

A PLATFORM FOR THE MRU

(A LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL HUB FOR THE MRU
COMMUNITY)

By,

Tanzina Binta Harun

ID: 12208003

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ABSTRACT

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts area, as much as 11 ethnic groups reside along with their rich and diverse heritage and culture and the **Mrus** are one of them. In terms of socio-economic condition, they are lagging way behind other tribes as a result of their isolated living pattern and superstitious beliefs. To get out of the poverty line, the Mrus are trying to be economically solvent but through this process, their **language, crafts, tradition and rich culture** is being threatened. In addition, they are **destroying the forests** on which's resource their whole livelihood depends on. This progress is needed but not at the cost of one's identity or by threatening the assets of the nation.

A platform is needed where this ethnic group can explore their language and preserve it, uphold their rich culture and communicate with us and practice their crafts and earn revenue from it so that their dependency on forest resources reduced.

The research has undertaken by using observation and interview methods in some chosen case studies.

This paper aims for establish that a platform featuring the Mru language, culture and crafts can actually help this indigenous group to develop their socio-economic state and reduce their dependency on the forest resources.

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I have spent a whole year behind this project to understand the cultural diversity of this country. The Mrus taught me how simple and beautiful life can be and how to live in harmony with nature. Through studying their lifestyle, culture, socio-economic issues, I understood that. Their way of living has changed my view about the world. During this long learning journey, my instructors, seniors and friends supported me for which I am forever in debt.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Backgrounds of the Project: Mru community

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is a territory inside the Chittagong Division in southeastern Bangladesh, circumscribing India and Myanmar covering an area of 13,295 km². The whole area was undivided until 1984, when it was divided into three districts; Khagrachori, Banderban and Rangamati. There are about 45 distinguished ethnic groups now residing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area and Mrus are one of them. Who reside in the most interior parts of it. Although the whole population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts area used to be of these indigenous groups, now the scenario has changed and 50% of the population is indigenous peoples and mainly followers of Theravada Buddhism; 49% of the inhabitants are Bengali Muslims and Hindus; the remainders are Christians, or animists.

General or mass population of the country somehow doesn't have a good impression about the tribal groups residing in the country as they have always been portrayed negatively. Somehow their rich culture, social values, tradition etc are not reflected properly to everyone. This happens for their geographical location as it is very remote and for the hilly topography. Some groups like the Chakma, Marma have become more associated with the Bengali community and prospered but the Mrus who lives in the

most remote parts of the hilly area could not do so. As a result, they are lagging behind from other communities in terms of development. Because of geological position and furthermore some financial issues have made them remain detached from Bangali individuals, and additionally other tribal groups. Other communities look down upon them and oppress them. Due to language barrier, they can't even communicate properly with the others. As a matter of fact, they can't even communicate amongst their own tribe as there is variation in the Mru language in different regions. Their craftsmanship is getting lost as modern materials are embarking upon the community. In order to earn and sustain they are destroying the forests and natural resources without even understanding the devastating consequences of it. A development center can preserve their language, uphold their culture and nurture their crafts and lessen the dependency on forest resources.

1.2 Project Introduction and Rationale: A Platform for the Mru Community

The Mrus previously dwelt in the Arakan who now reside by the border line of Bangladesh, Myanmar and India. They are also known as Mro, Murong, Mrung. They reside mainly by the bank of Sangu and Matamuhuri region of south eastern portion of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Some other tribes call them by lengta, kuki or langye meaning lower cast or primitive people. They are discriminated by the Bengalis and other tribes as they consider them to be of lower cast. This occurs for various reasons. For instance, their living pattern is totally different from other ethnic groups. They live in an isolate pattern and tend to be in the remote regions and they are shy in nature. The

Mrus believe that they are cursed by their God. All these beliefs and their nature made them restricted from the Banglasis and other communities.

This project aims to create a platform for this community where they can communicate with others and uphold their culture; a platform where they can nurture their culture. A place where they can develop their condition through exploring the problematic sectors that the ethnic group is facing. For instance, they are facing problems regarding preserving their language, their culture and tradition, their craft and also destroying the very environment where their life is fully dependant.

The Mrus primarily speak the Mru language, a Tibeto- burman language and one of the recognized languages of Bangladesh. The Mru language is considered as “definitely endangered” by the Unesco in June, 2010. In 1985-1986, Menle Mru first invented the Mru alphabets but those alphabets are borrowed from other languages like Burmese and English. There are some sub divisions in Mru community. When they talk amongst themselves they talk in Bangla as there is difference n dialect in different regions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. As a result, the existence of this very language is threatened. Therefore, a language research center is necessary to preserve and develop this language.

The Mrus are very shy and are oppressed by others. They need a place where they can explore their culture and rich tradition. This platform is needed in order to communicate with them. The communication gap between the Mrus and other ethnic groups is one of the main reasons of them being oppressed. This platform would also represent their rich

culture and history. This is needed to help them overcome their insecurities and identity crisis.

The Mrus are heavily depended on natural resources. Let it be their housing materials like, wood, bamboo, bamboo leaves, and need of protein they totally depended on the forests. Recently, there has been some site of rare and animals in the Hill Tract Area; they are selling those animals and birds as exotic animals. They cut down many valuable trees in order to cultivate jhum. They cultivate on one hill for a year then leave that and move on to another one to cultivate. This way, deforestation is being done. The problem is they don't know the consequences of such actions. On the other hand, they are forgetting their own craft. Their bamboo weaving skills, jewelry making skills are getting Detroit day by day. If there is a training center which can train them and nurture their craft, alternate income source can be created. Their dependency on the forest will be reduced.

In short, this platform would be created to develop the condition of the Mru people.

1.3 Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this project is to focus on the Mru community and develop their current situation by pinpointing the major problems which are acting as setbacks for the community and resolving them through a platform where the solutions for the problems could be explored. It will work on-

- The Mru language. Preservation and development of the language.

- A platform where their rich culture and tradition can be represented
- Nurturing their crafts in order to protect the nature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Indigenous group and Development

2.1.1 Indigenous Group

Indigenous peoples, also known as first peoples, aboriginal peoples, native peoples, or autochthonous peoples, are ethnic groups who are descended from and identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently. Groups are usually described as indigenous when they maintain traditions or other aspects of an early culture that is associated with a given region. Not all indigenous peoples share such characteristics. Indigenous peoples may be settled in a given local/region or exhibit a nomadic lifestyle across a large territory, but they are generally historically associated with a specific territory on which they depend. Indigenous societies are found in every inhabited climate zone and continent of the world. Indigenous people are people defined in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant. The concept of indigenous people defines these groups as particularly vulnerable to exploitation, marginalization and

oppression by nation states that may still be formed from the colonising populations, or by politically dominant ethnic groups. As a result, a special set of political rights in accordance with international law have been set forth by international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the World Bank. The United Nations has issued a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to guide member-state national policies to collective rights of indigenous people such as culture, identity, language, and access to employment, health, education, and natural resources (<http://www.indigenouspeople.net>).

2.1.2 What is communal development?

Communal development doesn't merely just mean to give a community what they want, rather it is to find out what they need and try to find solution accordingly. The United Nations defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It is a broad term given to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at a grassroots level (www.peernetbc.com).

2.2 History of the Indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

2.2.1 History of the indigenous groups:

Around 45 indigenous groups reside in Bangladesh. Most of them reside in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area at the South-eastern part of the country. They are also called the Jumma people. There was a time when they were the only population that resided in this area but not the scenario has changed. Around 51% of the population is now from the indigenous groups in the hill tract areas (Chakma M.K., & Chakma P., 2010).



Fig 02: Map of Chittagong division



Fig 03: map of the Chittagong hill Tracts

Source: Author

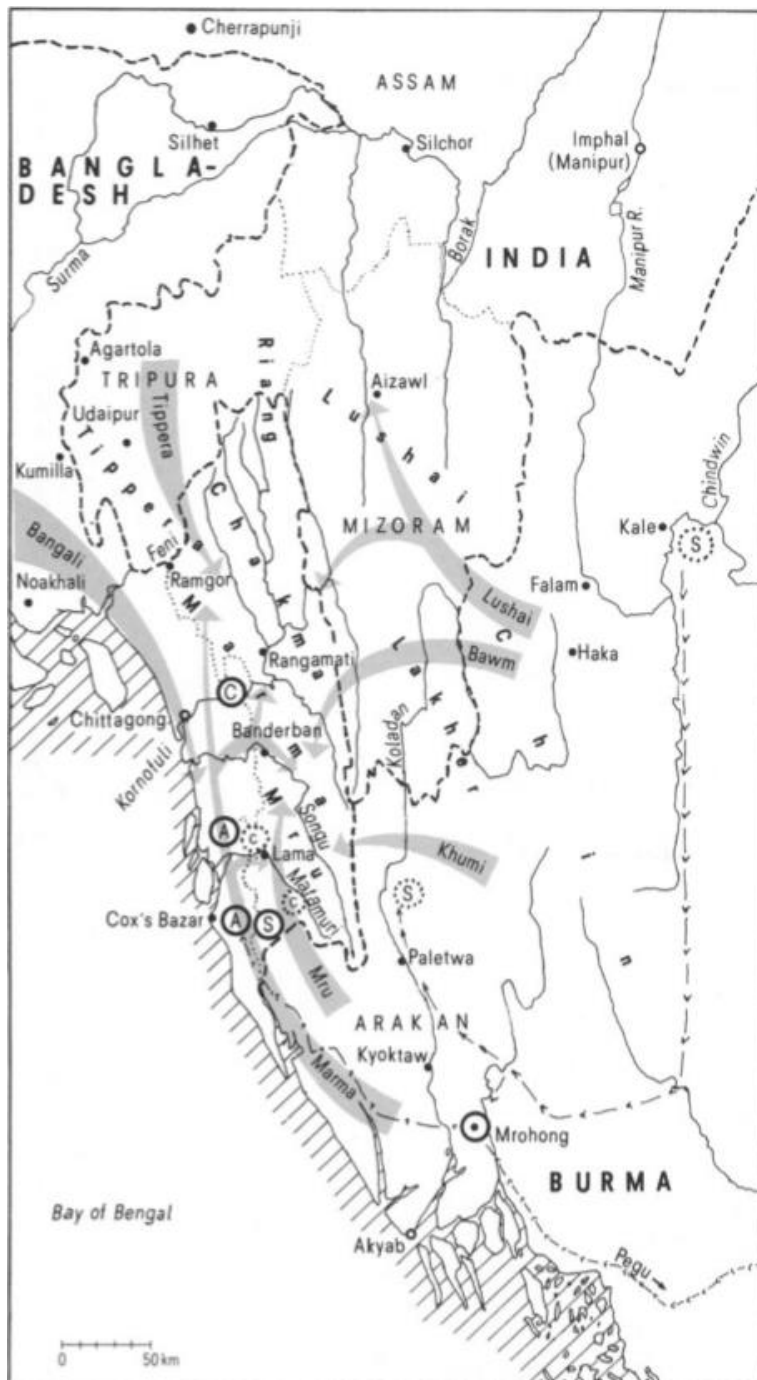


Fig 04: Map of indigenous groups residing area

Source: (Brauns C., & Loffler G. L., 1990)

Most of the indigenous group belongs to the Mongoloid race. Indigenous groups residing in The Hill Tracts Area (Rangamati, Khagrachori, Bandarban), Mid-Northern area (Greater Mymensing, Tangail), North-Eastern area (Greater Sylhet), Coastal area (Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Potuakhali, Borguna) are under this genus. The history of first footstep in our country is not assured yet. In the ancient time, this place was a jungle. The Southern part of the country was under the sea. In the jungles, indigenous groups like the Koch, Garo, Mru, Hajong, Kuki, Khashia, Santal etc. used to reside. They used to slash and burn the jungle and cultivate. They used to do jhum cultivation and hunt wild animals to eat (Mia A.K.M., 1995). Many think that people of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India are descendants of these indigenous groups. The classical section of the anthropologists thinks that they are either from the Austro-Mongoloid or Mongoloid-Dravid family. If this is true then average Bangalees' ancestors belong to Santal, Munda, Orao, Mahali or any other indigenous group (Roy D., 2002). They are mainly mixture of Arakani and Tripura tribal people, with Mogh.

On the other hand, from prehistoric time, from Nepal, India's North-Eastern side, Bangladesh's North Eastern, South Eastern and coastal areas (greater Mymensing, Greater Sylhet, greater Comilla, greater Chittagong and Chittagong Hill tracts area), today's Arakan were under hill towns of the Mongoloid people. In the middle ages, at foothills of the Himalayas Assam, North Bengal, Kachari, Ohom, Kamata, Chutia etc. were the homelands of the Mongoloids. In the Southern part, Tripura Maharaja's kingdom was spreaded till Bangladesh's Sylhet, Comilla, Feni, certain portion of Chittagong area and Eastern coast of the Meghna river including Chandpur. Chittagong

division's certain area and Chittagong hill Tracts area were part of the Chakma Samnto kingdom. As a matter of fact, History confirms that Chittagong including the Chittagong Hill Tracts area went under Arkanian rules at times (Kanungo B. S., 1984 & Chakma Resistance to British Domination, 1998).

The repression on the indigenous groups started from the British period. Since then, they had to go through many raids and operations. "Chittagong rule 1900" was the first attempt of British rule which created distance between indigenous people and Chittagong Bangalees, they were under the rules of British Govt. appointed district councilor (A British personnel) , they did not have right over their lands and they had to pay taxes for their own land to the district councilor (Uddin I.,2011). The inhabitants of the Chittagong were restricted from going to Chittagong Hill Tracts which was controlled by District councilor. The British did that purposefully in order to control movement against the British rule in Chittagong. As a result of these tactics, the relation of the natives and the indigenous group were affected and the bond became weaker.

During Pakistan period, they tried to improve Chittagong's situation and undertaken two projects, "Chandraghona paper mill" and "Kaptai bank and hydroelectricity plant"(Uddin I.,2011)." But this plant affected many indigenous groups mainly the Chakmas. They lost their land which was devastating for them and a large portion of the indigenous population migrated to India and Myanmar.

In Bangladesh period, they were suppressed under the military rule (Uddin I., 2011) where many of them lost lives, and it totally made them aloof from us. Still there are armies deployed there and news of violence is heard. The situation has changed now.

Some projects have been taken to improve their situation. Slowly, we are learning to respect their culture.

2.2.2 Current situation of the indigenous groups:

Like other countries of the world, the indigenous groups living within the border of Bangladesh reside as citizens of the country although they cannot enjoy the fundamental and civil rights in most cases. Because of the aggression of the majority of the country they are being secluded from their own land and living like parasites in their own land. They are part of the most helpless, poor, neglected, ignored portion of the total population. They are being part of the majority group of the country against their will in order to survive (Chattopadhyay S. , & Dewanji M., 1994).

Educational sector:

Community	Literacy Rate
Chakma	36.2%
Marma	26.6%
Mru	2.9%
Tripura	18.5%

Table 01: literacy rate of ethnic groups

Source: (Unlocking the potential, 2005).

Percentage of literacy is higher in Rangamati as the first school was built in this district. Only one in five villages had primary level schools in the CHT. In contrast, at the national level, there are two schools for every three villages. The institutions are very less in number, and also the education is little bit different and difficult for them as they do not know “Bangla”, their national language, they have their own language. But the schools do not have any program that will help them to cope up with this situation (Unlocking the potential, 2005).

Socio-Cultural aspect:

The indigenous groups are very different from the natives. This difference is clearly seen in their social, cultural, political, economical aspects. Each ethnic group has its own customs, religions, culture and social structure. The indigenous groups are mainly followers of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Animism. The mainstream population doesn't know much about their culture and rituals and somehow has a negative impression about them. This is a result of ignorance and marginalizing. If the native had proper knowledge and information about the culture and nature of the indigenous groups, this negative impression wouldn't have sustained. Some organizations like Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Jatiyo Adivasi Parishad, Bangladesh Adivasi Odhiakar Andolan, and Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) are helping the indigenous groups of our country. With their help these groups are celebrating their festivals and culture even in Dhaka city and letting people know about their culture and heritage. This method is helping a lot to create awareness. Media coverage and events like these are making the majority of the population aware about them. Aboriginal organizations now celebrate the International Day of the World Indigenous Peoples

every year on 9th August and the Santal Upsurge Day on 30th June. But there is no government initiative at all in this regard (Tahmina, 2007). Usually in books, they are degraded. As their culture is foreign to the major portion of the population of this country, it is regarded as inferior. They are mentioned as savages, wild, carnivorous, naked, addicted to alcohol and dancing in many books (Chakma K. M, & Chakma P., 2010). . The Social Science text book for 4th and 5th grade students published by the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTBB) inform readers that indigenous peoples lead backward lifestyles, eat whatever they find here and there, live in forests, and that the diet of Santals, Garos and Marmas consist of animal products mostly. Indigenous peoples contested this discriminatory portrayal of themselves. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum said that this issue was taken to the NCTBB for rectification; however, till today no attempt has been taken to change the information in the textbooks. Furthermore, in Banglapedia published in 2003 by the Asiatic Society, the different indigenous peoples were described in a derogatory manner. The indigenous groups of the Chittagong Hill Tracts area solely rely on jum cultivation. Their main purpose of it at the previous time used to be solely just growing food and economical but now it has turned into their culture. Their culture is heavily influenced by jum cultivation. They like to rely on their traditional administrative systems and try to follow them when it comes to resolving problems. They prefer their local administrative system over administrative system imposed by others.

Employment & Urban Migration:

When it comes to both government and non government jobs, indigenous people are degraded in all sectors. With equal qualifications, they fail to get a job when it comes to competition with a native competitor. This is a result of the racial distinction from the mainstream people. Although government reserves 5 percent of the jobs in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) for indigenous peoples, this is not actually practiced. (Halim, 2007). According to the 5 per cent quota, this means a total of 1,483 indigenous persons are supposed to be given BCS jobs. But, as indigenous activists have commented, in reality, the figure is far lower than that. The percentage in reality is lower than 1% (Chakma K. M, & Chakma P.,2010). Then again, they stated, no measures have been gone up against the piece of the legislature to give standards to indigenous people groups to abroad's work (wherein every year a huge number of Bangladeshi workers are sent to Middle East and South-East Asian nations). So it is apparent that, despite the fact that Government is guaranteeing to have a legitimate standard framework, there is no sign to demonstrate that this is really working, and indigenous individuals are unsatisfied with this.

Many indigenous people migrate to the cities as there is lack of opportunities at their own land. We see many indigenous girls working in the beauty salons. Yolong Mro, director of the murong kolyan chatrabash at Alikadam said, his son migrated to Dhaka as his son was always wanted to work with computers and there is no job opportunity in that sector at Alikadam. He was even forced to go to the city area at an early age there is no option of studying and learning about computers at Alikadam. So,

in order to learn he had to leave at an early age although his son didn't want to leave his house. According to him, he is discriminated when it comes to wages just because he belongs in a minority group. Many indigenous girls who are working at different sectors in Dhaka complain that they are mentally and even physically assaulted. There are some opportunities for the indigenous groups but they are sometimes limited to only certain groups and in most of the cases, the others are not even aware of the fact that those opportunities even exist.

2.3 History of the Mru community

2.3.1 Origin and history of migration of the Mru community:

The Mru are an ethnic group that is scattered across the hills of the Banderban district, whose numbers are reported to be a little over 70,000 (Mru Y., 2017). As mentioned before, these tribes formerly dwell in the Arakan hill; they now live principally to the west of the river Sangu and along the Matamuhori river within Chittagong Hill Tracts. Mru are also known as Mro and Murong. Other indigenous groups like Chakmas, Marmas call them Kuki, Lengta or Langye or wild/primitive people while some people of the plains designate them as Murongs.

The Mrus ruled the Arakan areas for about two thousand years. The Maru (Mro) dynasty ascended the throne around 2666 b.c. they ruled for about 1830 years. The last king of this dynasty was killed by the subjects of Arakan (Chowdhury, H. A.). They came

to Bangladesh after losing a war with the Khumis around in the late 1500s (Mru S., 2010).



Fig 05: Mru migration map

source: www.joshuaproject.net

Mrus are famous aborigines of Arakan and the two Mru kings who ruled Arakan in the tenth century, were A-mya-thu (957) and Pai-phyu (964). At that time wathaly was the capital city of Arakan.

