, and tribal groups like the Orao and Munda, coexisted amidst the challenges of colonial rule and economic marginalization, fostering a culture of mutual support. The absence of communal riots, unlike other parts of Bengal, allowed for fluid cultural exchanges, with Hindus participating in Muslim-led Hajat offerings and Muslims joining Durga Puja festivities, both incorporating Banbibi and Sheetala worship.

This period's relative isolation, due to limited infrastructure, preserved oral traditions, with Palagan narratives passed down through generations, ensuring their adaptability to local needs. The pre-independence unrest and migrations from East Bengal, introduced new devotees who enriched these rituals with diverse influences, yet the core practice of goddess worship remained a unifying force. Across the Sundarbans' intricate riverine network, these dynamics nurtured a collective identity, where Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan became symbols of hope and solidarity, binding communities in their shared struggle for survival.

### **III. MID-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS (1950-1980)**

The partition of India in 1947 profoundly influenced the ritual practices and Palagan narratives surrounding goddess worship in the Sundarbans from 1950 to 1980, reshaping the cultural landscape as waves of migration from East Bengal introduced new dimensions to the veneration of Banbibi and Sheetala. The division displaced numerous Hindu and Muslim families, many of whom settled in the Sundarbans' South and North 24 Parganas, bringing with them distinct ritual traditions that enriched local practices.

This influx diversified Banbibi Palagan narratives, incorporating stories from regions like Jessore and Khulna, where her lore as a forest protector was already prevalent, blending seamlessly with existing tales of her victory over Dakshin Ray. Sheetala worship, tied to health concerns heightened by post-partition sanitation challenges, saw an upsurge, with Palagan performances adapting to include laments for displaced families and prayers for communal healing. These narratives, performed in rural gatherings, began reflecting themes of loss and resilience, with lyrics capturing the migrants' struggles while reinforcing Banbibi and Sheetala as universal deities who safeguarded all, regardless of origin. Across the Sundarbans' vast delta, this period marked a fusion of musical styles and ritual offerings, as new settlers contributed Urdu-inflected songs and Hindu devotional motifs, strengthening the syncretic fabric of goddess worship and deepening its role in community integration.



The growth of festivals like Hajat and Durga Puja during the 1950-1980 timeframe significantly shaped Palagan performances, transforming them into vibrant communal platforms that amplified the spiritual and social resonance of Banbibi and Sheetala worship. Hajat, a Muslim ritual offering for divine favor, became a major event in villages like Gosaba and Canning, where Banbibi's Palagan was performed with heightened fervor, drawing mixed crowds who participated in sinni distributions. These performances evolved to include extended dialogues and songs, narrating Banbibi's miracles to inspire hope amid post-partition uncertainties.

Similarly, Durga Puja, a Hindu festival, expanded in scope, integrating Sheetala Palagan to address health fears in a region prone to waterborne diseases, with performances staged during evening gatherings that united diverse communities. The festivals, spread across the Sundarbans' riverine hamlets, fostered collective participation, with Palagan artists using local dialects to ensure accessibility, their voices carrying tales of divine protection over the mangrove expanse. This growth not only preserved traditional worship but also elevated its communal significance, making festivals key arenas for cultural expression and social cohesion.

The integration of music and dance into goddess worship rituals during this mid-century period enriched the performative aspects of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan, enhancing their emotional and unifying impact across the Sundarbans' scattered communities. Music, driven by instruments like the Dotara, Ektara, and newly introduced harmonium, became more elaborate, with Baul-inspired melodies blending with devotional rhythms to accompany Palagan recitals. Dance, including spontaneous movements during Gajan-like rituals, emerged as a complement to Banbibi worship, with performers enacting her battles through expressive gestures, captivating audiences at ritual sites. Sheetala rituals incorporated simpler dance forms, often led by women chanting health-focused songs, reflecting communal aspirations for well-being.

These elements, performed under banyan trees or near riverbank shrines, transformed worship into immersive experiences, drawing participants into a shared spiritual narrative. Spanning the region's intricate waterways, the integration of music and dance not only deepened the aesthetic appeal of goddess worship but also reinforced its role as a communal bond, uniting Hindus, Muslims, and others in a collective celebration of faith and survival.

