

**Examining Nationalism Through the Spatial Structure of the Bangladesh National
Museum, the Liberation War Museums, and the Military Museum**

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requirement of the requirements for the degree of

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the loving memory of my father, Subodh Kumar Sarkar. His unwavering belief in my abilities always inspires me even in his absence. I also dedicate this work to his genuine support and encouragement that continue to shape my path.

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Abstract

The study examines three museums located in Dhaka – the Bangladesh National Museum, the Liberation War Museum, and the Military Museum. In addition, it reveals how the spatial structure of these museums promote nationalism by showcasing specific items. Museums in Bangladesh have a great role to play in shaping ideologies through space, structure, and selective collection. Attractive representation of artifacts and historical evidence shape visitors' behavior. State funded museums like Bangladesh National Museum exhibits ancient art and historical objects proliferate cultural as well as national identity. The spatial environment of museums is crucial for promoting curated historical narrative over authentic context. Biased curatorial practices decide what to show or not, transforming the way objects are displayed in the museum galleries. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods for the analysis. Besides, it applies several theories that are aligned with ideological formation. For instance, Bangladeshi museums reinforce national identity formation through Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). They are the agents of ISA, persuading public attention through cultural practice. Ultimately, the study finds Lasswell's model of propaganda by analyzing the institutional role of museums, distributing nationalist ideology and influencing public opinion within the spatial structure. Furthermore, Hillier's space syntax is applicable for analyzing spatial structure of Bangladeshi museums for setting state-oriented narratives.

Keywords: Nationalism; Spatial structure; Artifacts; ISA; Propaganda model; Space syntax.

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Introduction

The idea of nationalism emphasises individuals' loyalty to the nation-state exceeds personal or group interests. This ideology is organized through the design, sequence, and pattern of the National Museum, Liberation War Museum, and Military Museum in Bangladesh. Their spatial structure works together as ideological framing to reproduce national identity. Bangladesh National Museum in Shahbagh, exemplifies this narrative by its architectural form. Its representation of selective history, arrangement of galleries, and spatial hierarchy express a nationalist approach. Similarly, Liberation War Museum exhibits the struggle and sacrifice behind the emergence of Bangladesh. Its new building in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka is designed deliberately to construct national identity by prioritizing the freedom fighters. In addition, the Military Museum preserves numerous weapons, tanks, and military vehicles as symbols of sovereignty. These items frame nationalism through the spatial hierarchy of military power in which historical artifacts transform into national pride. These institutions not only circulate history or knowledge but represent state-oriented nationalism. As a result, they provide nationalist aspect throughout their architectural forms. Observing these museums' architecture and exhibition design in Dhaka, the paper will discuss why visual representation of the artifacts promote "Bangladeshi" nationalism over "Bangalee" identity; based on secularism, how visitors become neither inherently passive observers nor active by exploring state oriented nationalism embedded in public education, and how museums in Bangladesh are not only physical structures but mechanisms of control that establish state promoted nationalism.

Literature Review: Bennett's study argues that museums serve cultural politics to shape collective perception of history and identity. According to his argument, museums act as tools of government power- shape human behavior and social norms just like Bangladeshi museums do.

His analysis discusses the museum's role in shaping public understanding hardly connected to nationalism (89). Although it is a representation set by the state or dominant group, Bennett's framework helps to explain the connection between museum collection and national identity formation. Lasswell's propaganda model shapes collective attitudes by manipulating significant symbols (Cardama and Borges 3). The exhibition of historical objects work as symbols in museums, and set pre-determined ideologies such as nationalism among the public. Lasswell's study on propaganda strategies during World War I incorporates collective response to emotional stimuli rather than rational argument (627). Apart from his case study, Bangladeshi museums reinforce national identity by their spatial control, especially galleries with an arranged nationalist narrative carry emotional weight, and so people respond to that instinctively. For example, the Bangladesh National Museum preserves colonial history and symbolizes imperial power by showcasing a large pot that was used for indigo dying process. This particular item serves as a tool of propaganda that signifies national approach against colonial rule. Besides, Damgacıoğlu argues how museums' white cube or the walls interpret Althusser's theory of ISA highlighting national pride over aesthetic illusion of the artworks (4). Her views on curatorial practice transform dominant ideology into neutrality, reinforcing museum space for distributing nationalist perspective. While white cubes disguise the power of curatorial choice, Bangladeshi museums and their spatial structure subtly promote nationalist narrative. Hence, museum space becomes a medium of ideological messaging. An Althusserian notion of Interpellation describes how certain institutions shape individual identity by "hailing" them (84-86). For instance, visitors are internalizing societal values like nationalism while observing heroic arts and war memorials in the Liberation War and the Military Museum. Interpellation works through positioning, movement, and arrangement of the objects within the museum space, aligning with

Althusser's view explains that ideology functions through material practice. According to Siddiqi, the Liberation War Museum in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar represents a visible description of history more openly than other museums in Bangladesh. Layered galleries encourage visitors to learn history through multiple interpretations. She argues that the architecture of this museum displays the heroic struggle of the freedom fighters during the liberation war (1971-1974). Museum configuration defines how museum space is designed to provide experience among visitors in terms of understanding the voice of architects and curators (Peponis 3). His book explains the aim and function of the museum design creating visitor attraction. Similarly, Bangladeshi museums function as cultural institutions that aim to communicate concepts between visitors and historical collections. Nationalism is the focal concept around the National, the Liberation War, and the Military Museum in Bangladesh. Benedict Anderson's concept "imagined community" works for the nation, while Bangladeshi museums function the ideological framing (5). For instance, a museum materializes the nation in space in which abstract ideas like nationalism become visible through the representation objects. Anderson's shared national imagination applies to the viewers while they meet the museum's spatial structure. Hiller's space syntax theory defines how space legitimizes several narratives. Syntactical language further promotes ideologies within specific places (8). His perception on spatial syntax is incorporated with Bangladeshi museum structure. A scholar, Kar illustrates the role of state-building and identity formation by examining galleries, curatorial narrative, and exhibition (1). Her view on national museums is directly connected to Bangladeshi museums and their ideological framing of nationalism. However, Kar's study hardly deals with the spatial structure, her discussion strategically defines meaning making policy through Bangladesh National Museum.

Methodology: This research was conducted through mixed methods while analyzing theoretical framework and interviews. Primary data sources consist of interviews with the curators and gallery assistants, communication through visitors, gathering information from museum collections, critical analysis of the historical documents, and artifacts. I have captured all the pictures throughout the museum visits that are attached to this paper. Secondary data sources include documentaries, scholarly research articles, and expert's commentary on exhibition. For a theoretical framework, Lasswell's communication model is highly applicable to museums that play an institutional role of communication. Although the theory was originally devised for mass media, it can easily be used as a lens to examine museum spaces. For instance, a state funded national museum works as (who) spreads nationalist narrative according to state ideology. Even exhibition style and spatial pattern promote state approved propaganda about nationalism, highlighting the message (what) likely the model does. The visitors (whom) play an interactive role over active or passive engagement by watching historical monuments in the museum spaces and gathering knowledge about nationalist sentiment. The spatial structure of the Liberation War and the Military Museum in Bangladesh reinforce certain narrative. The architecture, space, and design of these museums fit with the concept of channel (which) in the theory. In addition, these museums generalize state oriented nationalism (what effect) among visitors. Moreover, Bangladeshi museums reinforce national identity formation through Althusser's ISA. State funded museums like the National Museum in Bangladesh exhibit the culture and heritage of ancient Bengal and proliferate national identity. Its role as an agent of ISA, persuading public attention through cultural practice. Although the research is conducted through theories, it does rely on interviews for collecting statistical data to support the quantitate method. Interviewing gallery assistants of Liberation War Museum, reveals how authority controls the exhibition of

selective historical artifacts. Again, curators take responsibility for spatial hierarchy in order to promote nationalism.