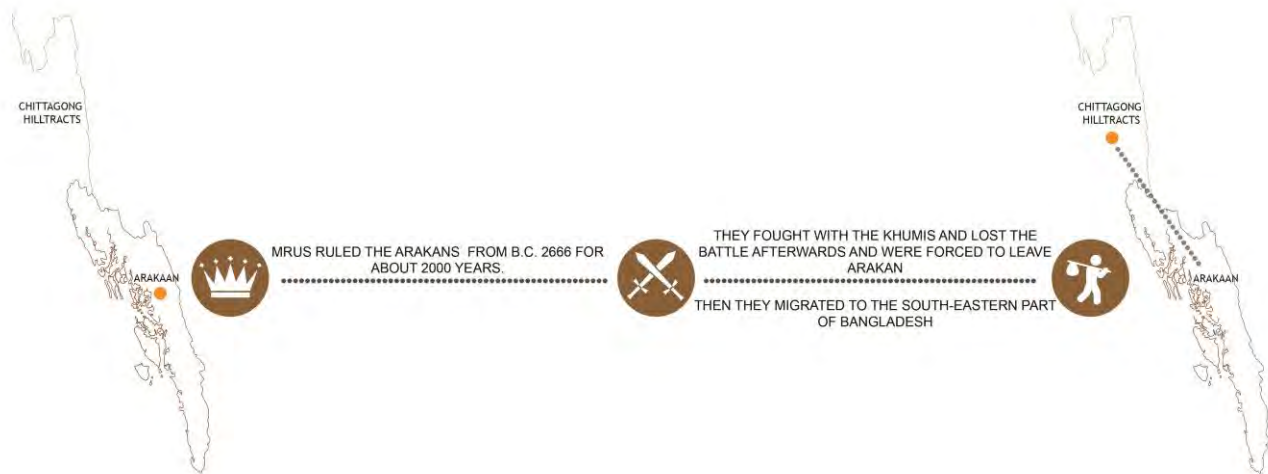


Diagram 01: Mru migration from Arakan to Bangladesh

Source: Author

Mru had a bloody war with Khumi on the bank of the Koladain. The Khumi tribe defeated the Mrus and ousted them from Arakan. They moved to Chittagong Hill Tracts some times between the 17th and 18th centuries. Many however, believe that this happened in the 14th century. Mrus living in the district of Khagrachari are in fact a clan of the Tripura. There is a linguistic affinity between the two groups of people. In the Indian state of Tripura, the counterparts of Mrus are known as Riangs. However, on many occasions, Mrs are contemptuously Called Mro-Dang or Myawktong, Meaning lower type of animal being. But Mrs introduce themselves as Mro-cha. The word Mro means man and cha stands for being.

In the 14th century, Mrs were driven out from Arakan by Khumis, a powerful tribe. They moved to the Hill Tracts of Bandarban and settled Sangu along the Matamuhuri river. This is supported by a letter of the king of Burma to the chief of Chittagong district.

The king stated in the letter that that some Murongs Arakan and took refuge in the Chittagong region, from where they operated raids on the both sides of the border. (www.ebbd.info)

2.3.2 Geographical distribution and population:

Mru communities are mostly found in Banderban district. They live in Lama, Ruma, Alikadam and Thanchi Upazilas near Chimbuk mountaion of Bandarban district. Mru also distributed in Toin, Mangu, Toinfa, Luloing, Uttarhangar, Dhakkinhanar, Tankabati, Harinzuri, Takerpanchari, Renikyong, Pantala Thankhyong, Swalock, Tindow, Singpa, Alikhaung and Bhariyatali Mouzas. The Mro population in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1956 was 17000 and 1981, it stood at 20000 in 1991. (www.ebbd.info)

Mru Population since 1872 their Distribution:

Serial	Year	Population	Reference
1	1872	2,378	Sangu research paper, year six, Volume – One
2	1956	17,000	National Encydopedia of Bangladesh, Asiatic Society of BD.
3	1959	16,121	Parbotgo Chattagramer upajati translated by Sufic Khan
4	1981	17,811	B. H. Swarowardi
5	1981	20,000	National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, Asiatic society of BD.
6	1991	22,129	Govt. Census of 1991.

Table 02: Mru population timeline

Source: Bangladesh ethno botany online database

Serial	Name of Upazila	Population	Year	Reference
1	Bandarban Sadar	5,223	1995	Survey of Mro social council
2	Roangchari	3,541	1995	Survey of Mro social council
3	Ruma	4,970	1995	Survey of Mro social council
4	Thanchi	10,191	1995	Survey of Mro social council
5	Lama	11,721	1995	Survey of Mro social council
6	Alikadam	21,861	1995	Survey of Mro social council
7	Naikhangchari	2,241	1995	Survey of Mro social council
8	Total	59,748	1995	Survey of Mro social council

Table 03: Mru population thana wise

Source: Bangladesh ethno botany online database

2.3.3 Current situation of the Mru community:

As per field study, many issues and changes can be seen among Mru community. The built environment is much diversified in a positive sense, but at the same time numerous problems are occurring due to lack of proper education, health issues, poverty, land crisis, population increase etc.

Currently there are two types of Mru living in Bandarban. One type is living nearer the city and trying to accept and follow the facilities and lifestyle provided by city which is fruitful for them. And another type is living far away from the so called civilized locality, in the remote hills and in an isolated clustered manner. Some of them now are living nearer the city that has actually moved from the remote places in aspiration to become economically more solvent. But it does not mean that the remote Mru communities are not doing well in their own way, in a very basic natural and unique way. But as the globalizing is taking place, a little impact can be seen among the ethnic communities as

well. Many of them are coming out of their very basic “down to earth” lifestyle. It can happen either because of the globalization or to reduce poverty, need of education. But concerned ethnic group Mru has also another point to add, they have a tendency to migrate and shifting places. A specific change can be seen among these two types. The remote type is rigid in terms of their religion and beliefs, but the other type is flexible and actually altering and doing necessary changes to their beliefs to make it more workable. The Krama religion is the sign of their change. In this religion Mrus have alphabets and written language which was not there before, also they have stopped cow killing festival as they have got their alphabets which was the reason behind it. They always used religion as an excuse of their poverty and did not want to come out of the situation, So education was never a part of their life. And considering themselves as a cursed realm was a very common thing. But now some of them are realizing that if they continue giving such excuses, it will only hamper their lives and development and nothing else. But this realization is among very lesser population, where other communities have crossed a far way. Now many problems have been acute which were not much previously. Government and other organizations are working for the ethnic communities and giving them education, health care, work and other facilities like roads, transportations etc. But Mrus are not yet ready to accept these. As they are smaller community and lack behind in education and economic solvency and have always been suppressed and neglected by the other communities. As a result, now-a-days poverty is extreme in Mru community as they are lacking behind all the other communities they are living with. But the positive thing is, unlike neighboring tribes Mrus are still believer of their own religion and has been holding on their roots (culture, religion and language)

but they have desires and aspirations to be equal in socio- economic aspect as other tribes which are to some extent lost their culture to become part of mainstream society. So now Mrus can go both ways. Either they get derailed to fulfill their aspiration and lose their ethnicity, or they realize their potential and work and develop through their own culture.

The Mrus have significant culture and heritage. Which is slowly fading away in order to achieve a better lifestyle like the ones around them. Mru craft, language and culture is at a stake at the point.

CHAPTER 3: SITE APPRISAL

1.1 Site analysis:

In order to understand the baseline situation in terms of socio-economic indicators of Bandarban district population, this study was conducted in selected para or villages underunions covering Bandarban Sadar Upazila. My selected site is in Alikadam upazilla. I selected this site as it is the most urban area where the Mrus live. I did not want to disturb their natural habitat. Also, this site is geographically situated at the center of around 200 Mru hamlets in the Hill tracts Area.



Fig 06: Map of Chittagong division and Alikadam

Source: Author

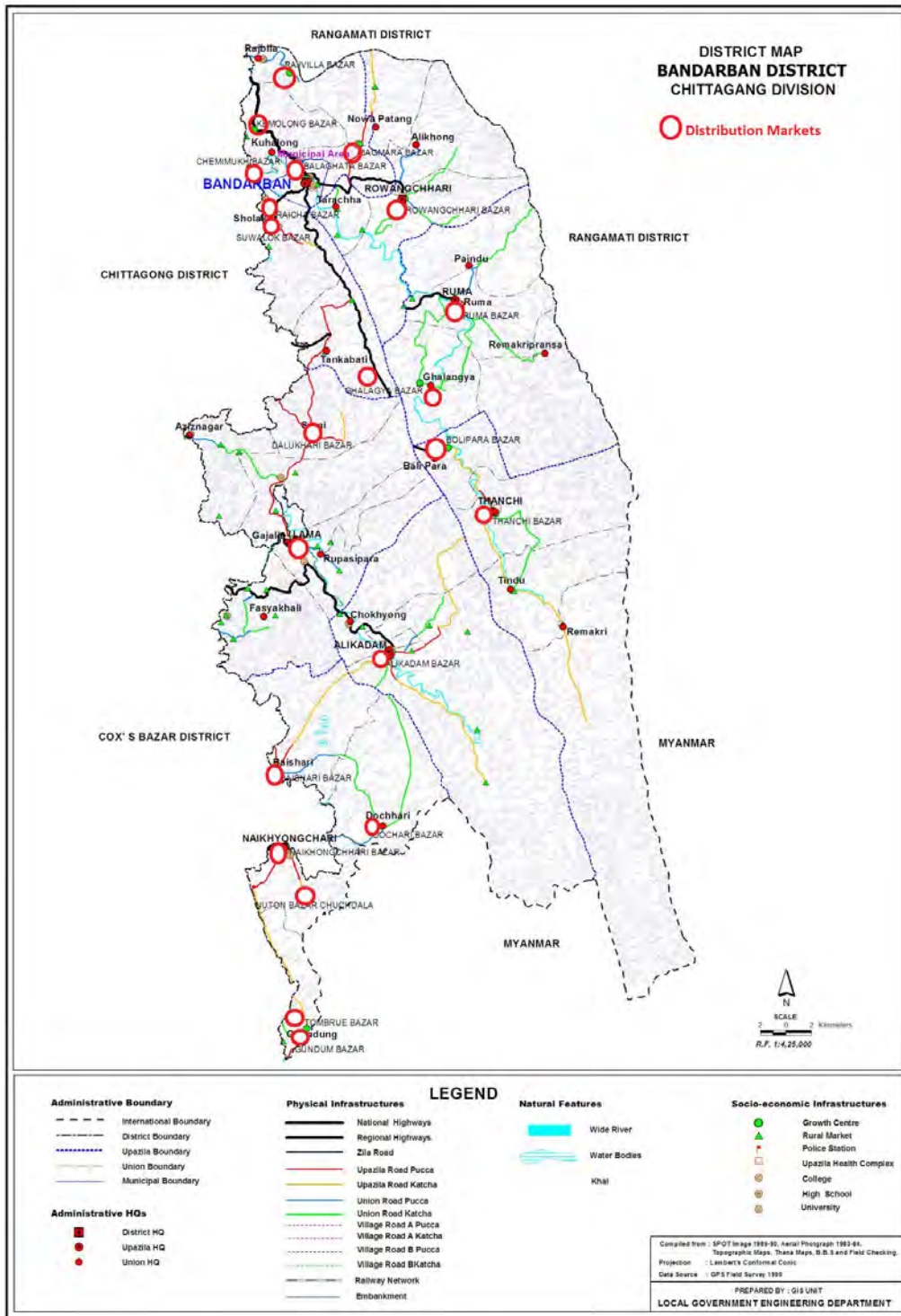


Fig 07: Distributing market map

Source: ICIMOD,2013

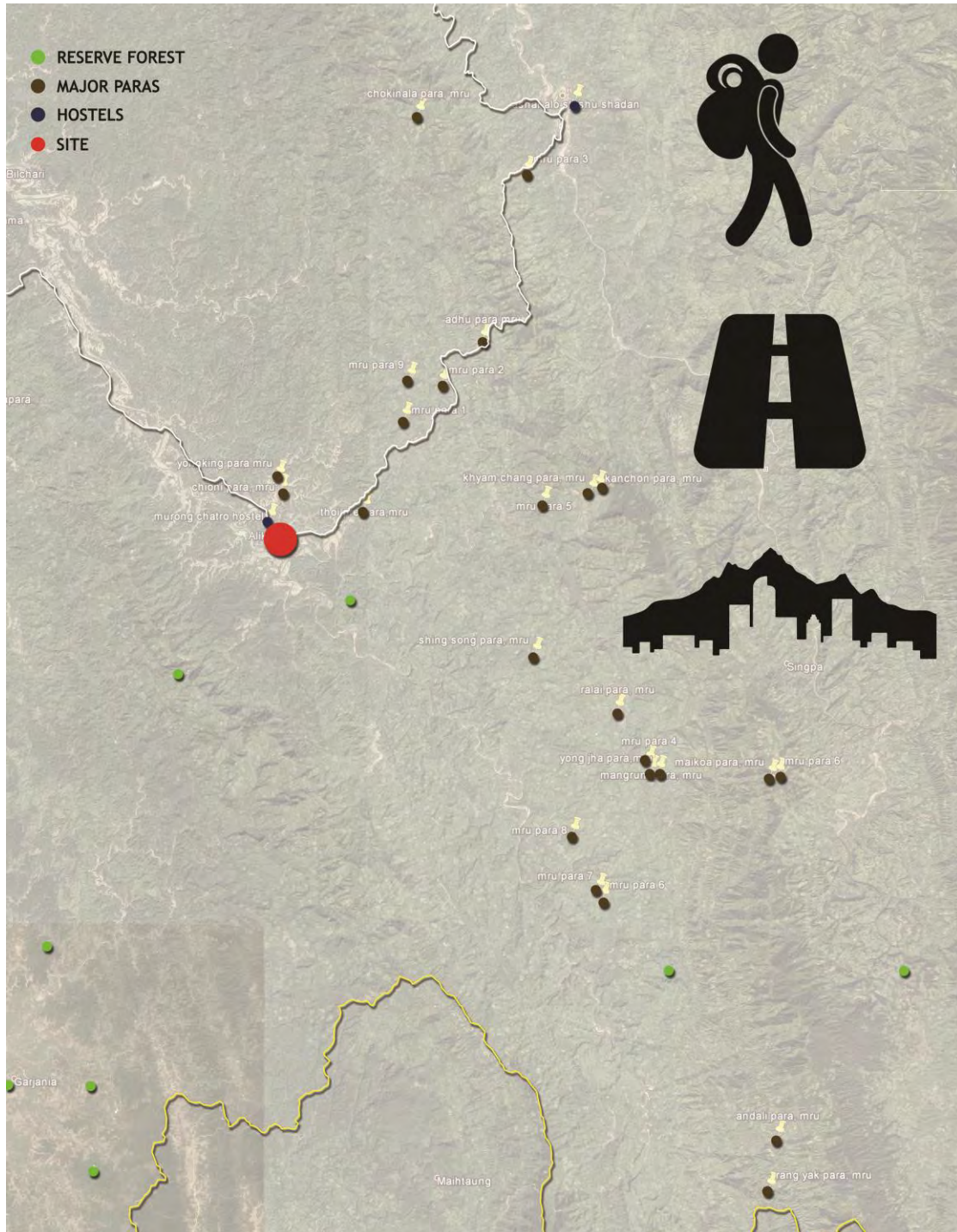


Fig 08: Reasons behind choosing the area

Source: Author



Fig 09: google earth image of the site

Source: Google Earth

Site surrounding:

The site is surrounded by some small “para” or villages of bawm ethics groups and Bengali local people. basically the site is a wonderful piece of nature surrounded by green hills and small stream. The Chokoria highway is 18km from the site, so the communication is big problem fo this community. AlikadamUpazila with an area of 885.78 km ², is limited by Lama upazila on the north, in southernArakan, thanchiupazila on the east and Lama upazilasnaikhongchhari and in the west.Alikadam, the bordering

upazila with Myanmar is the second largest upazila of Bandarbanzila in respect of area. It came into existence in 1981 as thana.

Area and Location: The upazila occupies an area of 885.78 sq.km. Including 564.76 sq.km. Forest area. It is located between 21°21' and 21°50' north latitudes and between 92°15' and 92°34' east longitudes. The upazila is bounded on the north by Lama upazila, on the east by Thanchi upazila, on the south by Myanmar and on the west by the Naikhongchhari and upozilla.

Topographically the elevation of site varies from 330-350 ft from the sea level and it is surrounded by higher hills. There is a valley between the site and the hill. Normally, floods do not take place here.



Fig10: Analysis of Alikadam Upazilla

Source: Author



ROAD AND WATER BODY



FARM LANDS



TOURIST SPOTS

Fig 11: Site surroundings

Source: Author

Fig 12: views and activities around the site

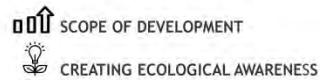
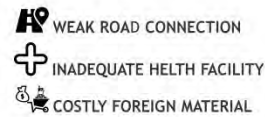
Source: Author

SWOT ANALYSIS

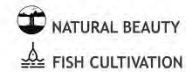
STRENGTH



WEAKNESS



OPPORTUNITY



THREATS



Diagram 02: Swot analysis of the site

Source: Author

Important unions and places: There are 2 unions in Ali Kadamupazila. Choikhang, Matamuhurietc are the important place of Ali Kadam. Postal code nearly – 4650

Travel from Dhaka: There are available buses from Dhaka to Ali Kadam. You may have to go Bandarban first and then Ali Kadam.

Climatic Situation:

Topographically the elevation of site varies from 330-350 ft from the sea level and it is surrounded by higher hills. There is valley between the site and the hill. Normally, floods do not take place here, but natural disasters like cyclone, tornedo sometimes take place. the chosen site has a tropical climate. In most months of the year, there is significant rainfall in this area. There is only a short dry season and it is not very

effective. According to Köppen and Geiger climate is classified as Am. The average annual temperature in site is 25.5 °C. The average annual rainfall is 2560 mm.

Climate graph:

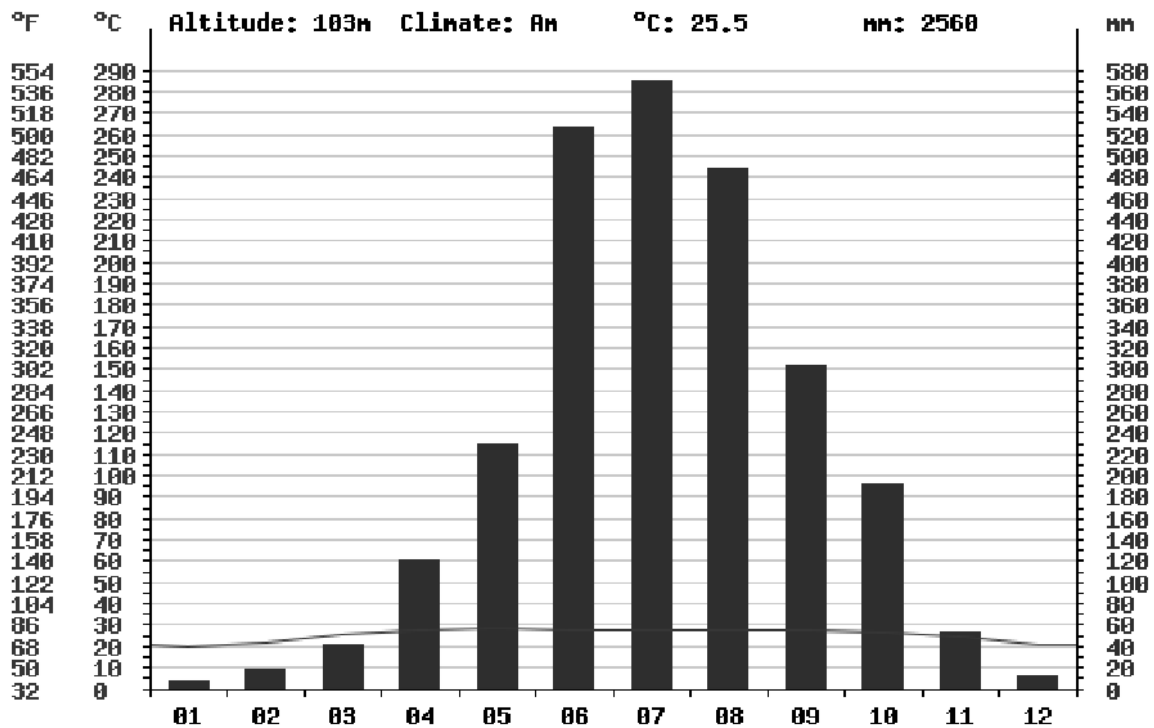


Fig 13: Climate graph

Source: <http://en.climate-data.org>

The driest month is January with 6 mm. Most precipitation falls in July, with an average of 569 mm.