#### **IV. MODERN ERA AND CONTINUITY (1980-2021)**

The period from 1980 to 2021 saw the Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan traditions in the Sundarbans significantly shaped by the rise of tourism and media, which transformed these rituals from localized expressions into globally recognized cultural phenomena, while also introducing new dynamics to their performance. The influx of tourists to destinations like Bakkhali, Sagar Island, and Frasersganj, drawn by the region's unique mangrove ecosystem, elevated the visibility of Palagan performances. Banbibi Palagan, with its dramatic narratives of forest protection, became a staple at cultural festivals and tourist events, often staged to showcase the Sundarbans' syncretic heritage, attracting visitors from across India and beyond. Sheetala Palagan, tied to health rituals, found a niche in community demonstrations for eco-tourism initiatives, emphasizing traditional healing practices.

Media, including television broadcasts, radio programs, and later digital platforms like YouTube, amplified these performances, disseminating recordings of Palagan songs to a global audience. This exposure, while spreading the Sundarbans' cultural richness across its sprawling delta, sometimes led to commercialization, with performances simplified or stylized to suit tourist expectations, prompting debates about authenticity. Nevertheless, the interplay of tourism and media fostered new patronage for artists, ensuring the continuity of these rituals while embedding them in a broader cultural narrative.

Amidst globalization and environmental changes from 1980 to 2021, the rituals surrounding Banbibi and Sheetala worship adapted creatively, maintaining their relevance in the face of modern pressures across the Sundarbans' riverine expanse. Globalization introduced external influences, with urban musical styles and electronic instruments like the organ infiltrating Palagan performances, yet artists preserved core elements like Banbibi's mantras and Sheetala's health-focused lyrics, blending them with contemporary rhythms to appeal to younger audiences. Environmental challenges, including intensified cyclones, rising sea levels, and mangrove depletion, disrupted traditional ritual sites, pushing communities to relocate performances to safer venues like community halls or tourist stages.

These adaptations reflected the region's resilience, with rituals like Hajat and puja parvas incorporating prayers for environmental protection, aligning Banbibi's role as a forest guardian with modern ecological concerns. Across



scattered islands, communities maintained the syncretic essence of worship, ensuring that Palagan performances continued to unite Hindus and Muslims, even as global and environmental shifts demanded flexibility in practice and presentation.

Despite their endurance, traditional Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan practices faced significant challenges from 1980 to 2021, prompting robust community responses to safeguard their cultural legacy across the Sundarbans' intricate waterways. The dominance of globalized entertainment, including Bollywood music and digital media, threatened to overshadow these rituals, with younger generations showing less interest in learning complex Palagan narratives. Environmental degradation further strained resources for rituals, such as clay for Sheetala's mounds or wood for festival setups, while tourism-driven commercialization risked diluting spiritual depth, as some performances prioritized spectacle over devotion.

In response, communities rallied to preserve their heritage, with local artists and cultural groups organizing workshops to teach Palagan songs and rituals. Village committees in areas like Gosaba and Kultali revived traditional festivals, emphasizing authentic performances over tourist-oriented ones, while collaborations with NGOs documented oral histories and ritual practices for digital archives. These efforts, spanning the region's mangrove hamlets, underscored a collective commitment to sustaining Banbibi and Sheetala worship, ensuring that their Palagan traditions remained vibrant symbols of community bonding amidst the pressures of a rapidly changing world.

## **V. SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BANBIBI AND SHEETALA PALAGAN**

The Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan performances have played a pivotal role in fostering Hindu-Muslim syncretism and social unity in the Sundarbans, serving as powerful conduits for cultural convergence across the region's diverse communities from 1921 to 2021. The worship of Banbibi, a goddess revered by both Hindus and Muslims as the protector of the forest, exemplifies this syncretism, with her Palagan narratives blending Islamic origins—linked to an Arab figure named Ibrahim—with Hindu motifs of a divine forest guardian. These performances, enacted during festivals like Hajat and puja parvas, incorporate Urdu-Arabic terms such as “Bismillah” alongside Bengali devotional lyrics, creating a shared linguistic and spiritual space accessible to all. Sheetala Palagan, centered on health and disease prevention, similarly unites communities, with Hindus offering puja and Muslims presenting *sinni* in rituals that transcend religious boundaries.