Research Gap: There is a lack of systematic analysis on spatial structure of Bangladeshi museums including architectural symbolism, arrangement of galleries, zoning, visitors' movement and so on. Most of the articles mentions ideological framing to avoid how visitors experience through museum space. The embodied experience of visitors as an active mechanism through nationalism is produced and internalized remains unexplored. Limited comprehensive study on Bangladesh Military Museum, leaving question about how museum space functions state promoted narratives. In addition, lack of inquiry into how spatial structure of the Bangladesh National Museum reinforced identity formation. Overall, comparative study on different architecture of Bangladeshi museums are limited in several articles.

Research Question: Multiple questions arise throughout this study. Such as:

- 1) In what way does the National Museum, Liberation War Museum, and Military Museum and their spaces help to distribute state oriented nationalism?
- 2) How does spatial design reinforce selective memory over historical narratives?
- 3) In what way does spatial narrative vary from different museums in Bangladesh in providing ideology?
- 4) What does museum architecture including gallery design play in legitimizing national identity?
- 5) Does museum space serve as an ISA agent for legitimizing state narrative?
- 6) How do these museum spaces align with Lasswell's propaganda theory in shaping collective attitude towards nationhood?

An Introduction to the Spatial Structure of the Three Museums

Bangladeshi museums and their spatial structure play pivotal roles in spreading nationalism.

Although they have architectural differences, all promote national ideology. A debate goes on whether they provide “Bangladeshi” nationalism or “Bangalee”. The answer is visible in museum spaces. The arrangement of galleries often discusses state oriented nationalism.

Bangladeshi museums are always associated with state promoted ideologies and are politically influenced. Yet their central focus is on “Bangladeshi” nationalism which the nation considers as a whole. In contrast, the National Museum provides cultural as well as national aspects. The Liberation War Museum is based on liberation history. The Military Museum highlights national defense forces. Overall, they provide a common narrative- national identity formation through their spatial structure. Museum space is not neutral yet ideological because its architecture produces meaning. As a result, museum design spreads state oriented narratives and guides visitors.

The most significant role of the National Museum is to introduce the culture, heritage, and tradition of a country. Bangladesh National Museum established in 1913, is located in Shahbagh, Dhaka. The museum buildings have specialized curatorial departments such as; history, anthropology, and decorative arts. In 2017, the museum collaborated with Korea for a project. It is based on preserving cultural heritage with advanced technology. A memorial plaque is situated inside the museum garden, showing cultural cooperation between Bangladesh and South Korea. The museum's surroundings are carefully landscaped with plants, trees, and green lawns.

The Bangladesh National Museum reflects the evolution of identity formation. Museum space along with galleries are organized in a chronological order. To begin with, the museum contains the main entrance and ticketing area. Then open spaces and gardens are decorated with old

cannons. Historical weapons are displayed near the entrance. A room designated for bags and luggage, is located near the ticket counter. The museum has multiple floors and thematic galleries. It has 44 galleries. The ground floor functions as an introductory zone containing orientation spaces for visitors. A cafeteria beside the souvenir shop enhances the visitor experience.

The 1st floor represents ancient Bengal, ethnography, natural history, archaeology. This floor displays the prehistoric period of Bengal. It highlights Hindu and Buddhist sculptures, manuscripts, and historical places in Bangladesh. The 1st gallery begins with a map of Bangladesh. It introduces visitors to the nation's territory. The natural history gallery is located on the 1st floor. This represents Bangladesh's mangrove forest Sundarbans and Royal Bengal Tiger. A whale skeleton attracts the children in the aquatic exhibition. Rural boats are displayed on this floor. The presence of rivers and water is central to understanding the Bengal Delta. The geographic features of Bangladesh educate visitors about national identity. Furthermore, ancient civilization in Bengal represents the architectural foundation of the nation. The chronological placement of history describes present day Bangladesh. The 2nd floor consists of liberation war galleries. This floor illustrates nationalism. By displaying the heroic struggle of freedom fighters, the museum strengthens nationalist ideology. The spatial design of these galleries commemorate the national heroes. Some galleries highlight language movement, a symbol of Bengali nationalism. Others display guerrilla warfare materials, weapons, personal belongings of the freedom fighters, and historical documents. A few galleries portray political leaders. Several monuments are displayed in the liberation war galleries, including the sculptures of "7 Bir Sreshtho".

The 3rd floor encourages visitors to perceive international culture and world civilization. The main purpose of showcasing international culture is defining Bangladesh globally. This may form nationalist sentiment among the visitors. Global art and culture construct modern artistic identity. The significance of international galleries often relates with cultural diffusion. These galleries are newly inaugurated. Yet they display vast cultural and literal objects within the space. The floor allocates separate space for global civilizations including Chinese, Korean, Iranian, and Swiss. Each gallery showcases distinct culture, heritage, and literature. Portraits of international artists and poets signify cultural identity. Such as; Rumi, a Persian poet, became significant in Iranian civilization. Nevertheless, contemporary Bangladeshi artists and their paintings exhibit in some galleries. Therefore, Bangladeshi artworks establish national identity and cultural pride.

A library is located on the 4th floor. The museum building allows students and researchers to connect with museum publication. However, visitors have to take permission from the authority to enter. The library is enriched with scholarly articles, books, and journals. The museum showcases current affairs, posters, and newspapers in the library. This place provides adequate knowledge regarding history, anthropology, science, and geography.

Liberation War Museum established in 1996 for celebrating the heroic struggle of martyrs during the nine-month long war. It commemorates the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, sharing the memory and sacrifice of the freedom fighter. Despite the beauty of its old location in Segunbagicha, the new building develops modern facilities for archiving and displaying within its permanent space. “In 2017, a permanent museum complex was inaugurated in Agargaon”, said Mofidul Hoque, the founder trustee of the Liberation War Museum. His view on museum architecture is captivating visitor’s interest while looking at the entrance, preferring a large floor

space with auditorium, seminar hall, library, and theater hall. It is designed by the architects Tanzim Hassan Selim and Naheed Farzana, featuring bullet-marked walls whose exterior symbolizes war ravages and trauma. In addition, vertical column elements come out from the building, reflecting the triumph of victory during the uprising. Eternal flame surrounded by water inside the museum represents the undying spirit of the martyrs. Above a stone inscription written never to forget the memories of the martyrs. Ultimately, the outer complex has a distinct view on witnessing unwavering struggle during independence. There are some smooth sliding paths reaching the galleries directly. Thus, visitors hardly climb stairs to enter the galleries. Minimal staircases add a variation to its architecture, following a balanced interior overall. The library besides the cafeteria looks beautiful due to its transparent background.