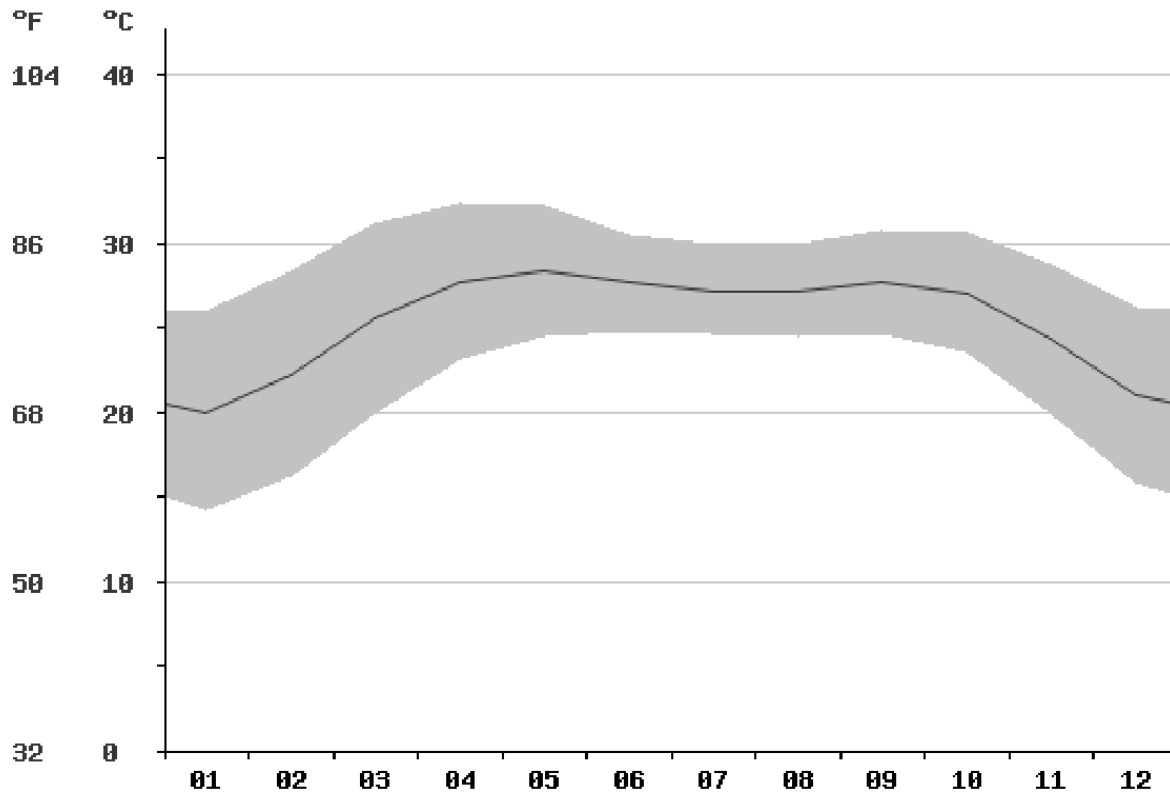


Fig 14: Temperature graph

Source: <http://en.climate-data.org>

The warmest month of the year is May with an average temperature of 28.3 °C. In January, the average temperature is 20 °C. It is the lowest average temperature of the whole year.

month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
mm	6	18	42	121	229	527	569	488	302	192	53	13
°C	20	22.2	25.5	27.7	28.3	27.6	27.2	27.2	27.7	27	24.3	21
°C (min)	14.2	16.2	19.9	23.2	24.5	24.7	24.6	24.5	24.6	23.5	19.9	15.8
°C (max)	25.9	28.3	31.2	32.3	32.2	30.5	29.9	30	30.8	30.6	28.7	26.2
°F	68	72	77.9	81.9	82.9	81.7	81	81	81.9	80.6	75.7	69.8
°F (min)	57.6	61.2	67.8	73.8	76.1	76.5	76.3	76.1	76.3	74.3	67.8	60.4
°F (max)	78.6	82.9	88.2	90.1	90	86.9	85.8	86	87.4	87.1	83.7	79.2

Fig 15: climate table

Source: <http://en.climate-data.org>

The difference in precipitation between the driest month and the wettest month is 563 mm. The average temperatures vary during the year by 8.3 °C. (<http://en.climate-data.org>)

Social background of the site:

Murong community mostly found in Bandarban district. Murong lives in Lama, Ruma, Alikadam and Thanchi Upazilas near Chimbuk mountain of Bandarban district. Mro also distributed in Toin, Mangu, Toinfa, Luloing, Uttarhangar, Dhakkinhanar, Tankabati, Harinzuri, Takerpanchari, Renikyong, Pantala Thankhyong, Swalock, Tindow, Singpa, Alikhaung and Bhariyatali Mouzas. The Mro population in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1956 was 17000 and in 1981, it stood at 20000 and in 1991, the Murong population in Bangladesh was 22,178 and constituted the fourth largest tribe in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Bandarban is a district in South-Eastern Bangladesh, and a part of the Chittagong Division and Chittagong Hill Tracts. Bandarban is regarded as one of the most attractive travel places in Bangladesh. Bandarban (meaning the dam of monkeys), or in Marma or Arakanese language as "Rwa-daw Mro" is also known as Arvumi or the Bohmong Circle (of the rest of the three hill districts Rangamati is the Chakma Circle and Khagrachari is the Mong Circle). Bandarban town is the home town of the Bohmong Chief (currently King, or Raja, Aung Shwe Prue Chowdhury) who is the head of the Marma population. It also is the administrative headquarter of Bandarban district,

which has turned into one of the most exotic tourist attractions in Bangladesh since the insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts has ceased more than a decade back. The people in this area are more adaptable as they live nearby the city. Some of them migrated to Christian or Buddhist religion. And they have accessibility to all the new technology, specially cell phone. But basically most of them are very poor, and they have fear of land encroachment. The positive thing is the people here did not forget their culture or lifestyle as most of them migrated to these places to get the facilities of city life and for better income, but they have actually improved themselves by leaving many superstitions and taking education.

Household size:

The average dwelling household size for the upazila is 5.1 persons, for rural area the size is 5.0 and for urban area the size is 5.1.

Ethnicity:

In Alikadam upazila 53% are Bangali, 25% Mru, 10% Marma, 5% Tripura, 4% Tonchanga, 1.3% Chakma, and .2% are Kuki (Source: AynalHaque, History & Life Style of Tribes, June 2002).

Housing:

Housing structures observed for dwelling households are Jhupri, Kutcha, Semi-pukka and Pukka. Among housing structures in the upazila, predominant is kutcha structure. Dwelling households having such structure are as many as 81.6%. The kutcha housing structure is reported as large as 82.9% for urban dwelling households, compared to

80.9% rural dwelling households. In comparison, dwelling households with pukka housing structure are fewer, only 0.9 % in the upazila. Rural and urban dwelling households with pukka housing structure are found 0.5% and 1.7% respectively. Urban dwelling households are little better off in housing standard, because as many as 7.4% of them are found having semi-pukka and pukka structures, in contrast to merely 3.5% rural dwelling households.

Source of Drinking Water:

Among sources of drinking water, tube well and the (indigenous) sources are largely used by households. Dwelling households reported using tube well and other source (river, chharra etc.) are 33.9% and 39.6% respectively. On the other hand, dwelling households found drinking deep tube well water are 10.4% tap water 1.6% and pond water 14.6%.

Sanitation:

In Aikadamupazila 8.3% of dwelling households have sanitary latrines with 4.4% in rural area and 14.9% in urban area. A total of 61.7% of the households have non-sanitary latrines with (59.4% in rural vs 65.7% in urban area) with 30.0% of the households having no toilet facility.

Access to Electricity:

Both the two unions of the upazila have been brought under Rural Electrification Programme. However, a total of 13.2% of the dwelling households reported to have electricity connection in the entire upazila.

Ownership of Agriculture Land:

In Alikadamupazila 29.0% of the dwelling households own and 80.0% do not own agricultural land. Percentage of households owning agricultural land is 26.3% in urban area as against 30.6% in rural area.

Population Characteristics:

According to Population Census - 2001 the total population of the upazila is 35264 of which 19290 are males and 15974 are females. The sex ratio of the upazila is 121 males per 100 females as against 123 males per 100 females in 1991.

Growth Rate:

The decadal population growth rate is 42.3% and annual compound growth rate is 3.6%. In the upazila population below 10 years of age is 29.9%. Among the population of age 10 years and above those recorded idle are 27.0%, looking for work 1.6%, doing household work 32.7% and employed the remaining 38.8%. The employed people identified working are in agriculture 20.8%, industry 0.2%, business 4.5%, services 0.4%, construction 0.7%, transport and communication 0.2% and others 11.5%.

SOWT ANALYSIS:**Strength:**

- Alikadam cave is the center
- Good water facilities

- Use of solar power
- People have a very good skill of building structure with local materials
- Beside jum harvesting, tobacco harvesting, seasonal fruit and vegetable harvesting is done too
- Many tourist visit this place
- People are hardworking here
- People understand Bangla language

Weakness:

- Because of recent flood there is a scarcity of bamboo can seen
- Material which are not local and which are costly are being used
- The unique building style of huts are being changed due to natural disaster
- Site are far from the highway
- No hospital or health facilities near the site

Opportunity:

- Scope of development as there are few schools now and the community is slowly becoming conscious about saving their cultural heritage and also learn about the new world
- The green scenario will attract tourist to visit the place

- There are scopes of training centers as the local people are interested and the site is itself very suitable for the type of programs which will generate economy.
- As there is a water stream fishing related center might be helpful here
- Natural beauty is a plus point of the site which create peaceful environment

Threats:

- Land encroachment
- Other powerful ethics group can pressurize them and demand the land
- Instruction of building materials which are not natural might cause losing their unique identity

CHAPTER 4: MRU CRAFT, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

4.1 Mru craft:

Mrus are well known for their unique craft and art. They love to adorn themselves with jewelry, clothes and flowers. There was a time when they used to handcraft a lot of things. Their daily needs are fulfilled by themselves. They make their own utensils and jewelry from the elements Mother Nature has to offer. They are expert when it comes to make things from bamboo. Bamboo plays a vital role in their life. Their crafts are very coherent just like the nature they dwell in. The patterns which can still be seen on their clothes today, could be seen on the fenestration of their houses too. They used to weave that pattern with bamboo. Now that is lost. A new pattern has generated.

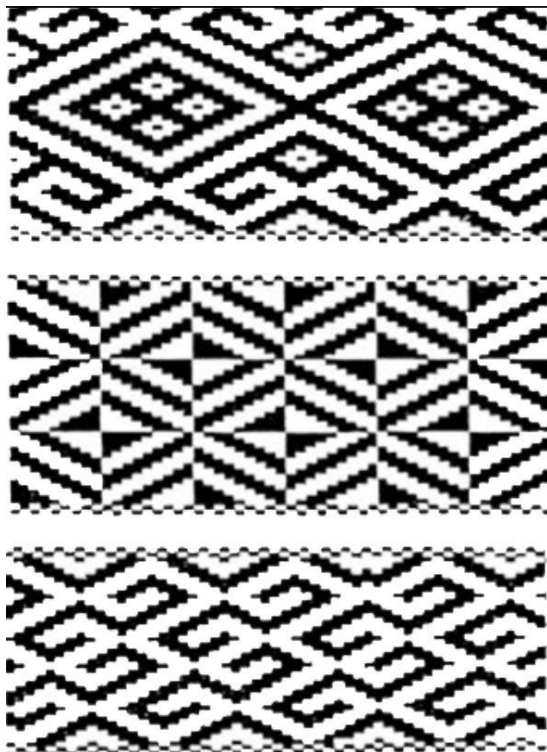


fig 16: patterns that is seen on Mru peoples' clothes and what used to be on bamboo fenestration as well.

Source: Brauns C.and Löffler L.G., 1990

The patterns seen on fig 11 can no longer be seen on their fenestration.

Mro men wear round the waist a strip of cloth called lengti, which is passed between the two legs. The female use a small piece of dark blue cloth (wanglai) to cover the private part of the body. The wanglai is 6 inches in width from top to bottom. The women hardly cover their breasts. They bind their hairs on the left side of the back of the head. Male wears a lungi and a shirt and female uses a piece of cloth on the upper part of her body when they go to the market. (www.ebbd.info). They weave their own cloth.



Fig 17: A Mru woman weaving

Source: Author

The Mrus play mouth organs and bigpipes made of bamboo. They also make em (carrying basket used during jhum cultivation), tom (basket carried by women), khongtom (a basket which acts as almira), bai/ toloi (device used to dry paddy), per (strainer), chapam (rice container) etc

are made from bamboo.



Fig 18: bamboo crafting by the Mru

Source: Brauns C.and Löffler L.G., 1990

Mru men and women were a lot of jewelry. They are mainly made of silver and brass. Their ear rings are unique and very large. They wear flowers on their hair and cultivate flowers for their use.



Fig 19: Mru jewelry

Source: Brauns C. and Löffler L.G., 1990

4.2 Mru language:

Mru language has been considered "definitely endangered" by UNESCO in June 2010. Mru is a Sino-Tibetan language and one of the recognized languages of Bangladesh. It is one of the Sino-Tibetan languages that are difficult to classify and has marginal affiliations with Burmic. Mru and Meithei in India, Bangladesh, and Burma, would appear close to the Kukish languages (Encyclopædia Britannica). However, although once classified as Kukish, the Mru language is thought to be closer to Lolo-Burmese (Peiros, I. 1997).

The Mru language has no established written form yet. It is synced with their religious belief. They believe that Thorai sent the full written form of how Mrus should live their lives as commandment but a cow ate it. This happened because Thorai was not pleased with them. They are cursed. When they have the written form, the curse would be uplifted and they would stop the cow killing festival.

Menle mru, the preacher of the new religion Krama, invented letters for the Mru language which is borrowed from Burmese and English language. He published the letters in 1983 (Mru S., 2010). The Mrus who follow the Krama religion have abandoned celebrating cow killing festival as they now have a written form. But this script is not accepted by all Mrus and the language has not developed to such an extent that books can be published properly. Thus, even though they have their own language they cannot read or write in it. Nowadays, some Mrus receive modern education at Shialoa

school (near Bandarban town) established by the government. Mros talk to their neighbors in the local tongue and know Bangla. In this sense, they are bilingual.

4.3 Mru culture:

Beliefs:

The Mros worship ghosts and spirits. They sacrifice cows and pigs on such occasions and eat their meat. They have no temples or fixed places for worship. Although the Mros are believers in Buddhism many of them have lately been converted to Christianity. Despite being Buddhists, they worship many inanimate objects. 'Thorai' is their principal deity and they believe that he created the world. According to them. Thorai once called a meeting of all peoples to grant them books of religion but there was none to represent the Mrus. (Baten,2008). After waiting for a considerable time, Thorai decided to send a book to the Mrus. Coming to know of this the Mrus began dancing and singing in joy and organized a festival of food and drinks. Thorai sent the book of religion, written on banana leaves, on the back of a cow. On its way to the Mru village through the hills, the cow became tired and hungry and ate up the banana leaves that contained the book. Consequently, the Mros did not receive their book of religion. When the Mrus went to Thorai to represent their case he ordered them to kill the cow. Till this day the Mrus celebrate the festival of sacrificing cows. (Baten,2008).

Cow Sacrifice or Siasat-ply Festival:

In Mro language, sia means cow and sat means killing with spear. This is why cow sacrifice festival is called siasat. Ply means dance. Such a festival is arranged by affluent landowners after jhum crop is harvested, usually during December-February. Mro youths in traditional costume dance in tune with the 'pung' flute around the cow already tied up; As the host orders, a young man kills the cow with a spear. As the cow bleeds the Mros rejoice. They eat the cow's meat in great delight. They draw the animal's tongue out, cuts it and hoists it on a three-pronged spear as punishment since the cow used its tongue to eat up their book of religion. For observing this festival a committee known as 'riwachawa' is set up with elders in the society. No priest is present on the occasion. (Baten,2008).

Worshiping and Rites:

The Mros worship or perform puja twice a year - in the months of Falgun and Ashar. Puja in Mro language is called 'khang'. Cakes are made in every house with new jhum crops. The festival continues for three days. Cows, pigs, goats and chickens are sacrificed in the name of their deity. Such worshiping is arranged to seek the deity's protection against evil spirits. They perform basumati puja if an epidemic breaks out in their village. (Baten,2008).

Champua Festival:

The Mrus observe champua or banana leaf cutting festival. This festival rhymes with cow sacrifice festival. Cows are killed as the animal ate up the banana leaves that contained their book of religious and banana leaf cutting is celebrated as it contained

their sacred book. On the day of festival young Mro boys and girls go far into the forest and cut the banana leaves amidst dancing and singing. This is called champua festival. (Baten,2008).

Roikkharam:

This is a festival relating to piercing of the ears. Ears of both boys and girls have to be pierced. Children of the age of three years have to do it. A trained physician performs it. At the festival a pig and a chicken are killed to feed the neighbors who are also offered liquor to drink. Ear piercing through this festival is done to accept the child into the Mro society. (Baten,2008).

Krama Religion:

Krama religion was introduced by Mru youth named Menley. It is said that the Mros found in their meditation before a hill suffering erosion due to torrents of water that the stones of the hill will give them solace and that behind the hill is a deity. In course of such meditation in the eighties of the twentieth century, Menley reached a miraculous juncture. He asked and got from the deity alphabets for the Mrus and after this he introduced krama religion. (Baten,2008).

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDIES

5.1 Brambuk Cultural Centre

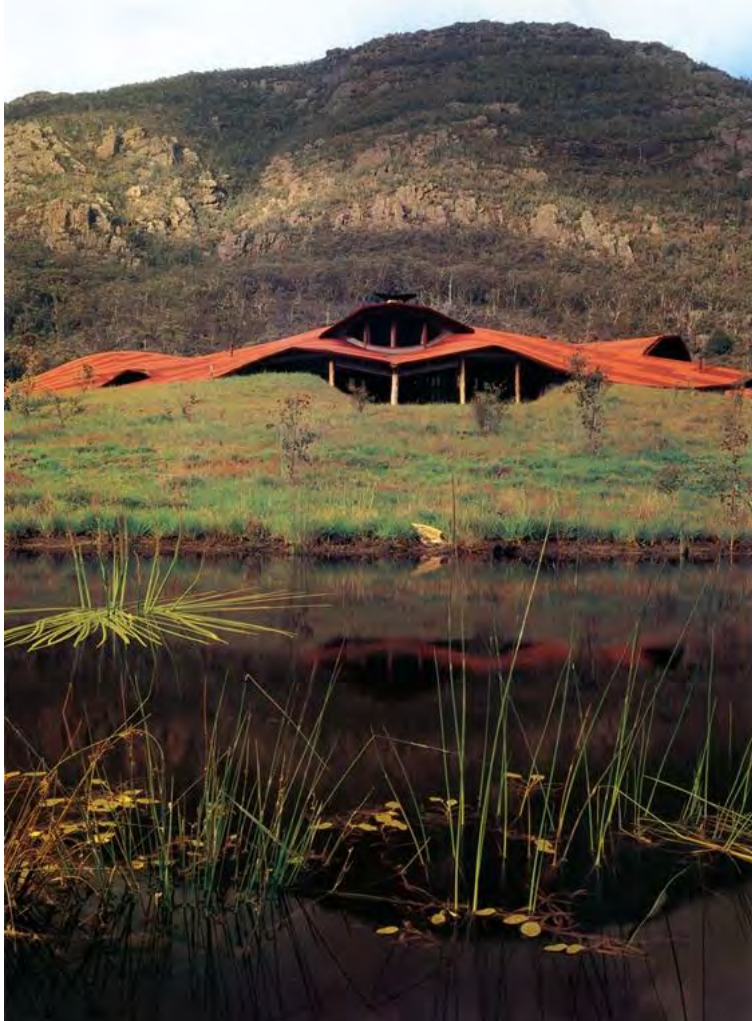


Fig 20: image of Brambuk Cultural Center

Source: internet

Location: Halls Gap, Grampians national Park, Victoria, Australia

Owner/Trustee: Korri communities from South West Victoria and Wimmera, including the Kirrae Whurang, Goolum, Gunditjmara and Kerrap-Jmara communities.

Architect: Gregory Burgess Pty Ltd Architects

Engineer: P. J. Yttrup and Associates Pty Ltd

Builder: The Victorian Department of Conservation and Environment using local contractors and Koori labourers

Date of Construction: 1990

The Brambuk Cultural Centre was conceived as an information and interpretation centre for the Grampians National Park with a special emphasis on the aboriginal culture of the local area. Kim Dovey in Architecture

Australia discussed the source of the design: "The design has sources in both the traditional Aboriginal shelter (stone circles of the western district) and in Aboriginal art. The plan is formed out of five rough circles which represent the five Koori community groups which constitute the client, but the internal divisions are functional and not social. The work is strongly archetypal, with the plan centered on a large hearth in the foyer, a kind of axis mundi. A helical pathway leads to a workshop and restaurant with eye-shaped windows framing glimpses of the mountains as one rises... The plan is strongly oriented to two outdoor spaces which it embraces; an entry courtyard and a meeting area with fire pit." The building can be seen in many ways. The undulating two toned corrugated steel roof as the wings of a bird or the reflection of the mountains nearby. It has also been suggested that the roofline simulates a currawong in full flight, with the apex window at the front being its beak. The curving ramp through the central interior represents eels which were once a staple food for the Koori communities in the region.