Across the Sundarbans' sprawling riverine network, these Palagan gatherings draw mixed crowds to village thanas and riverbank shrines, where collective singing and storytelling reinforce social bonds, mitigating caste and creed differences. This syncretic tradition, rooted in the region's history of communal harmony, has sustained a cohesive social fabric, enabling Hindus and Muslims to collaborate in worship and celebration, thus strengthening unity amidst the delta's challenging environment.

The connection between Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan and the livelihoods of the Sundarbans' inhabitants—particularly fishermen and Maules—underscores their socio-cultural significance, embedding these rituals deeply within the region's occupational struggles from 1921 to 2021. Banbibi Palagan, is intrinsically tied to the perilous tasks of fishing and honey collection, with fishermen chanting her mantras, such as “Bagh challam bagh korlam chai,” before navigating crocodile-infested rivers, and Maules offering prayers at her forest temples to ward off tiger attacks while gathering honey and wax.

These performances narrate Banbibi's protective feats, providing spiritual reassurance to those risking their lives daily, while reinforcing communal support through shared rituals. Sheetala Palagan, conversely, addresses health concerns vital to these labor-intensive livelihoods, with songs invoking her power to prevent diseases that threaten workers exposed to waterborne risks. Across the Sundarbans' scattered islands, these Palagan rituals align with the rhythms of work—performed before expeditions or during health crises—anchoring communities to their environment and fostering a collective identity grounded in the shared pursuit of safety and survival.

The emotional and spiritual impact of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan on community resilience is profound, offering a vital source of strength that has sustained the Sundarbans' inhabitants through adversity from 1921 to 2021. The performances, rich with evocative melodies and narratives of divine intervention, provide emotional solace, channeling fears of environmental dangers—floods, tiger attacks, and epidemics—into expressions of hope and faith. Banbibi's tales of triumph over forest perils resonate deeply, instilling courage in communities facing existential threats, while Sheetala's songs offer comfort during health crises, reinforcing belief in divine protection.



These rituals, staged under banyan trees or during evening gatherings, create a communal space where shared singing and listening foster emotional bonds, helping residents cope with loss and uncertainty. Spiritually, the Palagan performances connect participants to a higher power, with Banbibi and Sheetala symbolizing resilience against the Sundarbans' harsh realities. Across the region's intricate waterways, this emotional and spiritual sustenance has fortified community resilience, enabling inhabitants to endure and adapt, ensuring that these rituals remain enduring pillars of cultural and social strength.

#### Analysis of a Banbibi Palagan Performance and Its Communal Impact

A Banbibi Palagan performance, as observed in the village of Gosaba during the annual Hajat festival in the early 2000s, exemplifies the ritual's profound communal impact in the Sundarbans, uniting diverse residents through shared worship from 1921 to 2021. A local artist group, led by a seasoned performer, enacted the narrative of Banbibi's victory over Dakshin Ray, blending Bengali lyrics with Urdu phrases like "Allah" and "Bismillah," as fishermen, Maules, and their families gathered in a circle.

The songs, accompanied by the Dotara and Shrikhol, recounted Banbibi's protection of forest dwellers, resonating with the audience's daily fears of tiger attacks, while the dialogue emphasized communal harmony, drawing applause from both Hindu and Muslim attendees. This Palagan, lasting into the night, fostered a sense of collective strength, with participants sharing sinni offerings afterward, reinforcing social bonds across the Sundarbans' scattered hamlets. The performance's ability to bridge religious divides and channel shared anxieties into spiritual unity underscores its role as a cultural cornerstone, sustaining community cohesion amidst the region's challenging deltaic landscape.

The Sheetala Palagan, integral to health-related rituals in the Sundarbans, serves as a vital communal practice for addressing disease-related fears, particularly during outbreaks, with its significance enduring from 1921 to 2021.