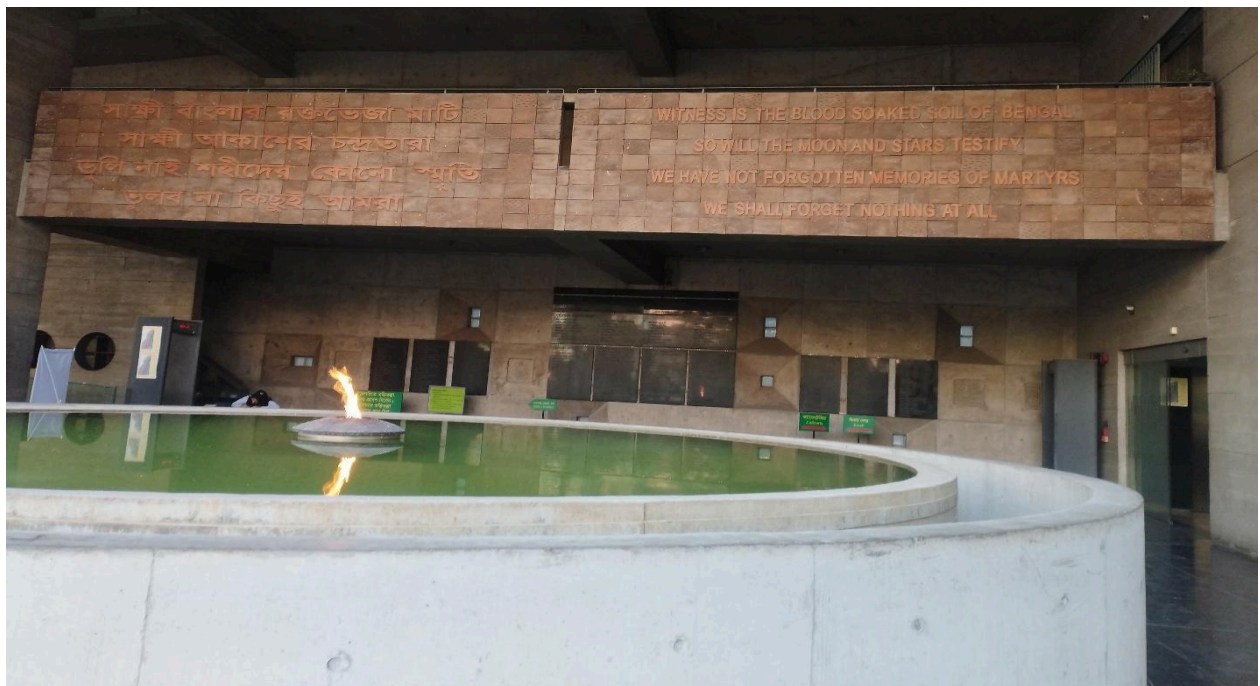


Figure 1: Eternal flame inside the Liberation War Museum

Four galleries in total are placed in level 3 and 4. Alternative staircases are available beside the elevator. According to the curator, approximately 2100 items are displayed in the galleries.

Gallery 1 focuses on historical context and origins of national identity. It describes the ancient era to the British colonial period gradually, following social and cultural movements before the emergence of Bangladesh. Gallery 2 illustrates mass resistance during Pakistani rule. Multiple documents showing political mobilization including language movement, leading up to nationalism. The gallery traces political marginalization, structural injustice, and collective struggle that intensified the liberation war. The 3rd gallery explores refugee crisis, genocide, and the trauma of women. It represents photographs and audio-visual projection to recreate the refugee camps. The sensory engagement produces emotional attachment to the stories of refugees in India. The museum preserves the memory of a brutal crackdown led by the Pakistani army on 25th March, 1971. The gallery shows the brutal violence against women including rape, murder, and physical torture in the Pakistani military camps. Several pictures and drawings of women as victims, leaving visitors with the view of sacrifice for national struggle. The 4th gallery focuses on victory and international involvement during independence. As a consequence, it encourages the reflection of empathy. Despite its sole context of independence, each gallery sets foundational steps such as displaying immense struggle and sacrifice towards freedom.



Figure 2: Portrayal of Victims during Liberation War of Bangladesh



Figure 3: Illustration of Refugees in India

The complex of the Military Museum in Bijoy Sarani, allowing visitors to see the military equipment, exhibition hall, and landscape plazas. Apart from traditional museum design, it has advanced engineering techniques to support heavy installation within large exhibition spaces. The museum building employs steel frameworks for durability and adaptability. Besides, the museum entrance is dramatic with the escalators. It highlights Bangladesh's military history and the contribution to the nation's heritage. The museum develops multimedia displays to provide educational insight into Army, Navy, Air force, and other military engagement. The combination of historical artefacts, extraordinary exhibition design, and interactive experiences give narratives towards visitors.