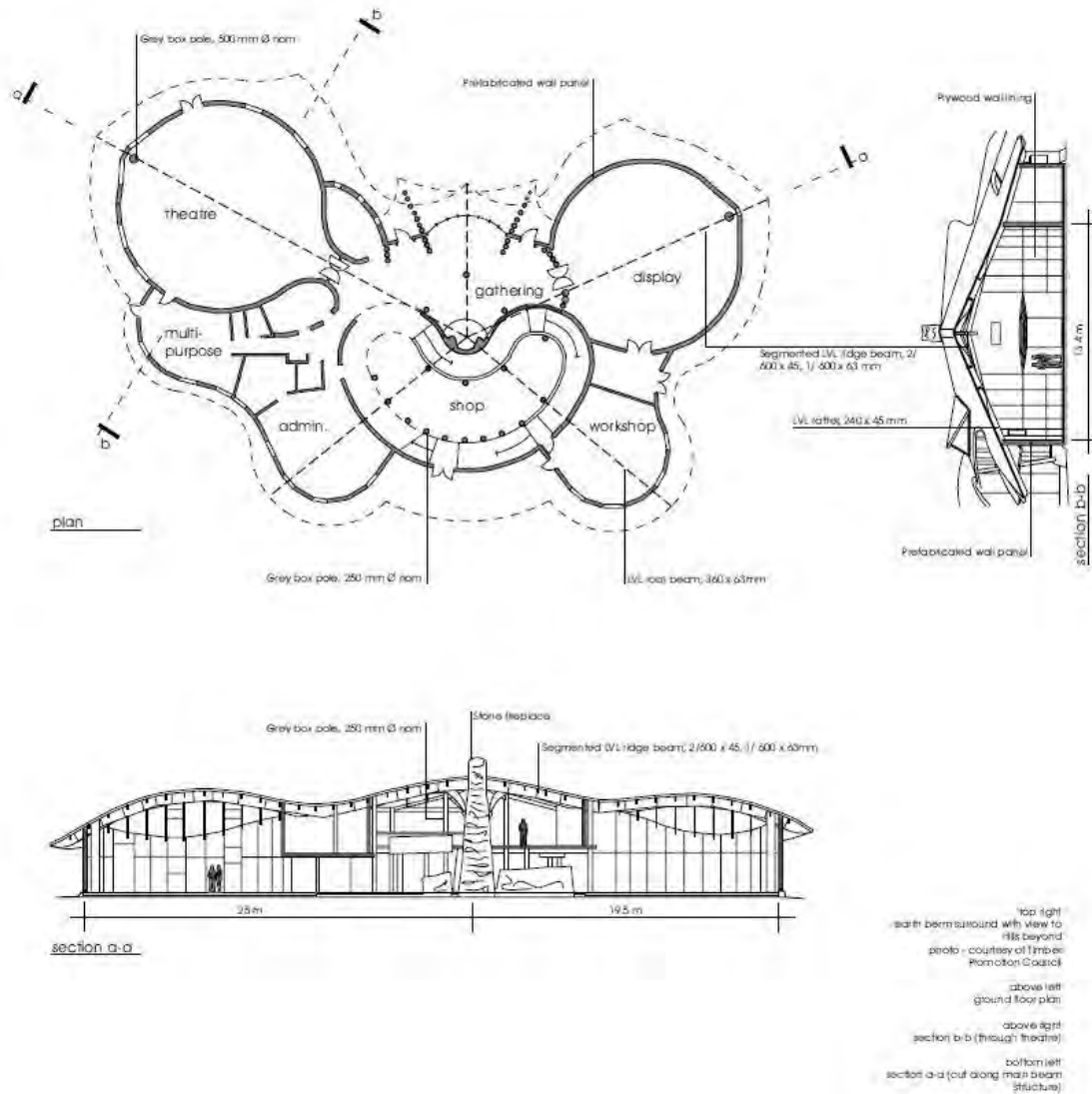


Fig 21: plan and section of Brambuk Cultural Center

Source: archdaily

Statement of Significance:

The Brambuk Cultural Centre is an important and a rare example of fluid organic architecture in the manner of the American architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Bruce Goff but rendered in a totally rustic style. It was recognized for its design excellence by

winning the RAI A National Award for Public Buildings in 1990. The complex demonstrates many outstanding original design qualities. These qualities include the curved free form shapes, the use of stone, timber and corrugated steel and their relationship to Aboriginal notions of shelter.

- Owned by 5 Aboriginal communities from South West Victoria and the Wimmera
- Serves as a medium through which surrounding historical art and artefacts may be experienced and enjoyed + cultural information centre
- Brambuk means cockatoo in Aboriginal language + bram stands for the heroic Aboriginal Bram-bram brothers + buk means to belong to = links architecture to culture
- Symbolic elements include:
 - Mud-clay bricks = reminder of the Ebenezer Mission at Antwerp and the Goolum Goolum Community
 - Plan consisting of 5 interlocking circles = 5 Aboriginal community owners
 - Curved roof = wings of the sacred cockatoo or emperor moth
 - Ceiling = skeleton of sacred Southern Right Whale (beam = backbone, rafters = ribs)
 - Ramp = totem eel/snake, (totem to Aboriginal Elders)
 - Poles + high ceiling + lighting = forest, (Flamliham forest)
 - Stonework = houses and fish traps at Lake Condah
 - Fireplace = traditional Aboriginal shelter
 - Seat with arm rests = loving arms of Aboriginal creator spirit, Bunjil

- Garden containing 6000 plant species = plants eaten and used by Aborigines in the area
- Activities accommodated by the Architecture:
 - Cultural talks and multimedia presentation on Aboriginal creation stories
 - Dancing and Didgeridoo playing
 - Excursions to nearby rock art
 - Bush tucker excursions and tastings
 - Boomerang demonstrations
 - Night time gatherings with story telling
 - Educational kits and holiday programmes

5.2 Diamond Island Community Center



Fig 22: rendered image of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: vo trong nghia architects

Architects: Vo Trong Nghia Architects

Location: Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Principal Architect: Vo Trong Nghia

Project Team: Le Thi Anh Huyen

Contractor: Wind and Water House JSC

Area: 1450.0 sqm

Project Year: 2015

Photographs: Hiroyuki Oki

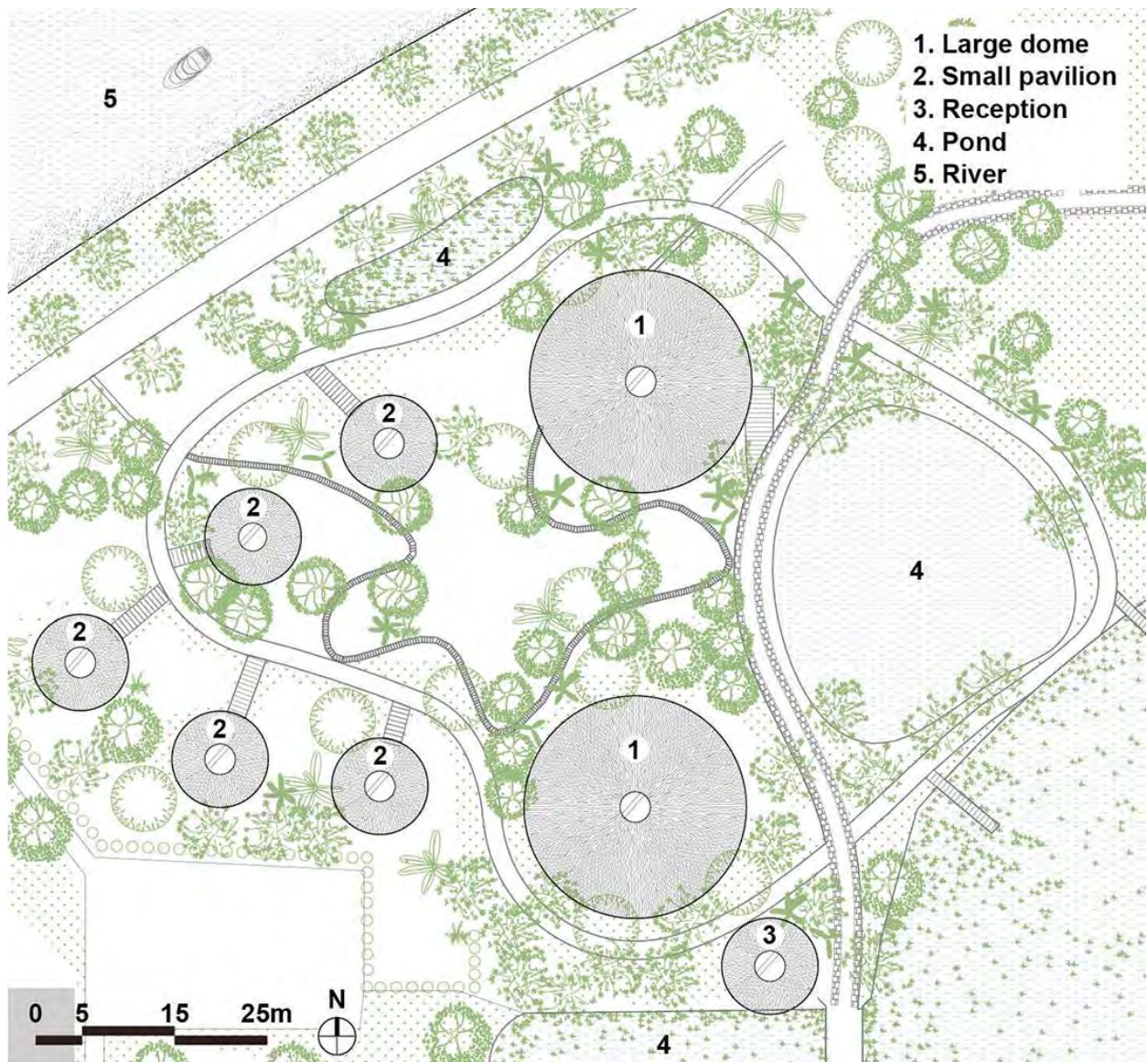


Fig 23: master plan of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: archdaily



Fig 24: rendered image of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: archdaily

Being adjacent to the newly emerging center of [Ho Chi Minh City](#), Diamond Island is a group of condominiums on an islet on Saigon River. To make the best use of the empty space of a gradual development program, this multifunctional community center is

designed not only for local residents, but also for foreign tourists brought by boats from the city center. Eight large and small bamboo pavilions are scattered throughout a park with rich vegetation along the river. The pavilions are used for various events such as parties, banquets, promotions conferences, and are also planned to be restaurants in the future.

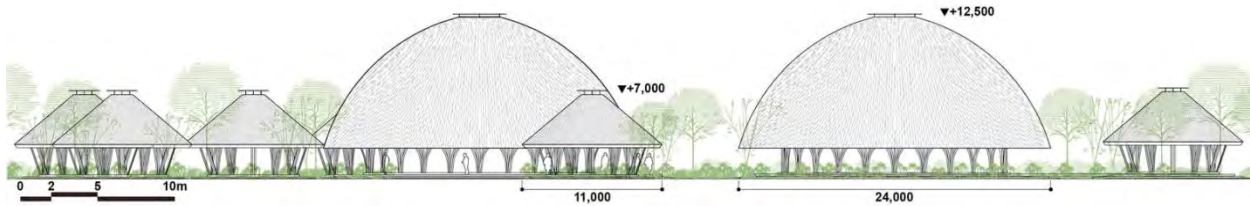


Fig 25: section of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: archdaily



Fig 26: image of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: archdaily



Fig 27: image of Diamond Island Community Center

Source: archdaily

Two large domes are created by pure bamboo structures and measure 24m diameter and 12.5m height. Inspired by a traditional bamboo basket sheltering fowls, the structure is made by skilled workers who weave each piece of bamboo on site. Six smaller pure bamboo pavilions are shaped like umbrellas with 11m diameter and 7m height. The umbrella structures consist of twelve prefabricated structural units assembled, aiming at efficiency of construction.

The large pavilions are double layered dome structures. The outer roof layer of thatch overhangs from the inner basket-like structure to create deep eaves, protecting the whole bamboo structure from harsh sunshine and heavy rainfall. Regardless of the shrouding shape of the roof, the interior space needs no artificial lighting for daytime

activities as a skylight and open periphery provide defused daylight. The skylight also functions to discharge hot air from the top of the dome as river breeze cooled by three surrounding ponds flows through the building.

Despite the application of several traditional construction methods, the project's aim is not to reproduce the vernacular, but to create sustainable architecture suited to the present. In order to do this, systematization of production and construction of bamboo architecture is essential and, as a result, the project is a fusion of traditional folk art and contemporary architecture.

5.3 Valencia University Language Center



Fig 28: image of Valencia University Language Center

Source: Arkitera spl

Architects: Arkitera Spl

Location: Velenci, Spain

Architects in charge: Carlos Sánchez Hernández y Salvador Lara Ortega

Area: 3885.0 sqm

Project Year: 2013

From the architect, this language centre lies on the southern edge of the campus of the University of Valencia at its junction with the consolidated city. Its volume consists of two bodies formed with rectangular prisms, separated by a connecting corridor. Structures of similar size and arranged in parallel, they are voluntarily contrasted with each other, to be phased out in plan and elevation and covered with contrasting materials: wood and steel.



PLANTA SEGUNDA



PLANTA PRIMERA

ESCALA 1/200



Fig 29: plans of Valencia University Language Center

Source: Arkitera spl

The west block houses the classrooms and open meeting spaces called “Aulas-jardín”. To protect it from the harsh afternoon sunlight, this lens is wrapped in an insulating and non-putrefiable frame of slats made of Canadian Red Cedar, with orthogonal lines organized with practicable wood pieces in classrooms and fixed lattice in open spaces to modulate light dispersion and adjusted to the functionality of every space.

By contrast, the eastern block houses service spaces and vertical connections. This is a tight block whose shell has been implemented through a veil of micro perforated galvanized steel forced at maximum curvature to simulate a textile flapping wind. This solution willfully violates the rationality of the sheet metal, getting the input of a light filtered with a surprising texture and shine full of shades of chiaroscuro, throughout the day.

The innovative academic proposal is considered to be a modern language school; as a place to exchange experiences, rather than just learning a language. Thus, the building is lightened by separating the classrooms that are constructed as hubs within the overall block, leaving friendly spaces for the meeting to be gardened on its facade, creating a green curtain where the direction of the slats is rotated so visually it appears from the

outside as a "Tetris" game, playing between classrooms and gardens.

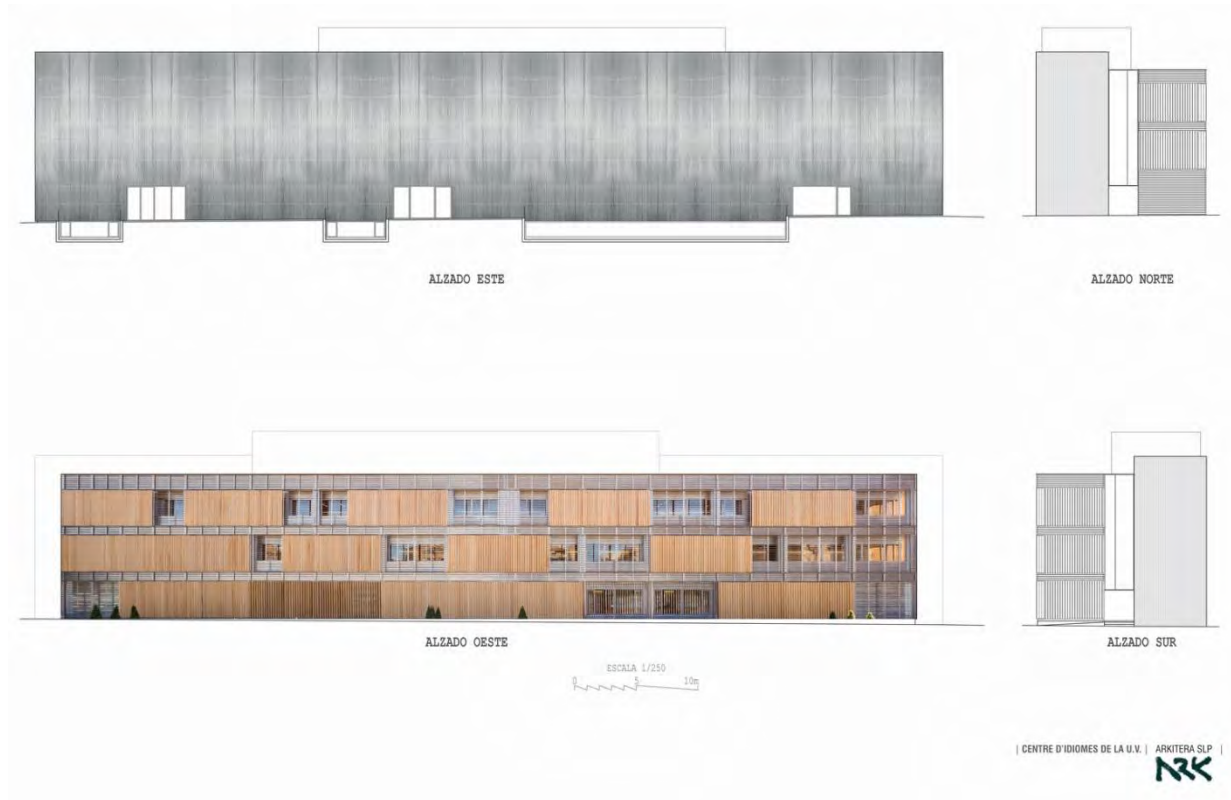


Fig 30: elevations of Valencia University Language Center

Source: Arkitera spl

5.4 Research Centre for Nigerian Languages



Fig 31: rendered images of research center for Nigerian languages

Source: BC Architects and studies

Project Description: Construction of the new Research Centre for Nigerian Languages

Location: Llorin (Nigeria)

Client: Kwara State University

Architect: BC architects

Cooperations: BAS, DASA Architects Limited

Budget: 1.000.000 € (VAT excl.)

Surface: 1600 m²

Concept: 2015

Status: In construction

The concept, structure and appearance of the building are shaped by both awareness of the academic environment it will host and respect of local building traditions. The design combines local techniques with high-standards of comfort in order to create individual as well as public environments which provide rest, openness and privacy for all researchers and visitors.