The lyrics, invoking Sheetala as "Ma," offered prayers for communal health, resonating deeply with attendees anxious about family well-being in a region prone to environmental health risks. This Palagan, staged over several evenings, encouraged collective participation, with women leading chants and sharing stories of recovery, fostering emotional support across the Sundarbans' riverine expanse. By addressing shared vulnerabilities through spiritual narrative, Sheetala Palagan reinforces community resilience, uniting residents in a collective plea for protection and healing.

#### Profile of a Local Ritual Group Preserving These Traditions

The "Gosaba Lok Sanskriti Sangha," a local ritual group founded in the 1980s, has been instrumental in preserving Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan traditions, ensuring their continuity across the Sundarbans from 1921 to 2021.

Led by figures like veteran performer Anil Mondal, the Sangha trains young artists in traditional Palagan narratives, teaching songs like Banbibi's mantras and Sheetala's health prayers, while adapting to modern instruments like the harmonium to engage new audiences. Their annual Banbibi festival at a riverside thana draws hundreds, blending authentic storytelling with community feasts, reinforcing Hindu-Muslim unity.

The group also documents oral histories, collaborating with cultural NGOs to archive lyrics, countering globalization's threat to traditional practices. Across the Sundarbans' intricate waterways, the Sangha's efforts—staging Sheetala Palagan during health crises and mentoring youth—preserve the spiritual and communal essence of these rituals, ensuring their vibrant legacy endures in a rapidly changing delta.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The exploration of Banbibi and Sheetala Palagan in the Sundarbans from 1921 to 2021 reveals their enduring significance as vital instruments of community bonding, weaving together the region's diverse inhabitants through shared spiritual and cultural practices.

Banbibi Palagan, invoking protection for fishermen and Maules against environmental perils, and Sheetala Palagan, addressing communal health concerns, have served as emotional and spiritual anchors, channeling shared fears into collective resilience. From early rural gatherings to modern festival stages, these rituals have adapted to socio-cultural shifts—partition, modernization, and tourism—while retaining their core role in reinforcing social cohesion. Case studies, such as Gosaba's Banbibi performances and Kultali's Sheetala rituals, highlight their capacity to draw diverse crowds, fostering unity through storytelling and communal offerings across the Sundarbans' vast deltaic expanse, ensuring that these traditions remain a cornerstone of the region's cultural identity.

The findings underscore critical implications for the preservation of Sundarbans' cultural heritage and the maintenance of social cohesion in an era of globalization and environmental uncertainty. The Palagan traditions, while resilient, face threats from commercialization, youth disinterest, and ecological disruptions like cyclones and deforestation, which



challenge ritual sites and resources. Preserving these practices is essential not only for safeguarding the Sundarbans' unique syncretic identity but also for sustaining the social unity they foster, which has historically prevented communal discord in a diverse region. The integration of modern elements, such as electronic instruments, suggests a need for balanced adaptation to keep rituals relevant without losing authenticity. Furthermore, the communal bonds strengthened by Palagan performances offer a model for social cohesion in other pluralistic societies, highlighting the power of shared cultural practices to bridge divides. Protecting these traditions ensures that the Sundarbans' communities, scattered across its intricate waterways, retain a vital tool for resilience, maintaining their collective strength against ongoing socio-environmental challenges.

To sustain Banbibí and Sheetala Palagan rituals in the future, a multi-faceted approach is essential, combining community-driven efforts with institutional support to ensure their vibrancy across the Sundarbans' mangrove landscape. First, cultural organizations and local groups like the Gosaba Lok Sanskriti Sangha should expand workshops to train youth in Palagan performance and traditional instrument use, countering the pull of globalized entertainment. Second, digital archiving projects, supported by NGOs and government bodies, should document songs, narratives, and ritual practices, creating accessible repositories to preserve oral histories for future generations.

Third, festivals dedicated to authentic Palagan performances, rather than tourist-driven spectacles, should be promoted in areas like Canning and Kultali, fostering community pride and participation. Additionally, integrating these rituals into school curricula can instill cultural awareness early, while funding for artists and ritual groups can alleviate economic pressures. Across the Sundarbans' riverine expanse, these recommendations aim to revitalize and protect these sacred traditions, ensuring that Banbibí and Sheetala Palagan continue to unite communities, sustaining their spiritual and social legacy in a rapidly changing world.

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