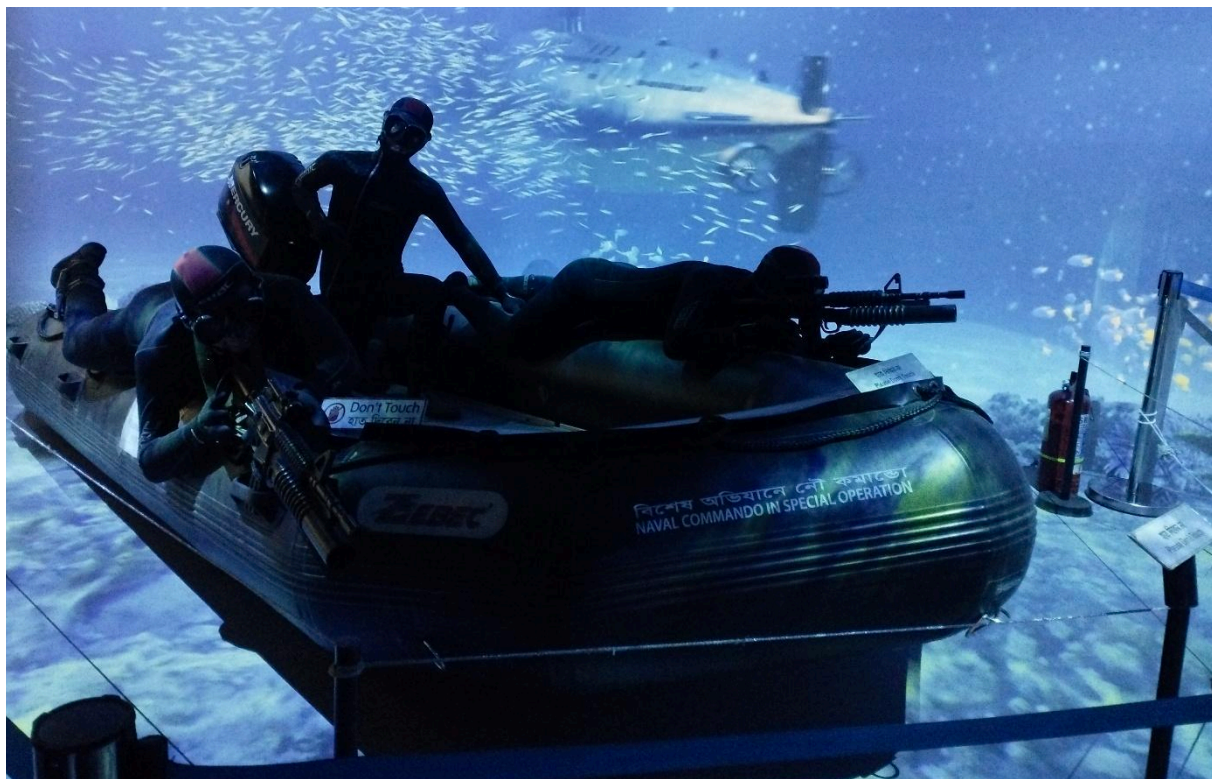


Figure 4: Holographic Image of Navy Gallery

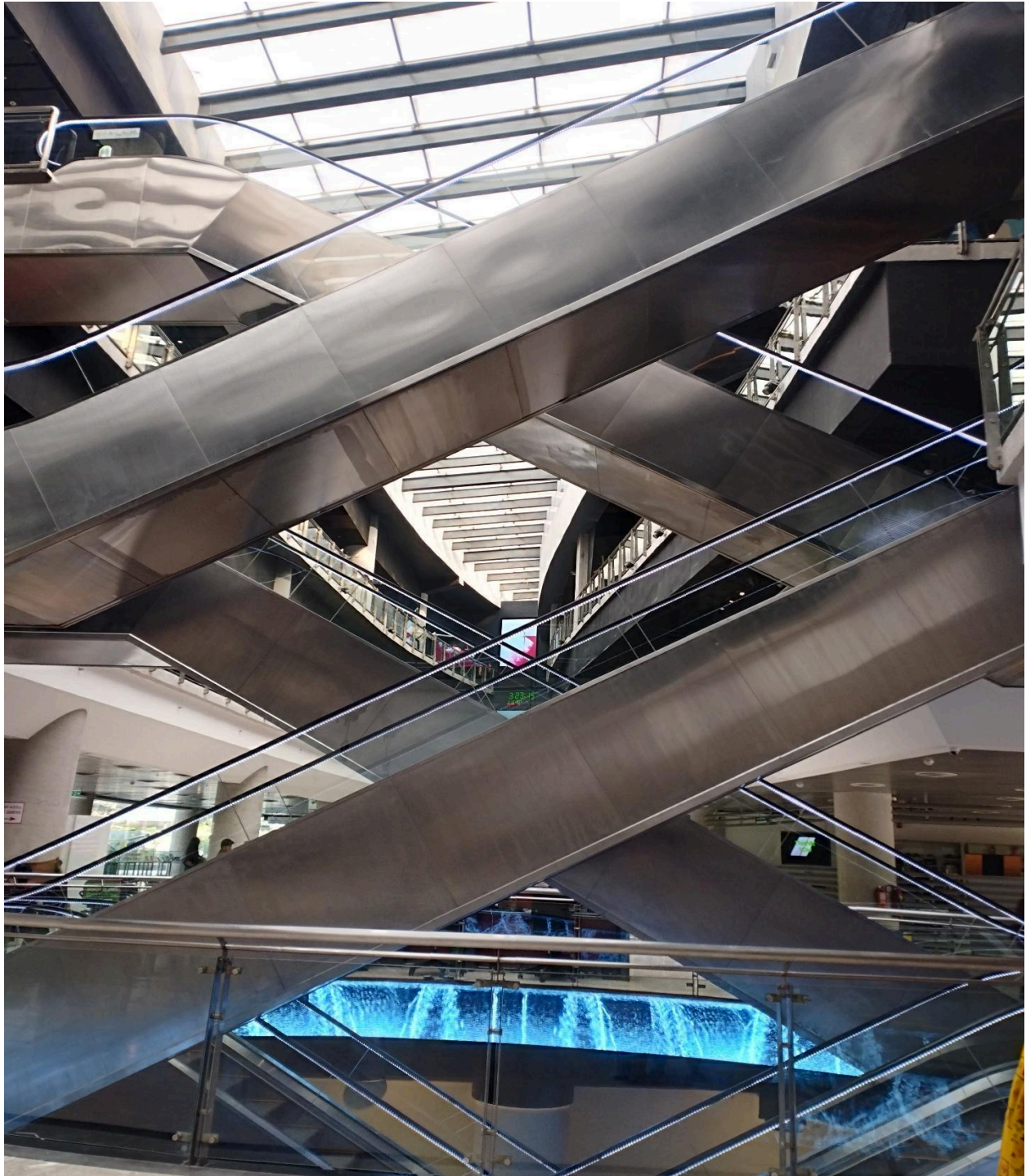


Figure 5: Dynamic Escalators in Military Museum

The museum galleries display artifacts along with advanced technologies and immersive design.

The first one is known as the Army gallery, displaying the army's role from liberation war to

present day mission. Nevertheless, kid zones and interactive space are located on the first floor. The Navy gallery is located in the basement, providing simulators, holographic images, and models. It showcases the evolution of the Bangladesh Navy through 3D displays. Air Force gallery provides mini holographic theatre with flight simulator and VR experiences. Overall, these galleries have modern illustrations of aviation, military, and naval power that signify Bangladesh's role in national defense.



Figure 6: Bridge Simulator in Military Museum

Chapter 1: Spatial Arrangement of Bangladeshi Museums and Its Role in Nationalism

The spatial arrangement of Bangladeshi museums are central to how nationalism is established, promoted, and internalized. Several museums in Bangladesh such as Bangladesh National Museum, Liberation War Museum, and Bangladesh Military Museum use space carefully to produce a coherent narrative of the nation. Above museums follow a sequential layout, guiding visitors from the history of independence to the emergence of a sovereign nation. Their spatial storytelling reinforces nationalism through artifacts, architecture, and the arrangements of historical documents. Despite their different categories, each museum represents the national aspect of Bangladesh while highlighting the war of independence in 1971. Moreover, museum space elevates the state oriented nationalism with unique arrangement of collections. According to Peponis's study, "What makes museums particularly interesting is the fact that the spatial structure of the environment is as much a product of intentional design as the displays and their arrangement" (6-7). For Bangladeshi museums selective artifacts are placed intentionally that align with the national interest.

1.1 Examining Chronological Placement of Artifacts:

Historical context follows chronological order from past to present events while displaying in the museum galleries. Curators maintain the flow of historical documents as they give continuity without disconnecting the visitors from a particular issue. This actually guides them to move forward step-by-step, ensuring they interpret all events that are mentioned. Often they explore selective history gradually instead of being critical at all. This leads to the curatorial choice providing specific knowledge which museum authority decides. Such as, the National Museum exhibits colonial history just because it wants to signify collective strength against oppression and so merges with nationalism. Neither this museum focuses upon a particular religious culture

nor glorifies one ethnic group which brings unity during the emergence of Bangladesh. From ancient civilization to post-liberation war era defining the glorious tradition developing identity formation.

The National Museum uses curatorial strategy to organize valuable items- not neutrally but ideologically. It begins with prehistoric life, geographical map, and the natural environment of ancient Bengal. Then moves into archaeological artifacts of ancient and medieval Bengal. It further showcases colonial culture and nationalist movements in the Indian subcontinent. Overall, this creates a timeline experience for the visitors where each single gallery displays the history of Bangladesh. The first floor represents early history including the natural environment, early human life, and pre-colonial Bengal. The second floor identifies the history of the liberation war of Bangladesh. It is based on national struggle and political history during the war of independence in 1971. The third floor is designed for global context. It displays numerous civilizations such as; Iranian, Chinese, and Korean into international galleries. Furthermore, it shows Bangladesh in a global and contemporary timeline.

Liberation War museum in Dhaka organizes its artifacts in strict chronological sequences. It begins with the partition of 1947 and its impact on East Bengal's politics. Highlighting language movement (1952) as a part of Bengali nationalism- refers to the distinct identity of Bengali people through language, culture, and tradition. This movement showcases as a response to cultural, linguistic, political marginalization during 1948-1971. Aftermath, Bangladeshi nationalism becomes prominent in the constitutional amendment. The museum describes the six point movement (1966), mass uprising (1969), and the general election (1970) through nationalist lens. In addition, the brutality of genocide and crackdown (Operation Searchlight) represents a backlash against Pakistani Army. The chronological arrangement of artifacts

consolidate national interest. This arrangement reinforces Bangladesh is an independent nation by reflecting the historical weight of the documents and artifacts.