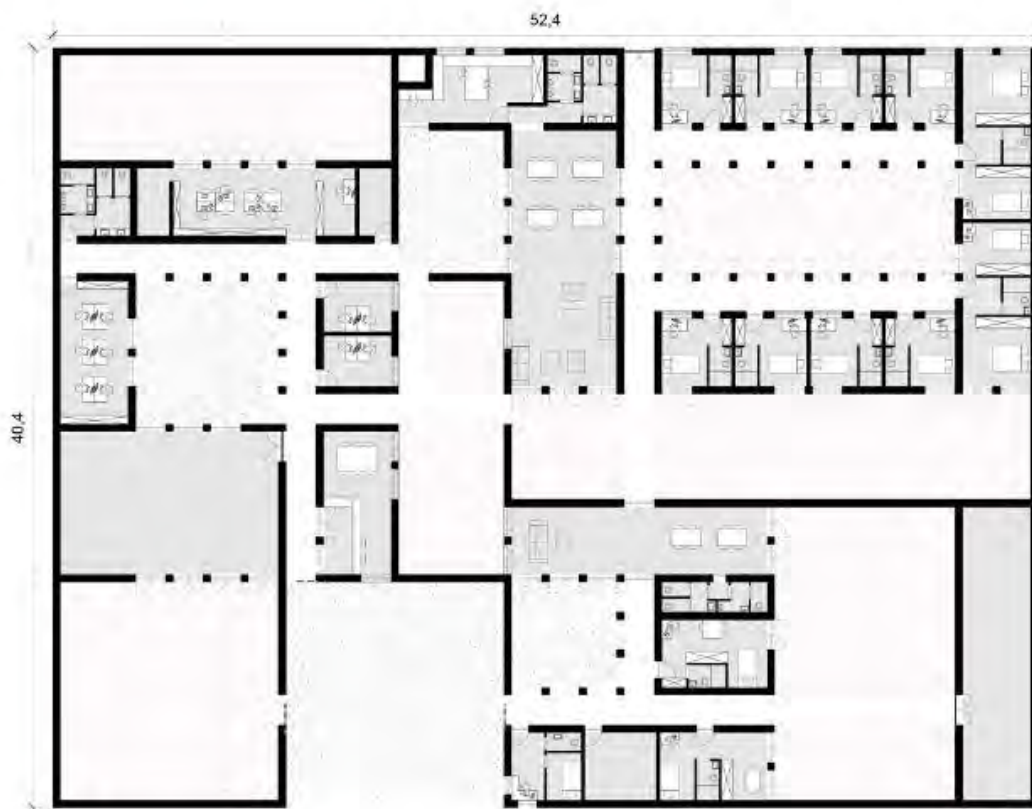
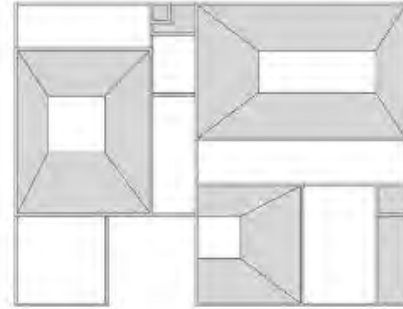
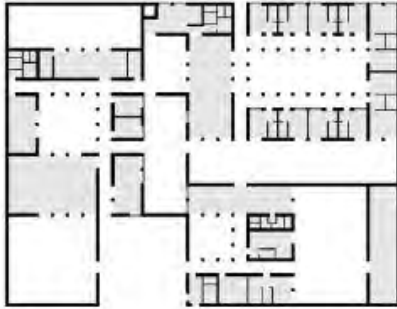
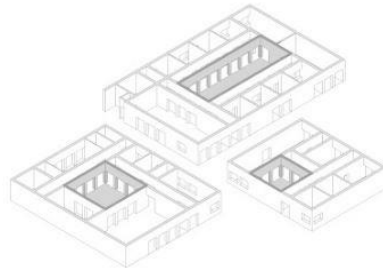
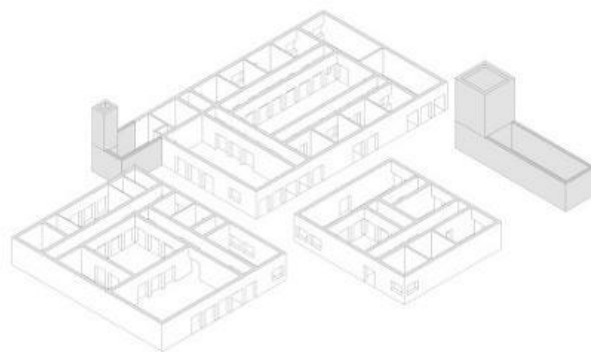


Fig 32: plans of research center for Nigerian languages

Source: BC Architects and studies



3 central courtyards



2 technical buildings

Fig 33: zoning of research center for Nigerian languages

Source: BC Architects and studies

The design of the RCNL has its roots in local conceptual elements such as the urban introvert medina, the typologies of the Yoruba palace and courtyard house and the sequence of different spatial atmospheres within a rational grid system. It therefore represents the local identity in a contemporary architectural language. The multitude and complexity of the various languages and dialects found in Nigeria is reflected in the architecture of the centre. Multiple open spaces with different atmospheres connect the various offices, classrooms, meeting rooms etc. The rationality of the design interacts with the surrounding nature due to the contrast between its very rigid grid system and the organic growth of the gardens and landscape. In this way the RCNL works as a monastery; a quiet study place, closed from the outside, but very open within its walls. A building completely autonomous of its surrounding built environment in terms of water electricity, etc



Fig 34: rendered bird's eye view of research center for Nigerian languages

Source: www.vai.be

CHAPTER 6: PROGRAM ANALYSIS

This paper aims to prove that the development of the Mru community can be done through enhancing their **language, craft** and **culture**.

Language is essential part of any culture and heritage. The Mru language is on the verge of becoming extinct and has been declared as definitely endangered by Unesco.

The language development is essential for this ethnic group. Mru craft is unique and ancient. This is slowly fading. This craft needs revival not only to uphold their culture but also restore the amazing craftsmanship and craft. Mru culture is diverse and unique from any other culture. But in aspiration of trying to be like others, they are forgetting their own root. Development is needed. There is no question about that but that does not mean one needs to leave his/her heritage behind.

According to the Mru people, the need improvement in their education, economy sector and they feel oppressed by other tribes and Bangalees which needs remedy.

For the sake of economy, the Mrus cultivate following the slash and burn process which is “Jum”. What they fail to understand is that they are destroying magnificent forest resources in the process. This happens because of lack of knowledge and lack of information. They have need of food and economy and thus they do it. The method which was used in the ancient times, still that is being followed. No information about new technology or anything has reach to them yet. As a result, they are ending up cutting down the only evergreen forest of the country and destroying the natural ecosystem of many endangered animals.

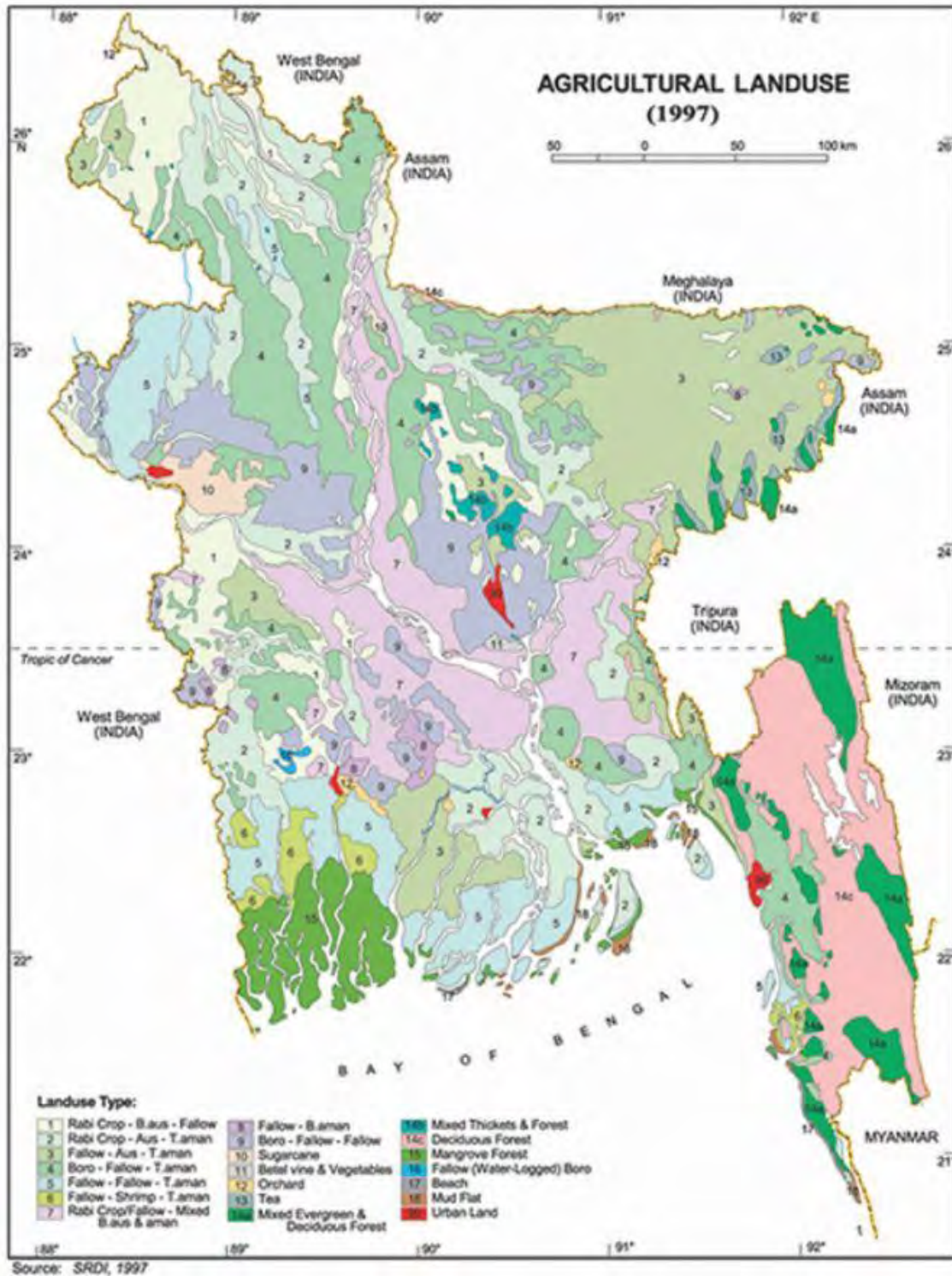


Fig 35: agriculture landuse of Bangladesh

Source: internet



Fig 36: traditional way of slash and burn “jum” process

Source: (Brauns C., & Loffler G. L., 1990)

The need of food can be fulfilled by agro forestry and from other way of cultivation.

For economy, they can rely on their crafts. They can become expertise on them and create a market value for their product and sell them. For this they would need proper training in order create their products ready for market.

The Mrus are experts when it comes to catch wild animals as they are the indigenous group who lives and are closest to nature (Brauns C., & Loffler G. L., 1990). The Chittagong Hill Tracts has a lush green forest which has open animal corridor with Myanmar's large forest. Thus, this forest is filled with natural wonders and is the residing place of many species. The Mrus catch these animals to fulfill their protein need and to sell these animals to the poachers in order to earn some money. They do this without even understanding the consequences.

A craft center can help them to practice their local crafts and excel in it. It can help them to learn how to create market value for their product and can turn into a hub where they can sell the products and export them. This training center can also have a wing where training regarding cultivation and cattle rising would be given.



Fig 37: Wild life distribution map

Source: internet



Fig38: camera trap photo of a globally
Threatened binturong

Source: Creative conservation alliance



Fig36: camera trap photo of a globally
threatened Sun Bear

Source: Creative conservation alliance



Fig 39: exotic animal trade

Source: Creative conservation alliance

An average Mru family needs about 3.5 kg of protein per week which can be easily managed from the domestic animals they have. Once again for economy, they can rely on their crafts.

As it can be seen from Table 01, the Mru literacy rate is only at 2.9%. the first thing that comes to mind is that, lack of institution might be the root cause. But that is not the scenario. There are many schools dedicated just for the Mru people but the main problem here is the language. When a Mru child is enrolled at school, at the very first day, he or she is forced to learn in Bangla his/her national language although she has a different mother language. Their language isn't so developed that they can publish books in their language. Other indigenous groups of Bangladesh have books published in their own language. At the beginning of this year, text books written in four indigenous languages were distributed among 50 schools of the Chittagong hill Tracts area. The languages were- Chakma, Marma, Tripura and Shatri (<http://parbattanews.com>). The Mru being bigger group than the Shatri and Tripura, they should have been given text books in their language before but this was not possible due to the language barrier.

So, if a language research center is created for them, their language can develop and eventually affect their education sector in a positive way. It can open up possibility to better communication with others and even among themselves as two people from different clans of the Mru group don't understand their language and communicate in Bangla. This can reduce the communication gap and open up possibilities of leaving

days of oppression behind. This research center will as well help to preserve their culture and heritage.

A cultural platform is needed for upholding their culture to others and to learn about others' culture as well. This way the communication gap can be minimized and door of understanding might open up. Also this will help the Mrus to be in direct contact with their own culture and heritage.

From site, it can be seen that there is a possibility of ecotourism hub there. So, tourism can be used to promote all the previous functions as well. Tourists can enhance them. Accommodation and amenities are needed here.

A small health complex is needed for the local community as there are many waterborne diseases that spread there but for treatment they have to travel all the way to Chakariya.

A dormitory will be needed for the trainers and researchers as well as the trainees which can be learned from the case study 5.4.

Program:

Training center

Workshops indoor:

Vegetation training 1 – 40'x32' = 1280 sft

Bamboo (handicraft) 1- 64'x32' = 2048 sft

Handloom 3 – (32'x56') x3 = 5376 sft

Jewelry training 1- 32'x32' =1024 sft

Workshop semi-outdoor:

Poultry 1 – 40'x32' = 1280 sft

Circulation 25 % = 2752 sft

Total= 13,686 sft

Dormitory

Male Dorm:

Single bedrooms 6- (8'x8')x6= 384 sft

Common bedroom (living like the Mrus)1 = 1143 sft

Supervisor's room 2- (8'x16)x2'= 256 sft

Service= 1785 sft

Female dorm:

Single bedrooms 6- (8'x8')x6= 384 sft

Common bedroom (living like the Mrus)1 = 1143 sft

Supervisor's room 2- (8'x16)x2'= 256 sft

Service= 1785 sft

Common Facilities:

Dining room 1- 40'x40'= 1600 sft

Kitchen1- 8'x40'= 320 sft

Common room 1- 24'x40'= 960 sft

Admin 1- 24'x24'= 576 sft

Circulation 25%= 2635 sft

Total= 13,173sft

Cultural area

Admin 1- 40'x32'= 1280 sft

Multipurpose Hall 1- 88'x48'= 3872 sft

Museum admin and Souvenir Shop 1- 48'x40'= 1920 sft

Gallery 1- 40x88'= 3520 sft

Gallery 2- 56'x 80'= 4480 sft

Open Platform 1- 64'x48'= 3072 sft

Circulation 25% = 4536 sft

Total = 22680 sft

Language Research Center

Admin 1- 32'x24'= 768 sft

Classrooms 3- (16'x24')= 1152 sft

Seminar Room 1- 32'x 24' = 768 sft

Library 1- 40'x56'= 2240 sft

Audio- Visual room 1- 32'x48'= 1536 sft

Circulation 25% =1616

Total- 8080 sft

Total- 57,620 sft

CHAPTER 7: SURVEY, DOCUMENTATION AND STUDY

7.1 Methods and Approach of Documentation:

Study Area

For detail documentation and observations the area chosen for study was Alikadam, Bandarban. Most of the Mrus live in the Thanchi, Lama, Alikadam area of Baandarban. The study area I chose were close to my proposed site. I studied three paraas which were at close proximity from my site. For my study area, I chose three paraas which are closes to my site. Among the three paraas, Chioni paraa is the oldest paraa at Alikadam also this one is the closest to Alikadam Sadar Upazilla. The second one is Yongking paraa, 15 minutes distance from Chioni paraa, this one is the newest and smallest paraa. The third one is Khingro paraa which is secluded from locality and the urban scenario.

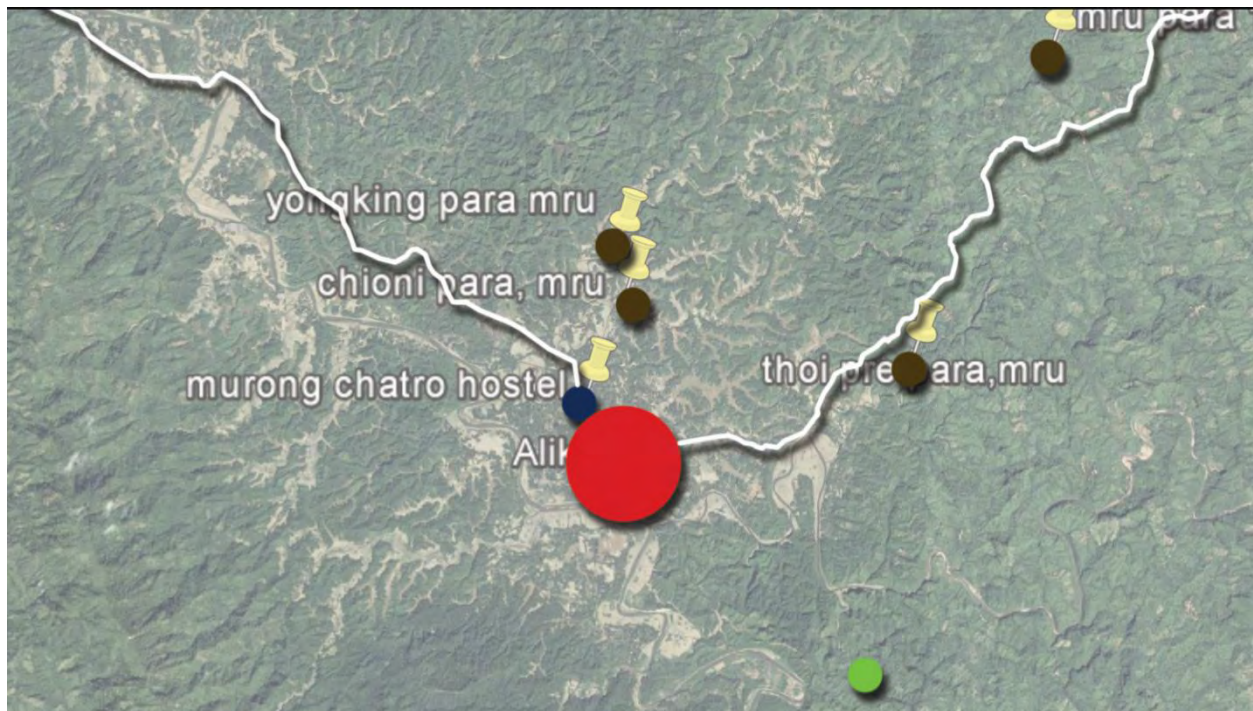


Diagram 03: geographical position of the study areas

Source: Author

Documentation

Around 7 paraas were visited to understand the morphology of the Mru hamlets during this study. But for convenience, scale, time frame and study requirements it was narrowed down to three paraas. These paraas are close to the chosen site. Among the three paraas, Chioni paraa is the oldest paraa at Alikadam also this one is the closest to Alikadam Sadar Upazilla. The second one is Yongking paraa, 15 minutes distance from Chioni paraa, this one is the newest and smallest paraa. The third one is Khingro paraa which is secluded from locality and the urban scenario. Documentation was done by drawing plans and taking photographs and videos.

Observation

The study was done by following observation method. The study areas and surroundings were analyzed and data were collected using this method. The characteristics and relationship between spaces, Mru culture and their relationship with nature were observed through the site visit.

Interview

Interviews of the locals and experts were taken to understand the Mru culture and lifestyle. Surveys were done in individual homesteads as well following this technique to understand the architectural patterns of the community.

7.2 Documenting the Paraas:

7.2.1 Chioni Paara

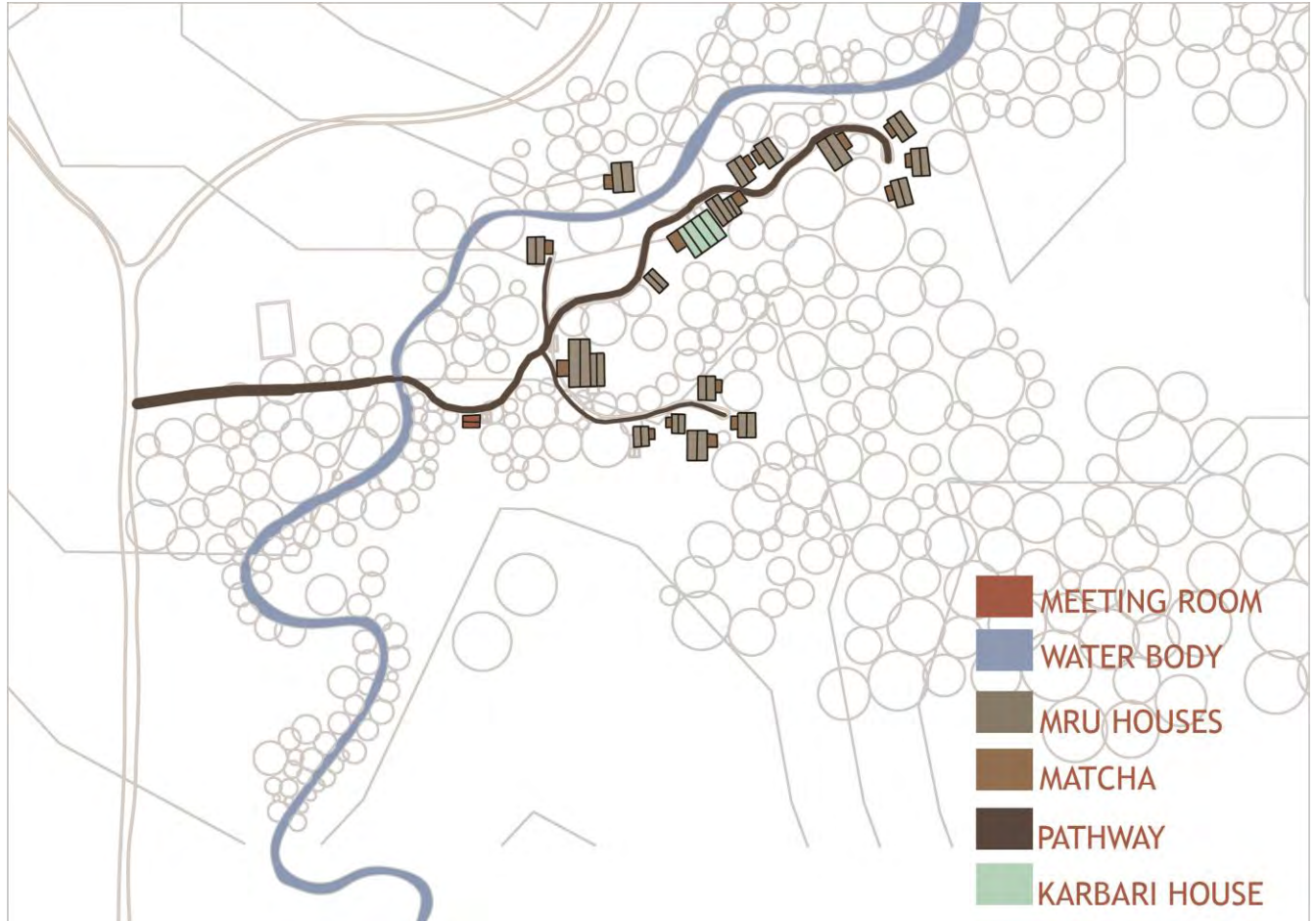


Fig 40: mapping of Chioni Paara

Source: Author

Chioni paara is the oldest established Mru paara at Alikadam. It is also at the closest distance from the main Sadar Upazilla. The hamlet consists of 18 single households. At the entrance of the hamlet, there is a meeting room for the community to take important decisions and meetings. The households are placed alongside the pathways. The

karbari house is at the center of the hamlet. The surrounding is secluded from the locality by lush green and topographical height variation. There is a valley at the front of the hamlet from where they collect their daily water supply.



Fig 41: images of Chioni Paara

Source: Author

7.2.2 Yongking Paara

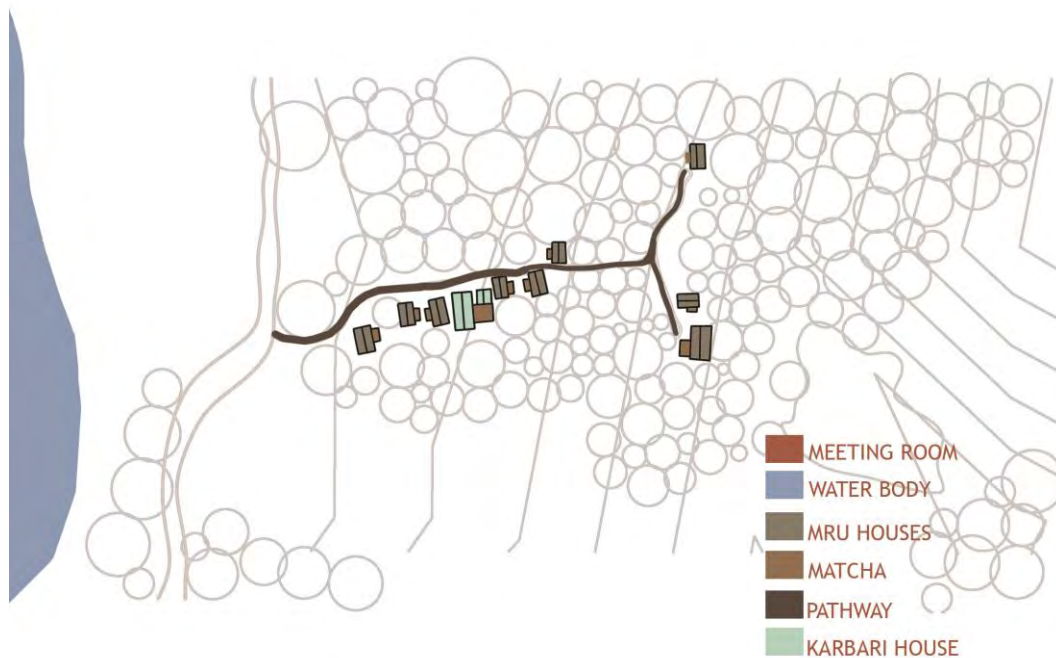


Fig 42: Mapping of Yongking Paara

Source: Author

Among the three study paaras, this the newest established paara. The paara consists 11 households. The houses are placed alongside the pathways. There is a jhiri at the lowest point of the topography from where the collect water to drink and do household chores. This hamlet is also surrounded by lush green.



Fig 43: images of Yongking Paara

Source: Author

7.2.3 Khingro Paara

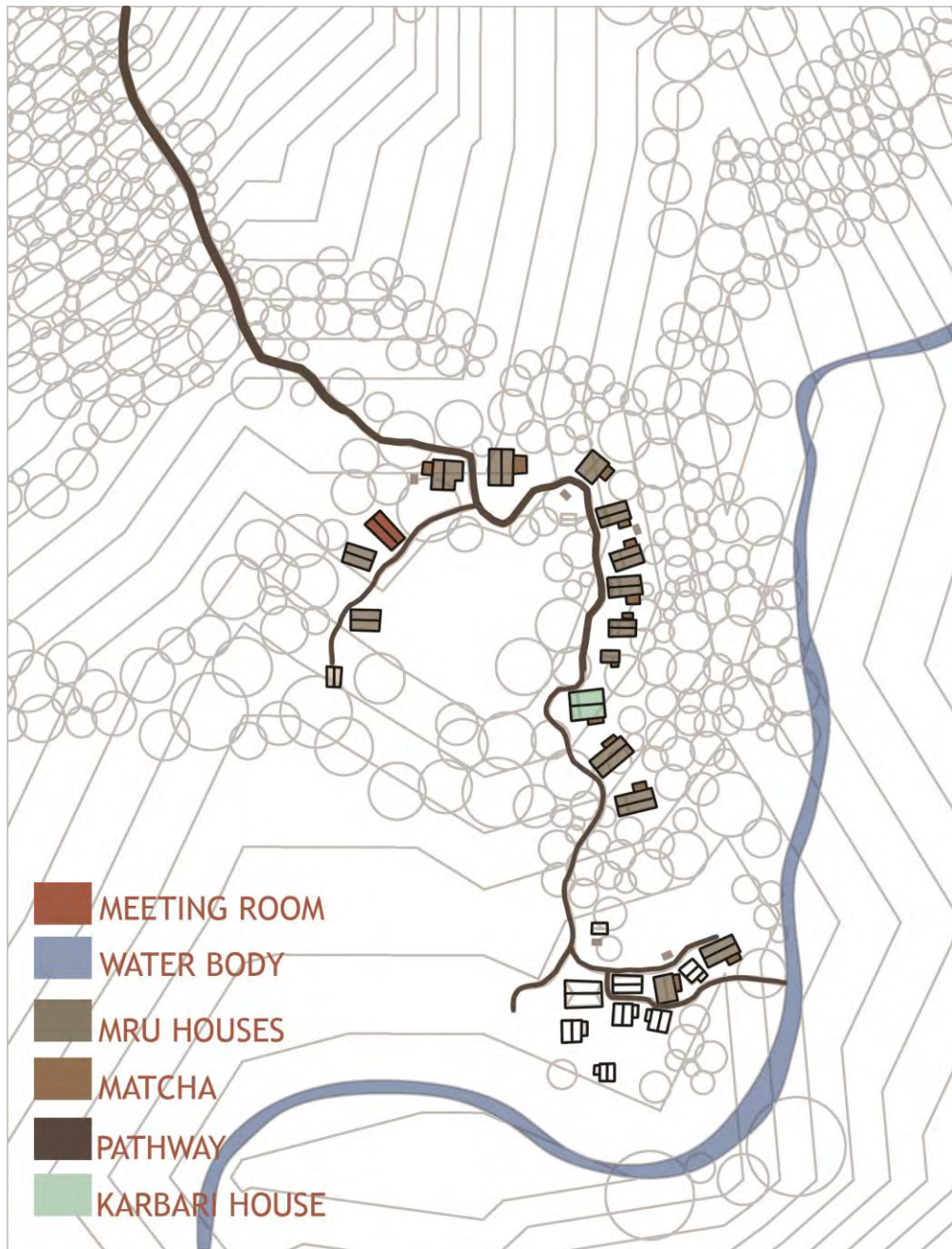


Fig 44: mapping of Khingro Paara

Source: Author

Khingro Paara is a bit secluded from the urbanized area. It is situated in a valley. The highest peak of this paara is about 350' higher from the lowest point of the topography. There are 15 Mru households and 8 houses of people from other ethnic groups. The karbari house is again at the center and the meeting room is close to the entrance. The valley however, in this case, is at the end of the hamlet. The whole hamlet is hidden amidst the forest and the hills.



Fig 45: image of Khingro Paara

Source: Author

7.2.4 Common Learning from Three Study Areas

Three different study areas were chosen to understand the characteristics of the Mru hamlets. Through this study the poetry between living and nature were explored and the spatial relationships were analyzed.



Diagram 04: section of topography of a Mru hamlet

Source: Author

Basically in a section of a paara, in the highland, where there is no shedding, Jhum cultivation is done. In the midland, the hamlet is situated and there is valley at the lowest point of the topography and usually the area is secluded from locality with a barrier of thick forest.



Diagram 05: Placement of Units

Source: Author

The household units are always placed along the pathways which are naturally created respecting the contours.



Diagram 06: Placement of the Karbari House

Source: Author

Usually, in a hamlet, the Karbari house is the biggest house and is placed at the center of the hamlet.

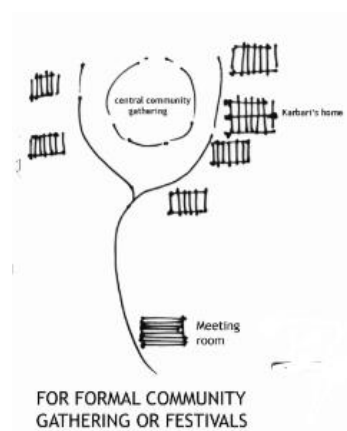


Diagram 07: Community gathering spaces (formal community gathering)

Source: Author

In a formal community gathering, usually the central open space in front of the Karbari house is used. For example, the cow sacrifice is performed here. People dance and sing in this place.

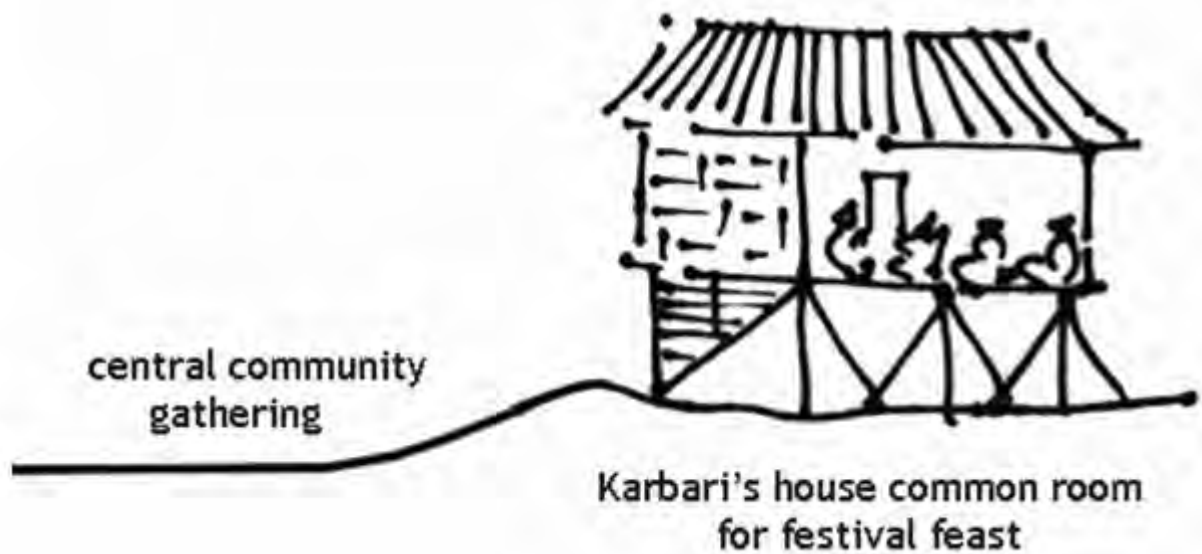


Diagram 08: Community gathering spaces (Karbari's house)

Source: author

The matcha of the Karbari's house is usually used as the place for festival feast.

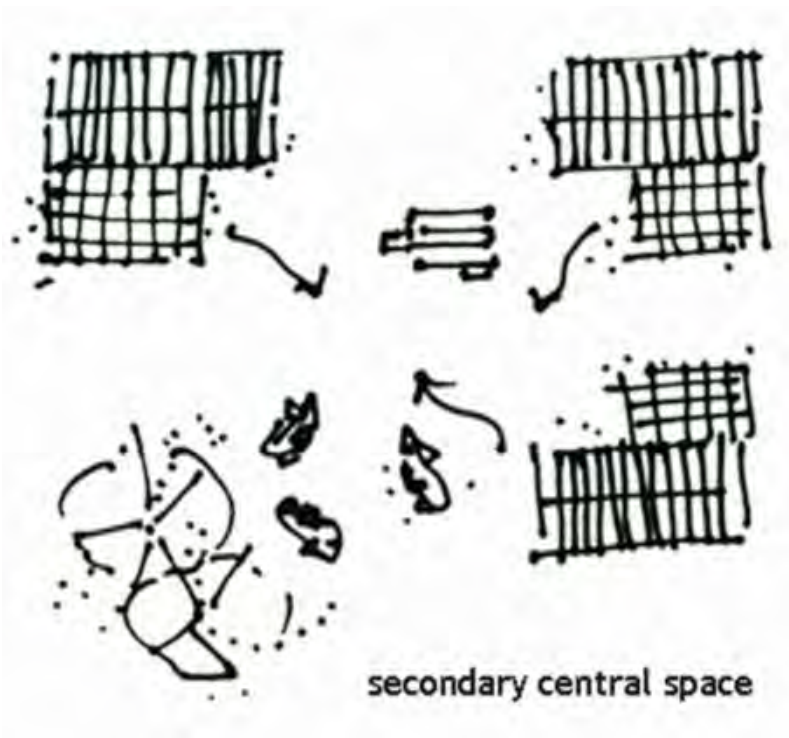


Diagram 09: Community gathering space (courtyards)

Source: Author

When a cluster of households are placed, the orientation of the matcha is done in such a way that their entrances are faced towards a common courtyard. In this courtyard, people hangout and spend their leisure time.

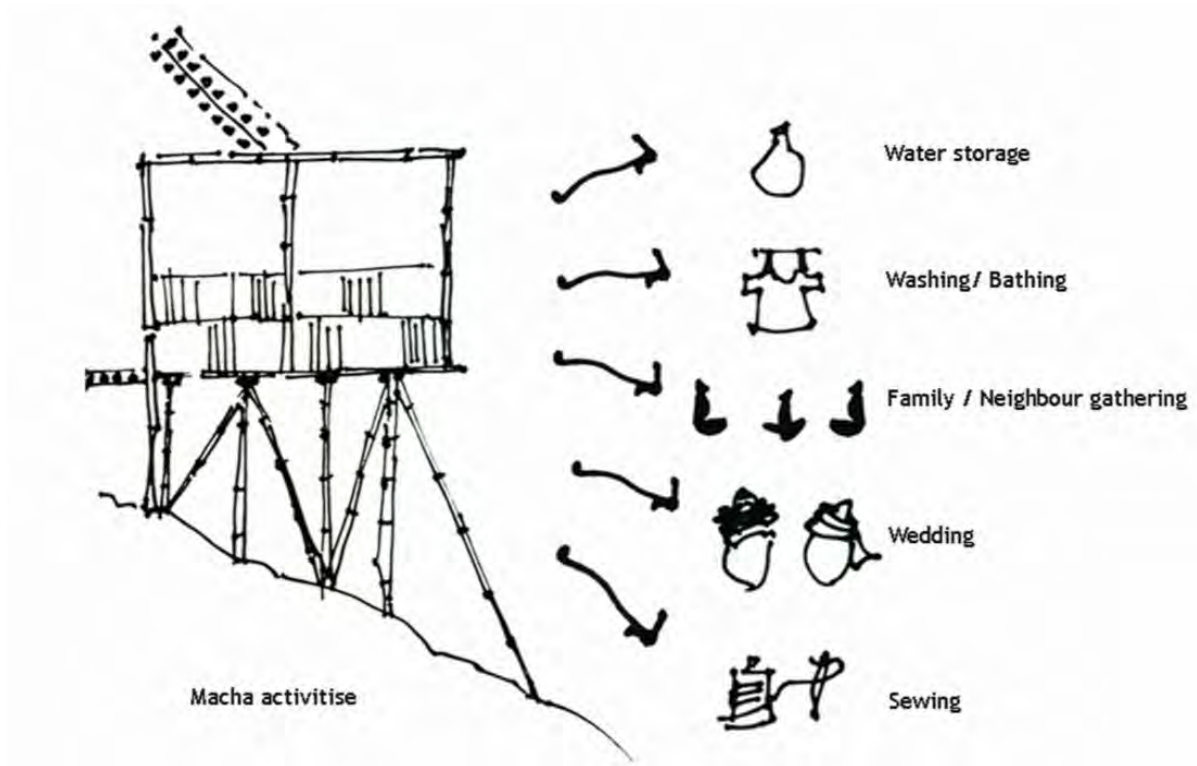


Diagram 10: Community gathering spaces (matcha)

Source: Author

The matcha is the most intimate gathering space. Many activities occur here like weddings, neighbors gathering, water storage, washing/ bathing and even weaving.



Diagram 11: Matcha and kitchen relationship

Source: Author

The kitchen is situated at the center of the house, but the matcha is used as preparation space. The wastage from cooking preparation is thrown under which becomes food for the domestic animals.

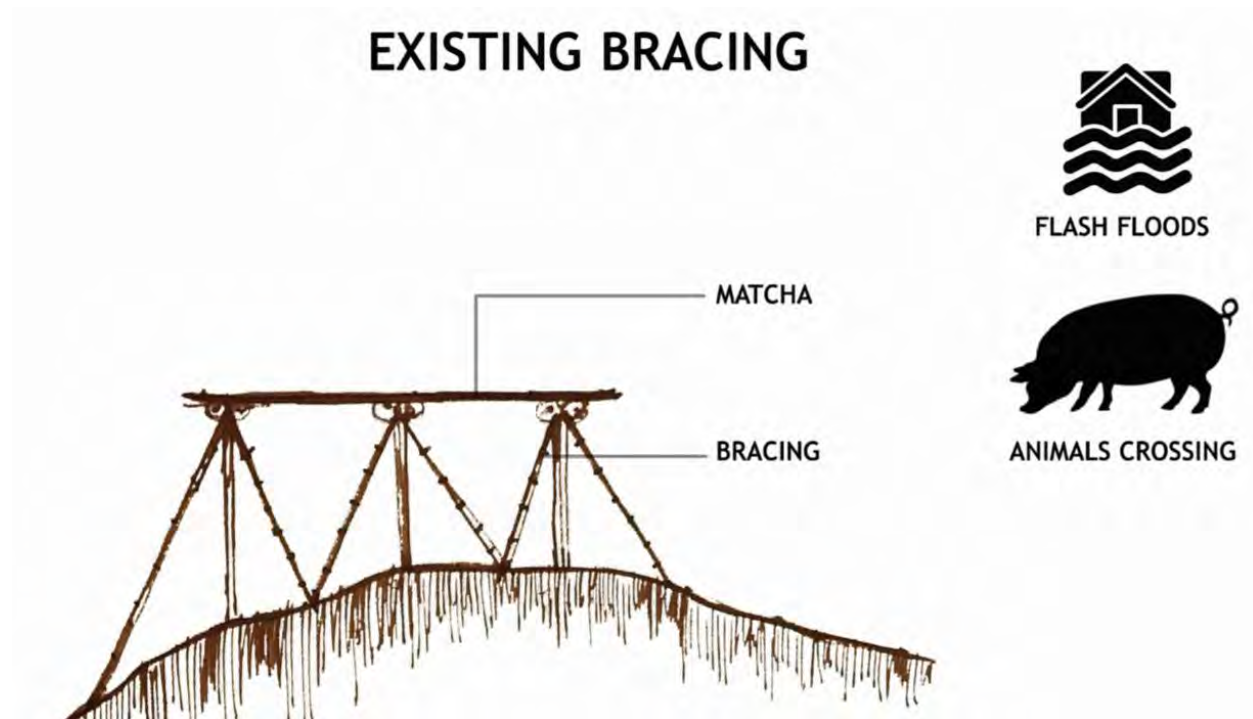


Diagram 12: existing bracing system

Source: Author

Existing bracing system is explained in the diagram. The units are lifted from the ground using stilts. This is done for two reasons. One to protect the house from flash flood and the second is to let the animals move freely.