The Bangladesh Military Museum arranges its collections in a chronological order. The structure of galleries allow visitors to trace the evolution of military history of Bangladesh. The museum organizes artifacts from ancient to modern times. Initially, it displayed freedom fighters' arms and their weapons such as; rifles and grenades during the liberation war. The army gallery emphasizes the Mukti Bahini's heroic contribution to the war. The Navy gallery highlights maritime defense evolution by displaying ancient warships alongside modern naval vessels. In the air force gallery aircrafts, air defense systems, and fighter jets are displayed. From older models to advanced aircrafts showcase the timeline. This museum showcases contemporary remarks through the UN peacekeeping gallery. It represents Bangladesh's role in international peacekeeping missions. Especially, Bangladesh army provides the bulk of personnel in order to support humanitarian aid and protect civilians. The gallery mentions the historical timeline of Bangladesh army in peacekeeping with its current role and contribution. As a result, chronological order displays the unwavering image of Bangladesh's military forces on the national and global level.

The chronological placement of artifacts in Bangladeshi museums can apply the theoretical framework of Lasswell's propaganda model. The model explains 5 W. Though it refers to media and communication study, Bangladeshi museums are a part of national and cultural subjects. Lasswell's model questions: Who says what, through which channel, to whom, and with what effect? (Cardama and Borges 1-2). While applying the theory into museum space, it discovers that chronological arrangements are not neutral. The chronological method of displaying objects

operates as a structured communicative strategy. This shapes visitors' behavior while understanding national history and collective memory.

In the context of Bangladeshi museums, the propagandist “who” refers to museum authorities, administrators, and curators, and fund donors, determining the selection of artifacts. They act as directors of historical narratives. They often decide which objects, documents, and memories should be emphasized or removed. The Lasswell's model “says what” component refers to the message or propaganda. It is embedded within Bangladeshi museums' chronological arrangement of artifacts. By arranging exhibitions in a sequential order such as: National Museum places artifacts from ancient civilizations to modern day Bangladesh. Again, ancient to colonial periods. Moving from liberation war to contemporary nationhood, the National Museum constructs a coherent historical narrative. The chronological sequence often emphasizes process, evolution, struggle, and national achievement.

The other component “channel” in this context is the spatial pattern. It means the spatial arrangement of galleries and exhibitions. Chronological placement works as a method of communication. It helps visitors to move from past to present through following the timeline. Instead of focusing on textual references alone, visitors experience visual movement of artifacts. Museums' spatial designs transform history into a lived experience. The visual representation alters visitors to encounter selected objects from the sequence. This visual movement provides nationalism. The curated interpretation of nation, moreover, reinforces particular meanings connected to historical events.

The “to whom” element indicates museum audiences or visitors. They are citizens, students, teachers, children, and tourists. Visitors are the receivers of the curated narrative or propaganda. They interact with artifacts through the chronological placement. They follow the predetermined

path towards exhibition. However, they are not blind followers. When visitors move from one to another, understand the chronology. The museums foster visitors' understanding of history, culture, and nationhood.

Finally, the “with what effect” relates to the ideological framework. The chronological arrangements produce messages regarding national interest. It creates deep emotional attachment to the nation. By showcasing historical events, it imposes state promoted narratives. Visitors accept the ideology consciously as a unified national identity. It boosts citizens' loyalty and national pride. From Anderson's view nationalism is a sense of shared identity. Bangladeshi museums legitimize the concept through promoting national pride. Thus, Lasswell's model is applicable to the chronological placement. In Bangladesh, the museum's exhibit curated artifacts to generalize certain narratives. Visitors are often influenced by perceptions and contribute themselves to nation building.

Therefore, the chronological placement of artifacts is not simply structured. It follows a practical method of exhibition design. Furthermore, the arrangements serve through communicative strategy. It promotes state oriented ideologies. As a result, the mechanism behind the arrangements transmit selected narratives successfully and shape collective identity.

Chronological placement is crucial because it constructs a storyline. For example, the Bangladeshi National Museum links the ancient period to the emergence of Bangladesh. Each gallery develops the story till the independence of Bangladesh. Both the Military and Liberation War Museum follow spatial chronology for framing Bangladesh as an inevitable nation-state.

1.2 Analyzing Selective Objects in Museum Structure:

Museum authority and curators display selective items for specific reasons. Such as; they want to highlight Bangladeshi nationalism through the making of constitution in the post liberation era in Liberation War Museum. Curators decide what to exhibit in the museum galleries perhaps visitors do not notice carefully. Curatorial practice determines which narratives are emphasized or marginalized. Visitors hardly pay attention on the curated history while looking at the selective objects. For instance, the Bangladesh Military Museum portrays a military tent as a temporary home for soldiers in harsh environments.



Figure 7: Military Museum portrays a military tent

This particular object shows the adaptability and mobility of the Bangladesh army. Moreover, it celebrates the strongest survival mindset of the commanders during military campaigns. Eventually, museum authority follows a strategic way of displaying selective objects to set narratives.

Peponis's work emphasizes museum design and spatial syntaxes. His theory of museum configuration explains how spatial design communicates and creates meaning. According to him, objects are not isolated entities yet associated with museums' spatial systems. The artifacts organize knowledge. Visitors' movement and interaction further reshape the meaning. The relationship between visitors and artifacts strengthens the museum communication. His perspective on the spatial environment fosters chronological order (23-27). Bangladeshi museums maintain a sequence by placing objects, creating meaning through categorization and arrangements. The placement of artifacts within galleries builds cognitive relationships. Through this, visitors perceive historical, cultural, and national narratives. In this framework, objects are shifted from ordinary textual items into lively objects. In addition, they carry the curatorial ideology of museums. Their meanings are incorporated with museum space.

Curatorial positioning and spatial pattern of Bangladesh National Museum demonstrate how artifacts provide knowledge. For example, Shital Pati, a significant object, is displayed in the museum gallery. This item is not only a symbol of cultural heritage but a piece of traditional handicrafts. The other gallery represents rural Bangladesh through several household items made of bamboo. Their placement within specific galleries highlighting folk culture and heritage. They create a broader narrative of Bangladeshi identity behind indigenous craftsmanship. Through spatial selection, these objects become symbolic exhibitions of Bangladeshi culture rather than their domestic usage.

Similarly, the Liberation War Museum exhibits objects such as; photographs, torture cell, and historical documents. The main purpose of showcasing these is to gain meaning from chronological and thematic placement. Peponis argues that museum space guides visitors while they observe the sequence of objects. The Liberation War Museum applies the same tactic. The

authority's core principle is arranging artifacts to create an essential narrative. Such artifacts symbolize struggle, resistance, and independence. The spatial arrangements of objects encourage visitors to connect emotionally and intellectually with the nationalist perspective. Overall, the liberation history of Bangladesh, constructing a shared memory, and reinforcing national consciousness.

Likewise, the Bangladesh Military Museum displays the significance of the national defense force. The museum complex illustrates Peponis's argument that spatial structures shape narratives. By displaying guns, uniforms, and military objects within a structured sequence produces a nationalist narrative. These items highlight military achievement in national and international level. The organization often attracts children by showing new technologies. The interior of the museum building often distracts visitors yet encourages visual learning. The selective exhibitions are not isolated historical items but essential elements. Thus, they promote patriotism and national identity formation.

Therefore, Peponis's theory of museum configuration can be applied to Bangladeshi museums. For example, museums demonstrate selected objects, derive meaning. Visitors also become a part of the meaning making process. Institutional arrangement and spatial pattern of the artifacts signify narratives. The artifacts of Bangladeshi museums represent both historical and cultural as well as national aspects.

Selected items convey institutional purpose and vision are quite visible in Bangladeshi museums. Bangladesh's National Museum has an international gallery displays the cultural history of China, Korea, Iran, and Switzerland. It provides selected items regarding foreign literature and culture. Such as; Persian poet Rumi's literary works are significant. The gallery encourages visitors to understand the foreign tradition, values, arts, and social norms. By studying other

culture, one can develop own national identity. The process of developing nationalism is dialectical where people are going to strengthen national identity rather than reject external influences. Besides, the Liberation War museum shows some international magazine covers including photographs of the war victims. Moreover, a set of covers from publications- national geographic, time, and the Economist highlights the human suffering and global attention during 1971 liberation war. Most of them reflects the vulnerability of women and children. On the other hand, visitors explore intense grief, trauma, and resilience from the particular collection. It serves intense visual narrative exposing atrocities and genocide in East Pakistan during 1971.

Hence, chronological order and selected collections expose the agenda of museum authority. Very few enhance the national interest through selective history. Others provide chronological sequence of a topic and represent that from selected items. Overall, curators promote nationalism in the spatial arrangements either they reveal or hide while designing. If visitors look carefully, they will understand the narrative behind spatial arrangement of Bangladeshi museums.



Figure 8: Bangladesh National Museum at Shahbagh, Dhaka.

Chapter 2: Analyzing Nationalism in Bangladeshi Museums and Visitors' Insight into Curatorial Practices

Visitors' role is pivotal in terms of understanding museology and curatorial practice. They are not silent or fully active in exploring the spatial structure of the museum. Visitors are neither active completely nor passive inherently. To clarify, they bring their own prior knowledge to interpret artifacts. They decide which exhibit to focus on, whether to listen to the guide or not, how to observe, and read the level of the collections. In contrast, typical visitors hardly interact with the exhibition. Limited interaction makes them quiet observers who are apart from hand-on experiences. According to Bennett, museums create a space where people can engage or interpret

despite their engagement being monitored by the museums' authority and power (94). His theory confirms why museum visitors cannot be categorized as fully active or passive. The reasons are- museums guide their movements, mood of observing, and so on. Therefore, curators restrict interpretive freedom.

In contrast, museum audiences apply their instinct, cultural influence, and personal response within a controlled environment. Even visitors participate in meaning making, they occupy an interactive role. While standing within boundaries established by the museum, they internalize narratives through personal and social perspectives. Bennett's concept of "exhibitionary complex" proves why visitors are neither passive recipients nor active. He argues that museums do not only display objects but organize people. That means, "show and tell" (75). Museum galleries and exhibitions make power visible rather hidden and so the public can recognize that through analysis. Its spatial structure educates people into shared values like nationalism. The Bangladesh Liberation War Museum exemplifies how its galleries are not providing history but promoting nationalism among the visitors. State funded Bangladesh National Museum directs visitors toward a certain ideological interpretation which is aligned with nationalism. Thus, visitors construct meaning within the museum's ideological framework.

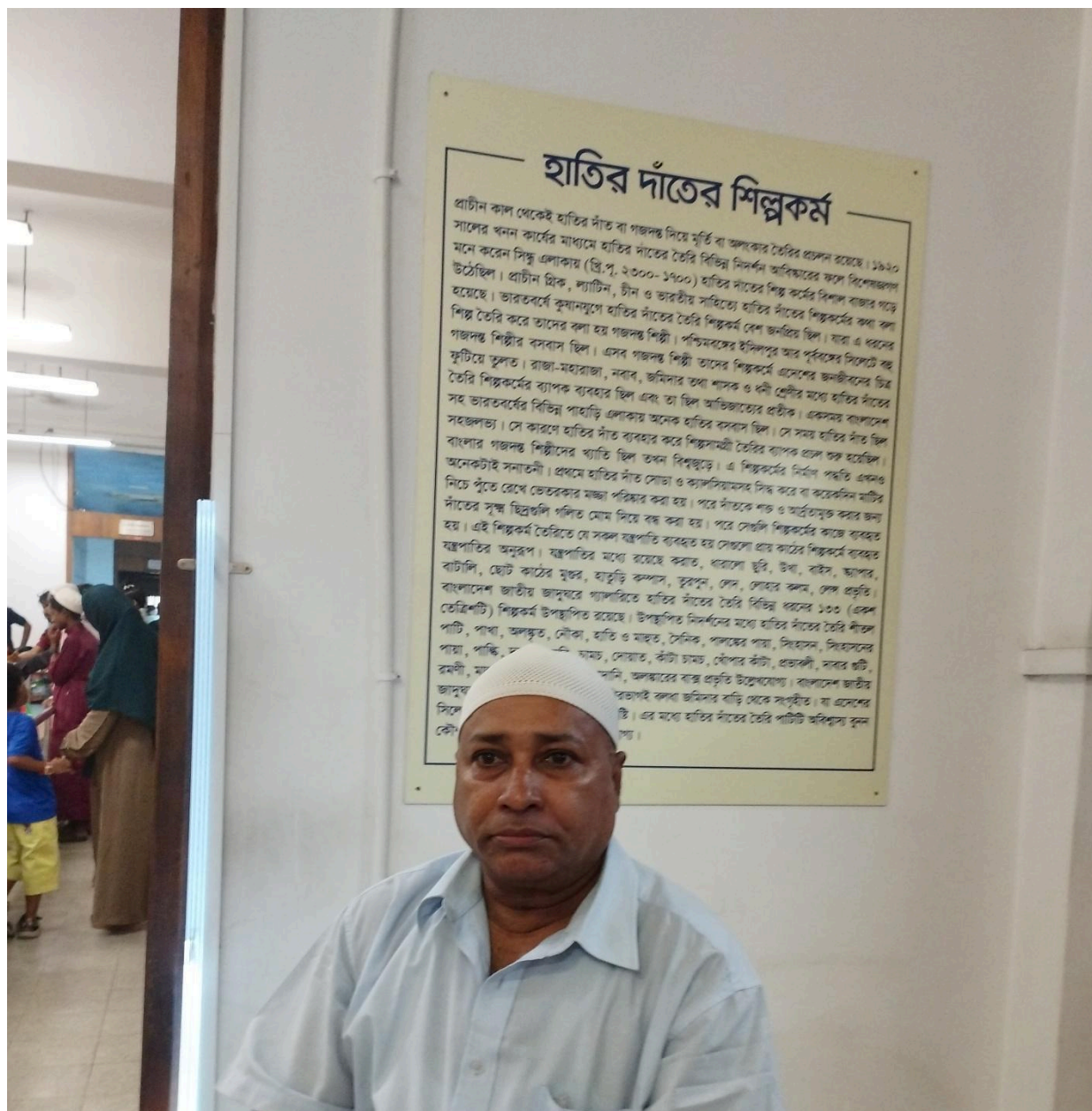


Figure 9: Anar Mia is a gallery assistant of Hatir Dater Silpokormo gallery in the Bangladesh National Museum

2.1 Interview Conducted at National Museum:

A senior curator named Anar Mia, talked about some important galleries in the museum. He mentioned, “The museum has 44 galleries”. He has 30 year of experience in maintaining gallery. Furthermore, he spoke how visitors generally take a glance on the collection without reading the

level. For example, he showed “Hatir Dater Shital Pati” (a cool mat made of elephant tusk) and its description. He said, “People do not understand the significance of the mat that represents Bangladesh’s cultural aesthetic”. He added, “Researchers definitely pay attention on the collections”. According to him, experts including senior members are in charge of maintaining important galleries and exhibitions. He ensured, “Museum authority cannot take risk because there are some valuable items to be protected”.