7.3 Architectural Features

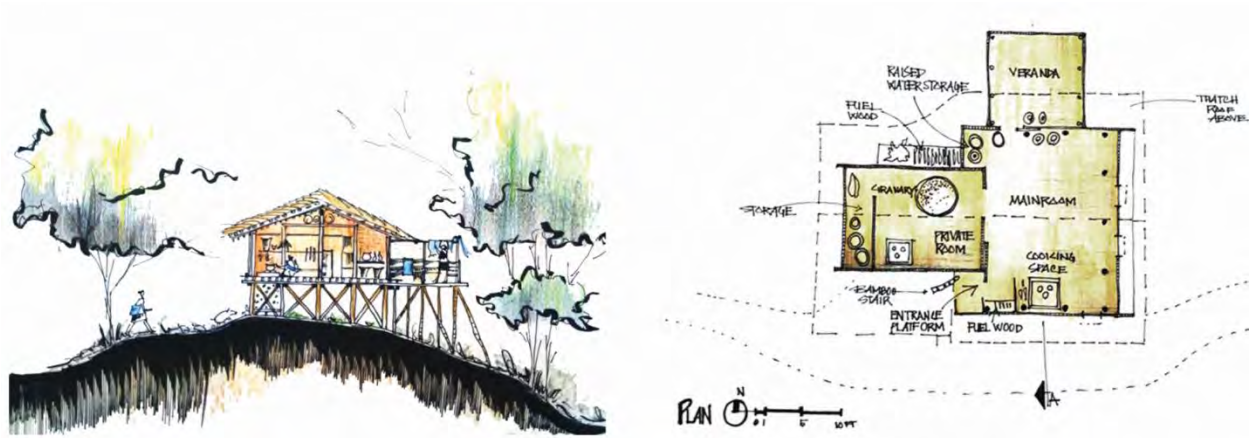


Figure 46: Traditional plan and section of a Mru house

Source: Khandakar Hasibul Kabir

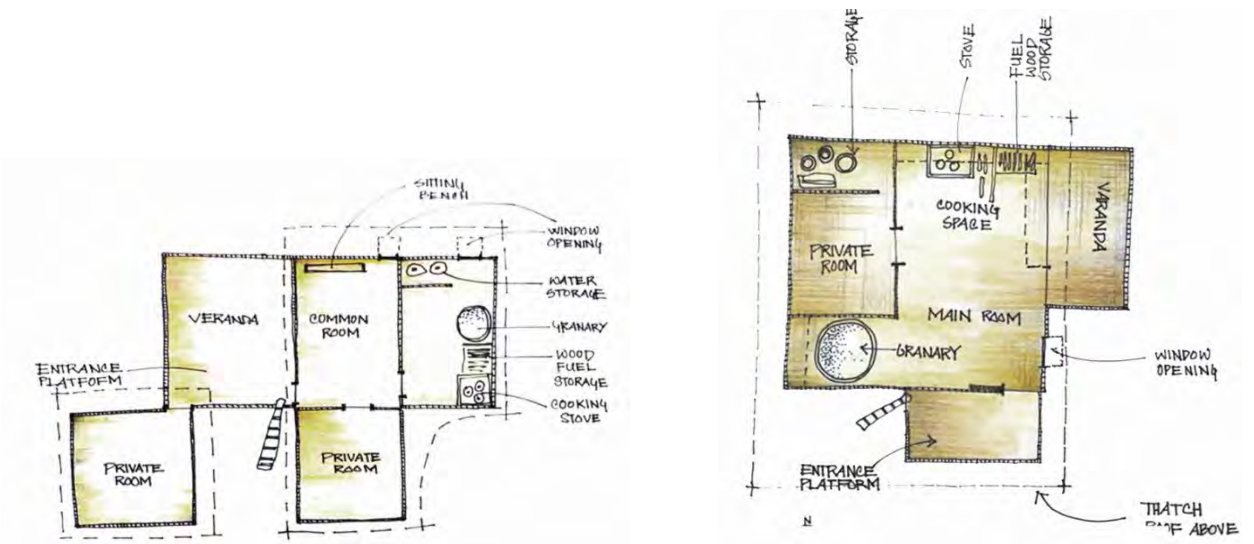


Figure 47: Typical plans of Mru houses

Source: Author

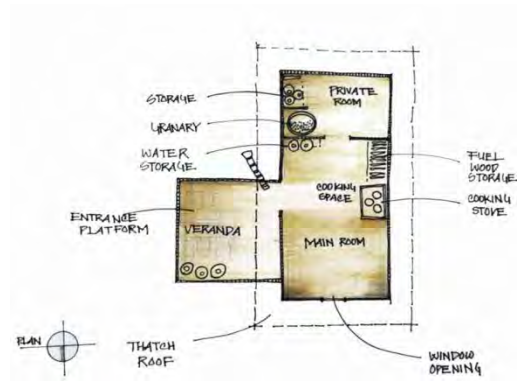
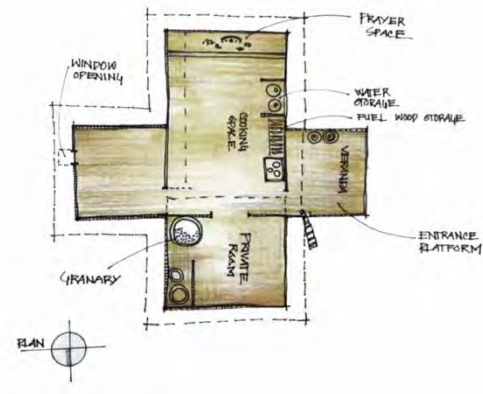


Figure 48: Typical plans of Mru houses

Source: Author

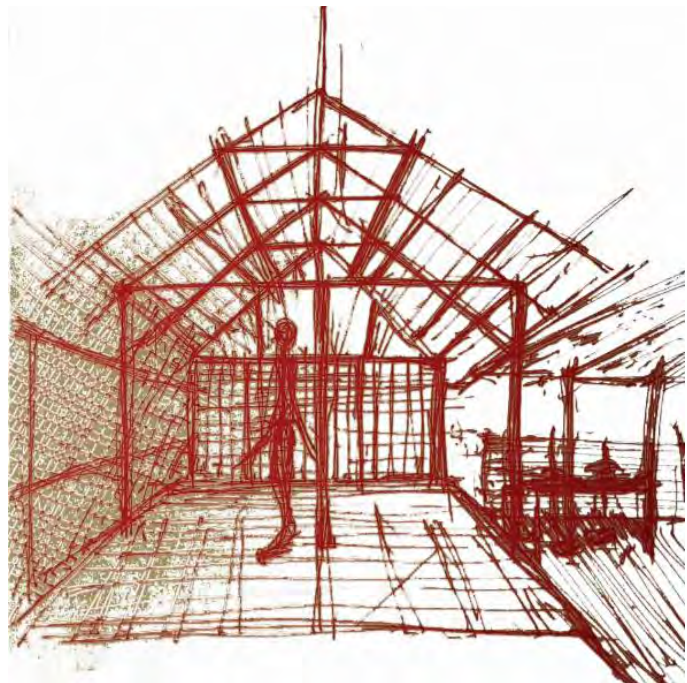
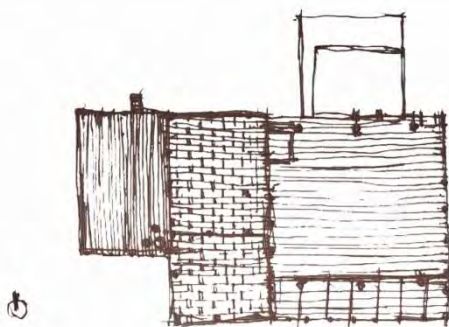


Figure 49: Typical plan and section of Mru houses

Source: Author

The basic layouts of the typical plans indicate that to enter every unit one has to limb to the matcha first which is like a preparation area. Then you enter the common room. This is used as the bedroom for everyone in the family except for the husband and wife. This room is also the kitchen. The kimtom is saved for the husband and family. The crop is stored in this room.

As seen in figure 47, the materials mainly used are- Bamboo, Bamboo leaves, Hay and Wooden columns. This is how typically houses were made but recently a change has been notified. This is use of an alien matter, corrugated sheet for roofing. This previously used to be made of bamboo, hay and bamboo leaves.

CHAPTER 8: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Introduction

Because of their isolated living pattern and lack of accessibility general amenities, Mrus are far behind many other communities. Another thing that hinders their way to development is lack of education.

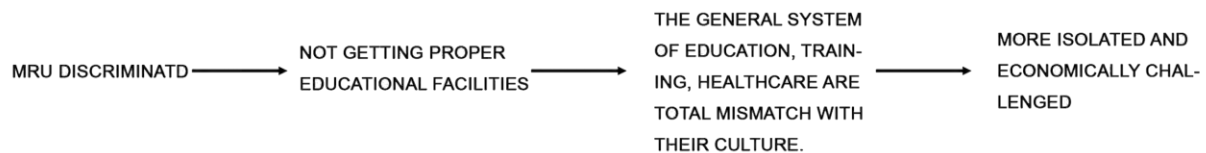


Diagram 13: Mrus lagging behind

Source: Author

MRU PROBLEMS REASONS BEHIND THE PROBLEMS

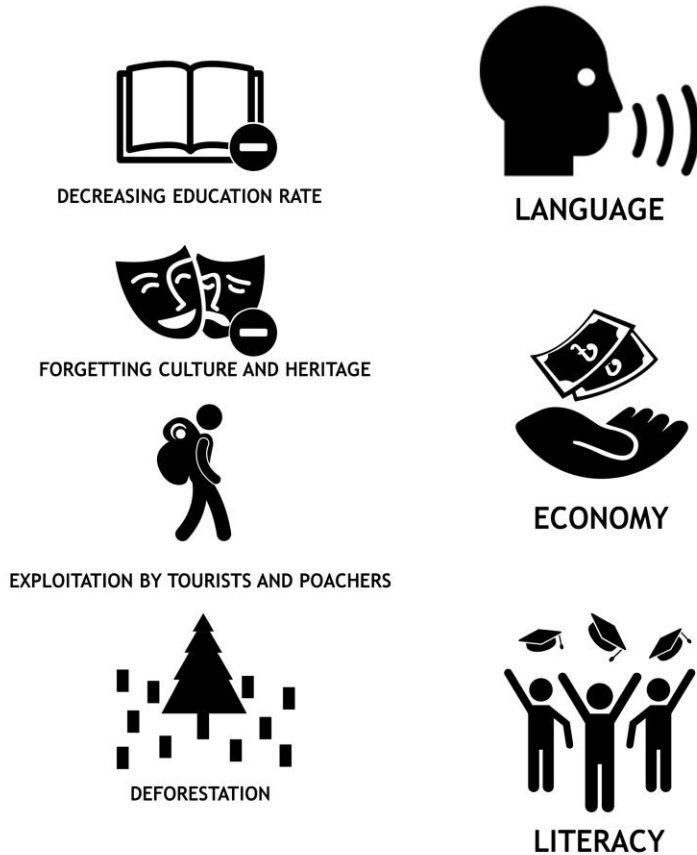


Diagram 14: Mru problems and reasons behind them

Source: Author

Mrus face many problems like decreasing education rate, forgetting their culture and heritage, exploitation by tourists and poachers and are the reason of deforestation. The reasons behind these problems are- language barrier, economy and literacy.

ECONOMIC SOURCES OF THE MRUS

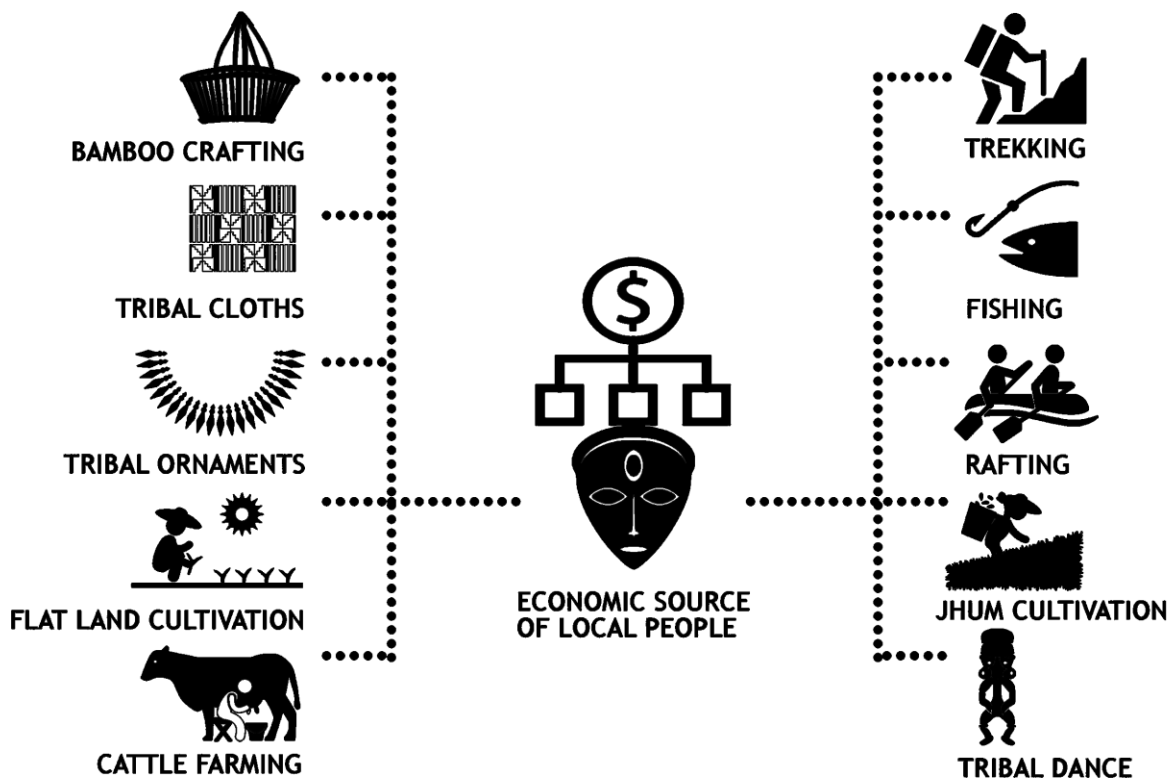


Diagram 15: economic sources of the Mru community

Source: Author

The main economic sources of the Mru community depends on bamboo crafting, weaving, making ornaments, jhum cultivation, cattle farming, assisting tourists, fishing, rafting and cultural performances.

The design needs to be a platform which can help to fight these problems using these economic activities as opportunities. The platform needs to uphold their culture to others and learn to protect their own heritage.



Diagram 16: need of procession path

Source: Author

Mrus believe in religions like Buddhism and Christianity but along with that, they also practice Animism. All of their festivals and rituals require a procession. For which, in this design procession path is needed.

8.2 Conceptualization

The basic concept of this project is to create a platform for the Mru community which would help to eradicate the socio-economic problems they are facing today. This

platform would open up opportunity for advancement of their language, culture and craft. It would be a platform which would promote their history and heritage to others and would become a small industry to help the community grow and develop.

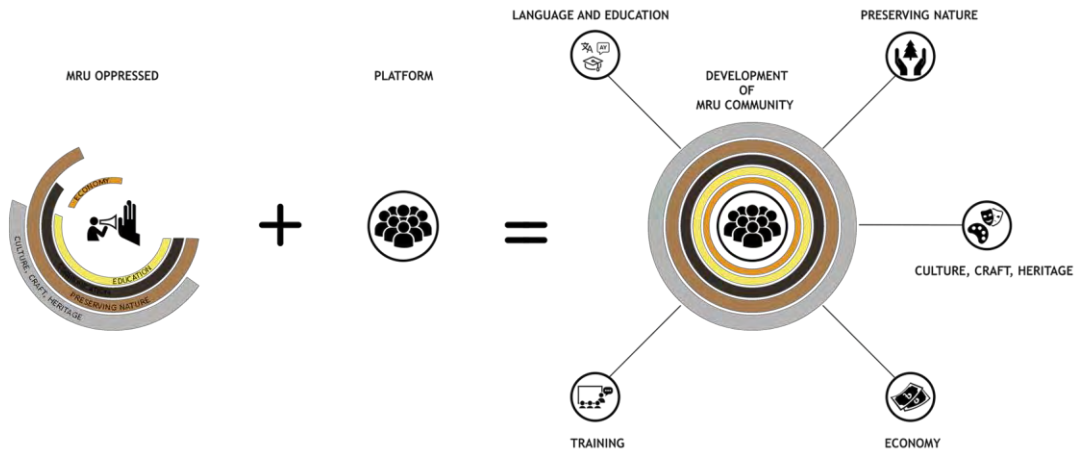


Diagram 17: Conceptualization of the project

Source: Author

8.3 Transforming Elements

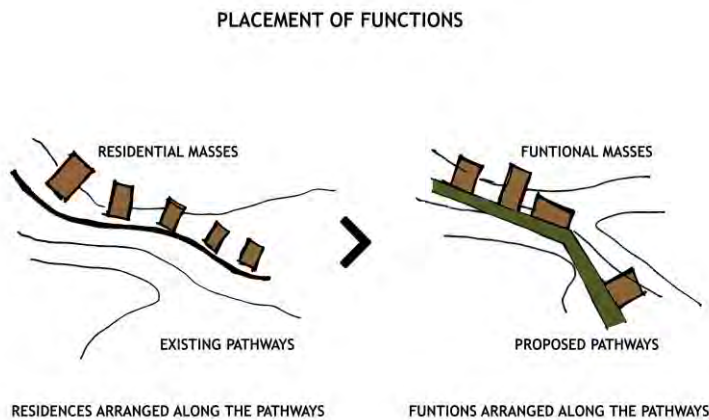


Diagram 18: Placement of functions

Source: Author

From the study it was found that all the houses were placed alongside the pathways. So in the design, the functions are placed alongside pathways.

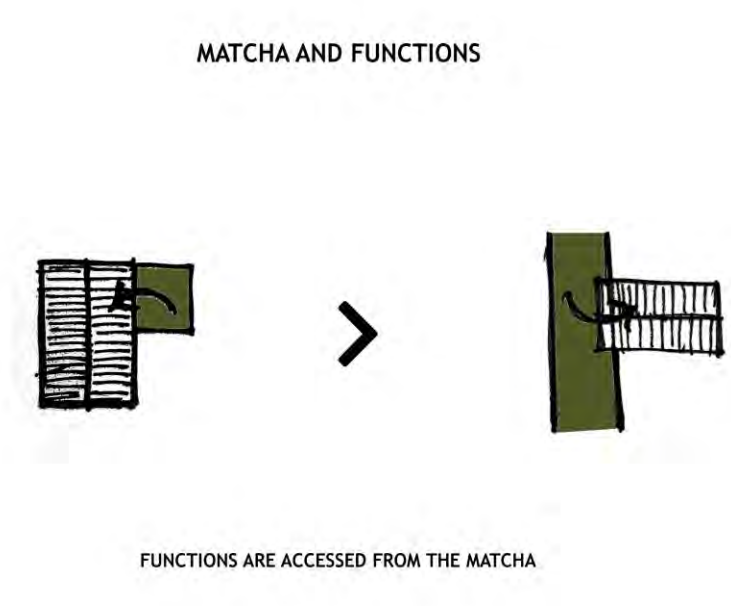


Diagram 19: Matcha and function relationship

Source: Author

In the traditional Mru architecture, to enter a house one needs to climb on Matcha and enter the room. This works as a preparation space to enter a function. On the other hand, all of the functions need to be placed alongside of a pathway. So in this design, the functions of a Matcha and pathway have been combined together and a shaded pathway is proposed.

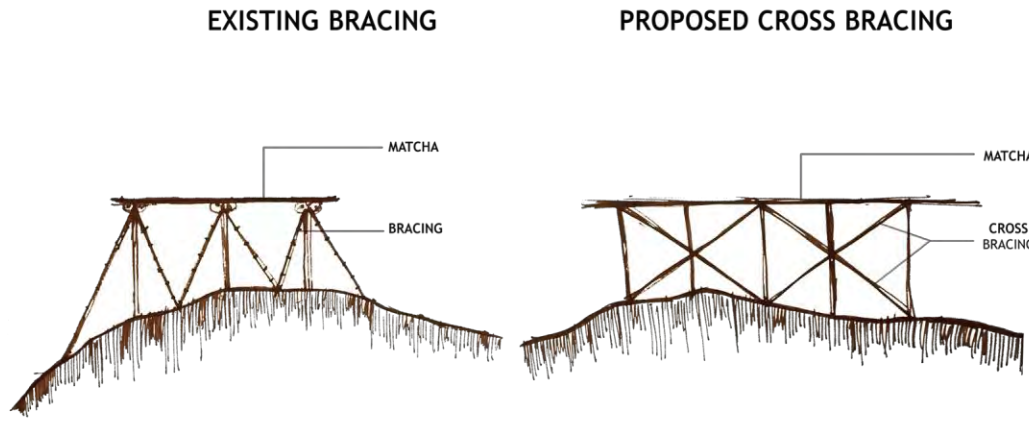


Diagram 20: development of structural System

Source: Author

In the traditional way, a column is supported by two bamboos, here to bring strength to this system, this design proposes cross bracing system.

8.4 Zoning

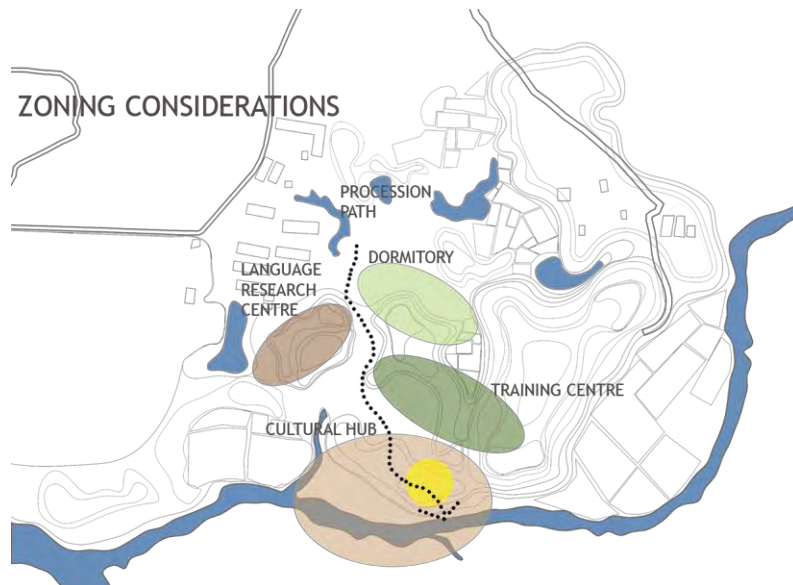


Diagram 21: Zoning of the Design

Source: Author

The design consist a language training center, a dormitory for the researchers, a training center and a cultural hub. the cultural hub has been pushed towards the water as there are rituals which requires water body to perform. The training center is placed opposite side of cultural hub. sort of reflecting each other as the trainees try to revive and nurture their heritage which is being showcased at the cultural hub zone. The language research center is placed a bit secluded from these two functions as it would require some privacy and noise free zone. These three zones are connected with a pathway which parts in three different branches to hold those zones. The dormitory is secluded from these zones as it requires the utmost privacy.

8.5 Plans, Sections, Elevations, Perspective views and Model



Figure 50: Roof plan

Source: Author

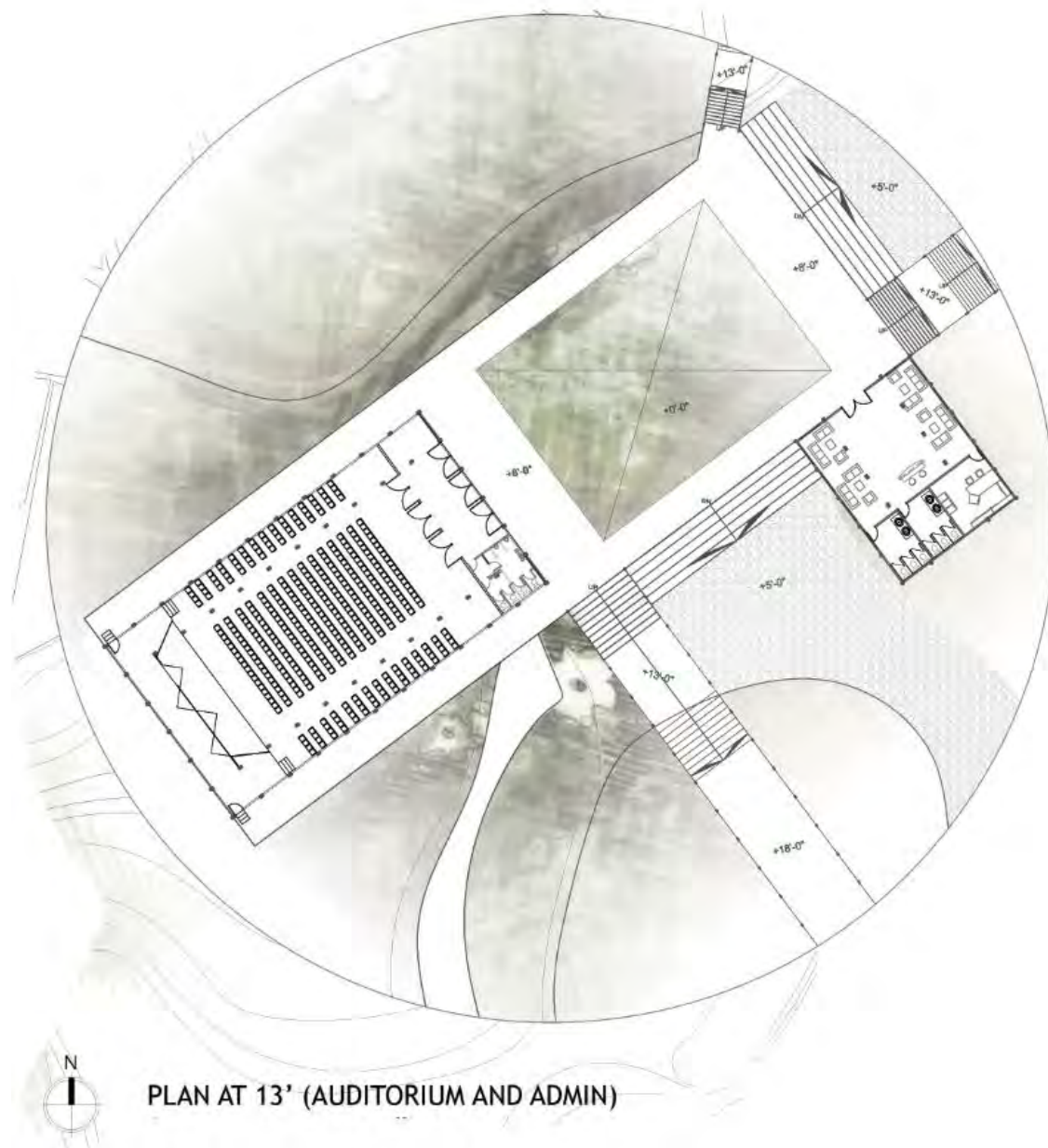
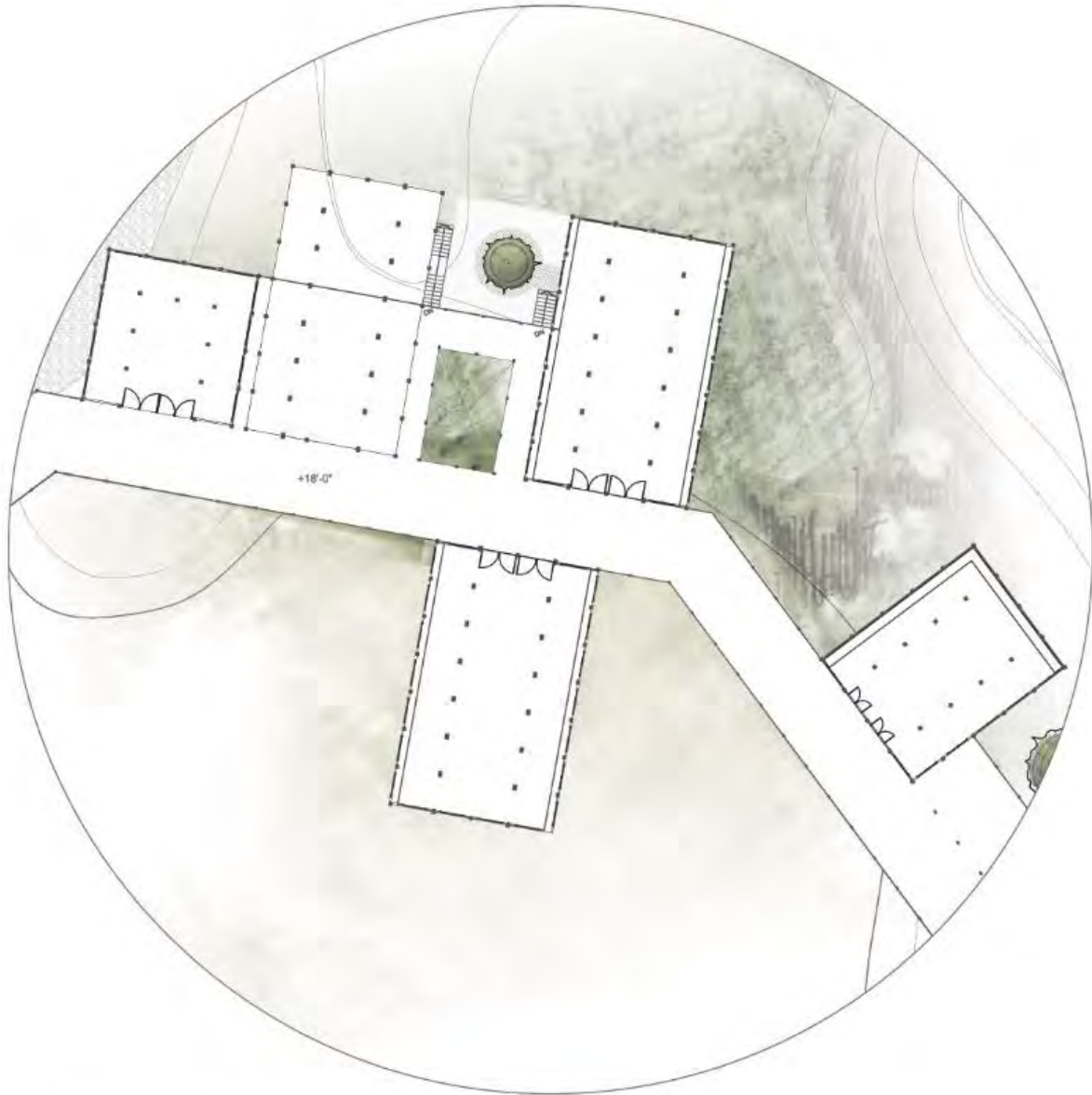


Figure 51: Plan at 13' (auditorium and admin)

Source: Author



PLAN AT 23' (TRAINING CENTRE)

Figure 52: Plan at 23' (training center)

Source: Author



PLAN AT 7' (DORMITORY)

Figure 53: Plan at 7' (dormitory)

Source: Author



PLAN AT 33' (LANGUAGE CENTRE)

Figure 54: Plan at 33' (language center)

Source: Author

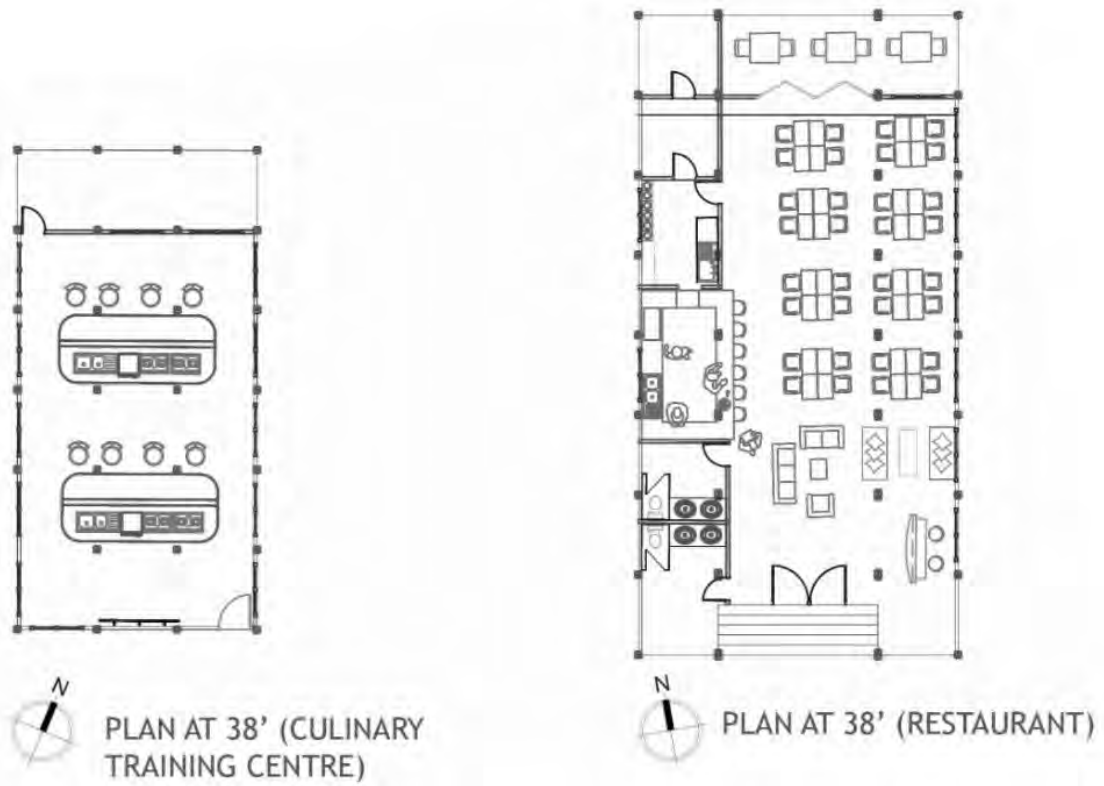


Figure 55: Plan at 38' (culinary training center and restaurant)

Source: Author



Figure 56: section AA'

Source: Author



Figure 57: section BB'

Source: Author



Figure 58: section CC'

Source: Author



Figure 59: Elevation of the cultural hub area

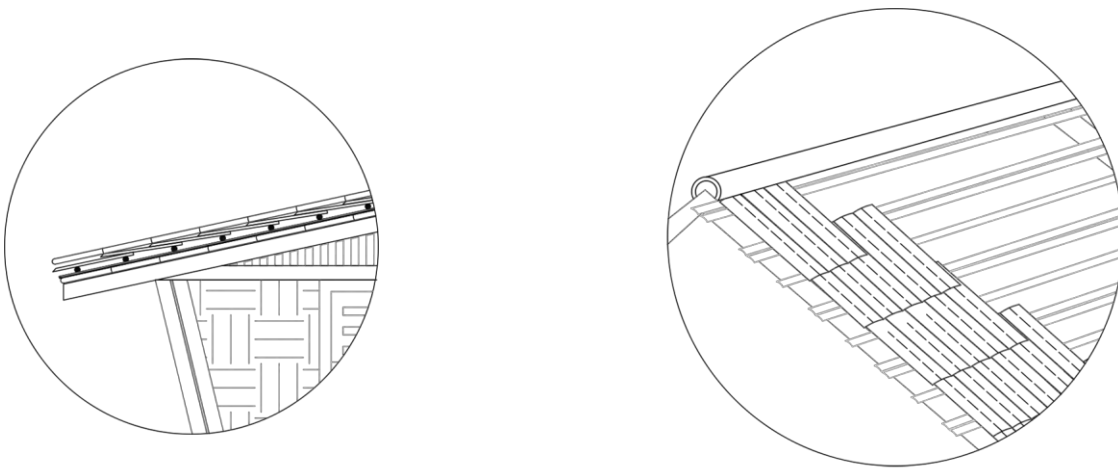
Source: Author

Elevation of the cultural hub area



Figure 60: Elevation of the language center

Source: Author



ROOF DETAIL 1

ROOF DETAIL 2

Figure 61: Roof Detail

Source: Author



Figure 62: details of different functions

Source: Author

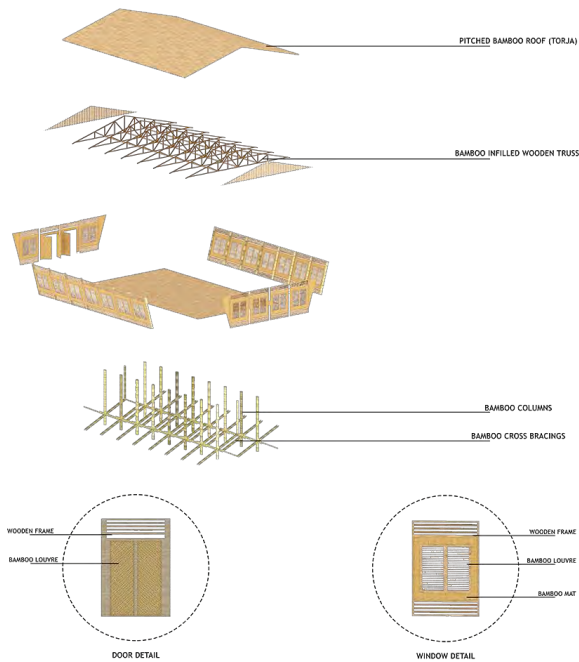


Figure 63: exploded axonometric view of a typical unit

Source: Author



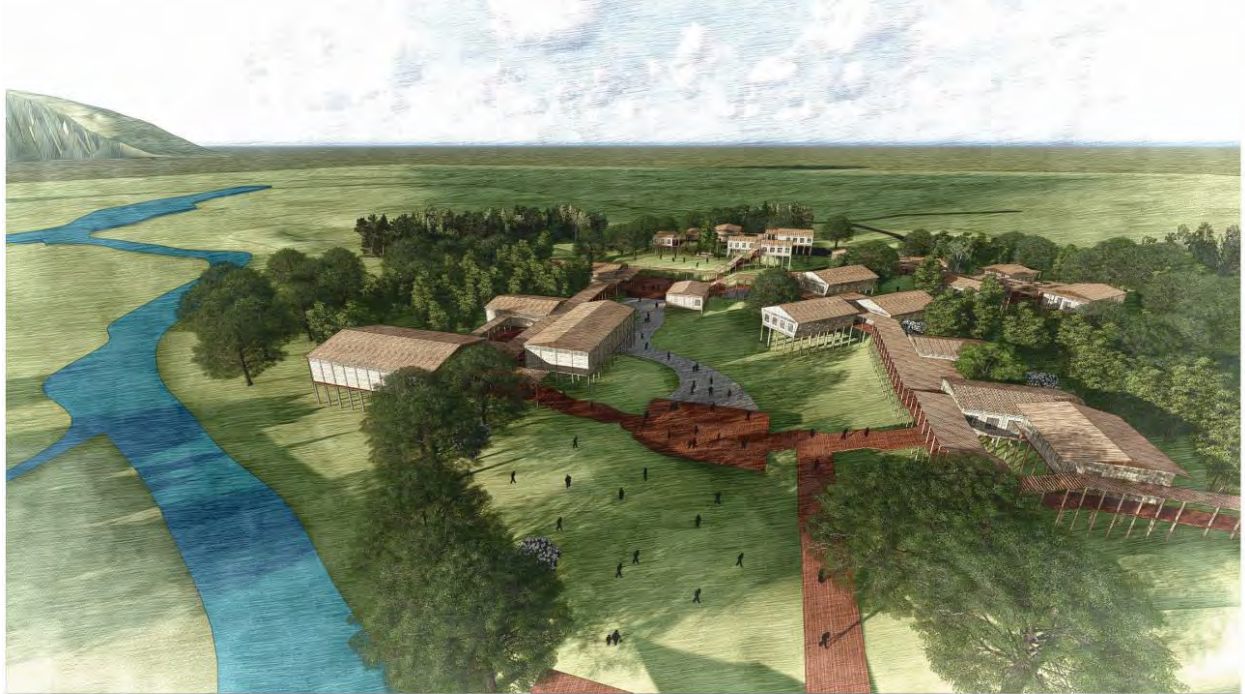
VIEW OF INTERIOR OF HANDLOOM TRAINING CENTRE



VIEW OF THE PROCESSION PATH

Figure 64: perspective views

Source: Author



BIRD'S EYE VIEW



VIEW OF FEMALE DORM'S COURT

Figure 65: perspective views

Source: Author



VIEW OF MALE DORM'S COURT



VIEW OF LANGUAGE RESEARCH CENTRE

Figure 65: perspective views

Source: Author



Figure 66: model images

Source: Author

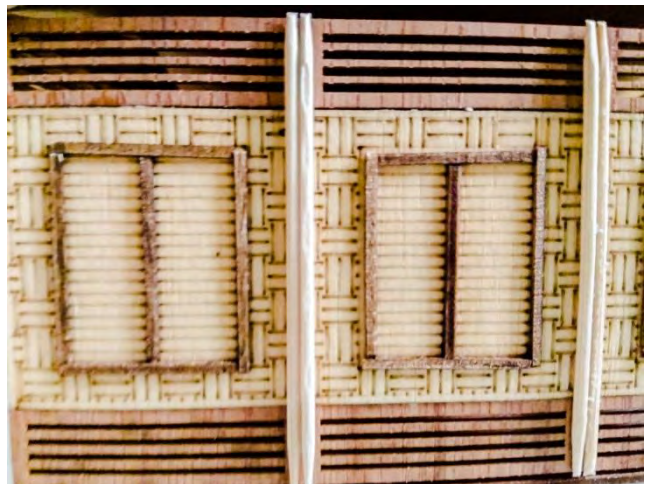


Figure 67: model images

Source: Author

CONCLUSION

The aim of this project was to create a platform for the Mru community which would uphold their culture and heritage to others. This platform would also serve to regain and protect their heritage. This would work as small industry which would contribute to the community. This is not just for the Mru community rather it could be for everyone. The whole process is about learning their lifestyle, their culture, their heritage and learning to respect it and help to protect it. As an architect, I did very little. The whole design was a learning process, learning about the community. The project is about a platform which will help the community to enhance their traditions, learning and teaching it to others. It focused on improving the present condition, to protect their language; to enhance the beauty of their culture, to protect the nature and to let others know about their identity. The whole purpose of this project was to give something back to the community, to try new ways following the traditional path to achieve something bigger.

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