A housewife, Trisha said, “The National Museum has multiple galleries that attract the children”. She saw that the museum portrayed the simplicity of rural life. She noticed villagers used some household products made of bamboo and wood instead of plastic. She said, “I will let my kids know more about rural Bangladesh”. She thought her kids would explore the culture and lifestyle of rural people in the museum.

Anima, an elderly woman of fifty, appreciated the exhibition of jute products. In her opinion, “Bangladeshi people should be proud of eco-friendly jute products”. According to her, the exhibition representing pater sika (jute plant rope hanger) and jute bag are a part of Bangladeshi tradition. She said, “The museum exhibits Bangladeshi culture and tradition”.

2.2 Interview at the Liberation War Museum:

Tanzina, a university student revealed, “The Museum has two different schedules - one is winter when visitors appear most”. In her view, students visited the place every year through study tours.

Tuli, a student of 6th standard said, “I have watched a documentary on liberation war”. She added, “I have participated in the quiz round”. From her perspective, the museum authority arranges several educational programs including quiz competition based on the documentary and prize giving ceremony.

Azad said, “As a researcher I am taking notes from the galleries about India-Pakistan relationship after 1947 partition”. According to her, “Museum displays vast information regarding pre-liberation war period”.

A college going student, Hassan said, “The museum has replaced Bangabandhu’s statue with the national flag”. She visited the place twice and assured, “It seems someone has changed the position of several artifacts”.

2.3 Interview at the Military Museum:

Ratul, a student from 9th standard said, “The museum design is lookalike Novotheatre”. He captured some pictures of the exhibition. While visiting the air force gallery, he noticed the FT-6 engine model of a fighter jet. From his view, “The model seems practical”.

Puja, a medical student claimed that “A Cineplex in a museum looks interesting”. According to her, “Star Cineplex is the central attraction of the Military Museum”. She agreed that the museum complex supported visitors’ interaction through this.

Mrs. Labony, a housewife, carried her little daughter in the Navy gallery by saying, “My daughter is enjoying the view of the artificial aquarium”. “The gallery looks impressive and colorful”, she added.

The main purpose of interviewing visitors and curators is to collect data. It is conducted through in-person meetings. The interview is a method of understanding visitors’ behavior within the museum space. Their approach to exhibition is completely active or passive and their interactions are balanced. Most of the time, they confront state oriented ideology because Bangladeshi museums work as the agents of Althusser’s ISA. It reveals how visitors adopt spatial narrative. Therefore, museum exhibitions succeed in engaging audiences. The interview part provides

different opinions from the older generation to younger. It finds out how different social groups interact with the nationalist narratives within the spatial structure. In the end, interviews provide insights into how Bangladeshi museums contribute to national identity formation.

2.4 The Role of Souvenir Shops in Building Interaction:

Souvenir and gift shops allow visitors to purchase objects. The shop is designed to transform historical memory into products that visitors can own. Initially, it extends the visitors' experience beyond the museum galleries and exhibitions. Souvenirs reinforce visitors' experience by allowing them to take a piece of museum home. Apart from its financial role, educational objects like books are available. Moreover, replicas along with themed items attract the teenagers. Some museum shops sell handicrafts for supporting local artisans and promoting sustainable practices. Though some artworks are expensive, visitors prefer aesthetic objects over money. However, some affordable products are accessible that enhance visitors' interaction.

The National Museum opens a small souvenir facility where visitors find books, traditional crafts, postcards, patriotic merchandise, and so on. The shop is located on the ground floor and is easy to find. The gift section has printed materials, handicrafts, and several products that are inspired by folk heritage. These items highlight Bangladesh's cultural identity and nationalist aspect. Through ethnography, the souvenir shop reflects both Bengali ethnicity and Bangladeshi nationalism. Because it is a combination of folk arts and liberation history. Besides, when consumers buy local goods they support the domestic industry. Those tangible items symbolize Bangladesh's heritage. While visitors are consuming, they deliver patriotism regardless of personal bias. That leads to national identity formation over external influence. Eventually, all sorts of local products represent national pride.

The Liberation War Museum has a souvenir shop that looks like a library. It is located beside the cafeteria. It is decorated with books, posters, photographs, academic publications, and magazines related to the independence movement. The shop encourages public participation in exploring historical contents. This souvenir culture is deeply rooted to Bangladeshi nationalism in which visitors connect to the history of liberation. On the other hand, museums sell merchandise such as; t-shirts and coffee mugs are commercial products that enhance profit. This strengthens the museum's brand identity, fosters marketing agenda, and boosts financial stability. Over commercialization can dilute historical significance yet Liberation War Museum maintains balance. As a result, souvenirs are not only commodities but carriers of a nation's history that extend the museum's mission in everyday life.

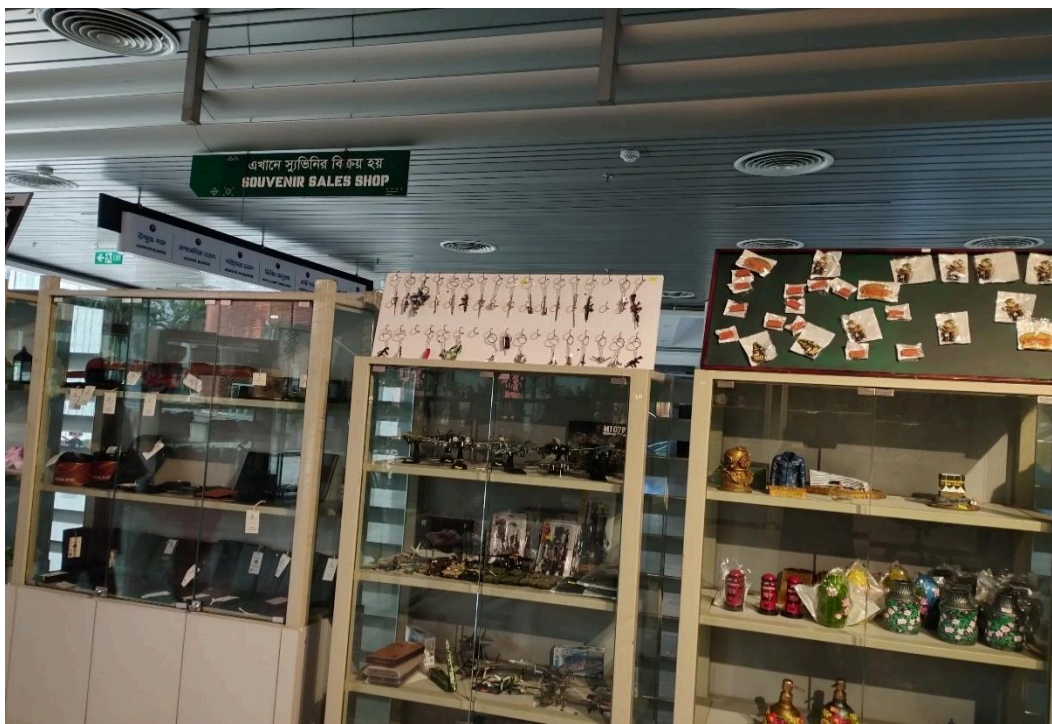


Figure 10: A Souvenir Shop in the Military Museum

The souvenir shop of the Military Museum is very unique in a sense that develops commercial space within the structure. It is a combination of book and gift shop. It consists of models,

mementos, military-themed merchandise, books on armed force history, and showpieces. Visitors can own as well as bring miniature flags, tanks, and medals to their home as fragments of military heritage. They carry those souvenirs by keeping them alive in everyday spaces. While wearing or showcasing the items, visitors express solidarity with the armed force and national pride. In conclusion, visitors' interaction with the souvenir shop transforms personal experience into collective memory.

Chapter 3: The Role of Bangladeshi Museums in National Identity Formation

The citizens of Bangladesh known as “Bangladeshis” refers to national identity. Despite cultural or religious beliefs, citizens prefer national identity that proves their loyalty. The Constitution of Bangladesh declares, “The citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshis” under Article 6(2). It means all individuals within the nation’s territory, regardless of indigenous status, are “Bangladeshis”. Yet Bengali identity is different. It primarily centered on Bengali language, culture, festival, history, and ethnicity. It is more regional rather than national.

More than a half century has passed Bangladesh becomes an independent nation but Bengali identity is still reshaping. For example, museums set narratives about national identity formation either Bengali or Bangladeshi. However, Bangladeshi nationalism is centered. Museums display a sovereign image of the nation in most of their exhibitions. Sometimes, they showcase 19th century’s partition history and liberation as well to legitimize nationalism. Historical documents ensure Bangla language became a part of movement in 1952, transforming linguistic identity into Bengali nationalism. The protest symbolized a political resistance after a few years of partition. Bengali identity was prominent when the central government of Pakistan imposed Urdu as national language during the pre-liberation period. Almost two decades later, this sentiment established national interest in the creation of Bangladesh.

During the post-liberation period, multiple political parties came into power with different ideologies. The former ruling party Awami League derived from the liberation struggle associated with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and established its political legitimacy. During its long period of rule, the party frequently framed narratives around historical memory of 1971. In 1972 the constitution was formed. It tied national identity with the ethno-cultural heritage of Bengalis and defined them as “Bangalees”. The Fifth Amendment took place in 1979 during BNP’s

(Bangladesh Nationalist Party) regime. Ziaur Rahman's government introduced the amendment by replacing "Bangalee" with "Bangladeshi". The party emphasized territorial sovereignty and citizenship over linguistic ethnicity. This action differentiated Bangladesh from West Bengal. Even the Bangla language remains a powerful cultural and regional identity in India's eastern state of West Bengal. Again, Awami League formed a government and introduced the 15th amendment in 2011. It reaffirmed nationalism yet highlighted the "Bangalee" identity in Article 9. Besides, two different political ideologies nation is the first priority for citizens.

Benedict Anderson's concept of "Imagined Communities" refers to the rise of nationalism. In his view, nations are socially constructed communities where people consider themselves as part of a group without knowing each other. Yet the community share a sense of belonging or solidarity towards their nation (Anderson 5-6). Anderson's theory is applicable in museum space for establishing nationalism. While visitors encounter objects as a part of shared heritage, they perceive collective identity. Bangladeshi museums encourage visitors to interact with the curated objects. They display nation's past and present make visitors imagine themselves as a part of national territory. They observe the history of liberation and so reinforce the idea of belonging to a larger community. Nevertheless, the spatial structure of museum promote collective memory. Visitors encounter pre-existing symbols such as; language, tradition, and culture of nationalism. Selected history leads the movement of visitors towards ideological formation. Bangladeshi museums emphasize certain struggle, achievement, and construct national identity. Such as: colonial history exhibits frequently that highlights national movement. According to Anderson, colonial archaeology becomes powerful exhibition in the Southeast Asian museums. In his view, museums are highly political that represent colonialism legitimize domination. However, in the nationalist context visitors experience a shared narrative of identity which makes their homeland

superior (178-180). The spatial structure of the museum transforms the theory of nationalism into practice and visitors involved in the process. Within museum space Anderson's concept of "imagined community" is visible because nation is curated here. Eventually, the abstract sense of nationalism is evident through selected artifacts in the spatial architecture of Bangladeshi museums.

Often political narratives influence state funded organizations like national museums. Even Bangladesh National Museum is not an exception. Its authority promotes a particular political ideology more or less but is associated with national interest. Fund raisers' contributions correlate with the ideological formation of museums. For instance, government funding influences what museums can show their spaces. Politicians including ministers donate huge amounts of money into cultural institutions like museums. This perhaps secures financial support but political bias enters. Curators probably organize exhibits aligned with the donors' interest. Museum authority should prefer holistic approach over individual choice while arranging artifacts. It should not be decided from one side. Political involvement in curatorial practice raises the issue of selective history. As a consequence, political narrative decides which history should be remembered and which erased.

3.1 Significance of Museums' Nationalism in Academic:

Museums arrange programs for utilizing national aspects. Museum space further boosts nationalism. Key examples include school outreach programs, research, and publication. Many students go on a study tour to museums every year. This helps to gain practical knowledge beside text books. Museums initiate study tours and offer hands-on activities that spark curiosity among students. It offers curated tours, interactive exhibitions, and guidance. Students contextualize historical artifacts through curators or guides that enhance their experiential

learning. They build a strong emotional connection to the nation's culture, heritage, and tradition. Study tours remove financial barriers and encourage wide participation in museum space. It becomes accessible for students through outreach programs initiated by museum authority. Institutional tours are curated to focus on specific subjects. Often deals with patriotic narratives of a nation including liberation, sovereignty, and territory. Museums provide expert guides for introducing curated objects among the students. Even teachers, faculty members, and instructors act as mediators in providing knowledge about museum exhibitions. They ensure whether museum curated experience aligns with the textbook curriculum or not.

The spatial structure of Bangladeshi museums and their physical environment have functioned state oriented ideology. For example, the mobile museum system immediately connects with the museum's architecture and accessibility. A bus is available in the Liberation War Museum offering a dynamic experience over traditional movement. However, the bus service may not be satisfactory because it is already damaged. Poor maintenance leads to structural damage of the vehicle. It looks dirty because the regulatory committee hardly pays attention to that. If museum authority takes initiatives to repair the service, visitors will experience a better view of the surroundings. Beside this, several museums in Bangladesh offer mobile museum systems. It is temporary, transportable, and time consuming. This system extends the reach of museum space not only for urban settlers but rural and peripheral communities. It is necessary to implement in other museums because of the flexibility. It challenges the traditional idea of museum space. This transforms the museum space where visitors move from static to dynamic view. The museum itself travels to visitors through mobile service.

Mobile museums minimize the rigid structure- fixed and monumental. Bangladeshi museums normally follow chronological arrangement of galleries while mobile museums bring changes in

the space. Visitors act formally within conventional museum experience but mobile museums prefer informal interaction. Mobile museums often carry national identity. For example, the vehicle buses are decorated with narrative, folk art, and culture that represent the nation as a whole. Furthermore, those vehicles circulate narratives regarding collective memory and nationalism. In contrast, the mobile museum directly changes Bennett's concept- museums are traditionally functioned to discipline. The system weakens the rigid institutional function yet opens space for all. People can travel by bus and observe the spatial structure with the museum space. This way museums promote national identity that shifts from walls or galleries to free spaces.

Research and publication in museum space enhance academic understanding and provide a sense of pride in national identity among students. The library of the Bangladesh National Museum is enriched with books and journals. Every year, the museum publishes a large number of works about Bangladesh's national heritage. The published articles contribute in shaping public behavior and ideological formation. One major reason that National Museum publishes works is for establishing authenticity and authority. Research-based articles provide both historical context and contemporary issues. Museum archives interpret the significance of artifacts, which legitimize the narrative of museum collections. The authority gives library access for research works and helps museums as reliable institutions of knowledge. This makes museums a useful tool for gathering information. Bennett's case study on British Museum, reveals how museums function as cultural institutions to provide ideologies (99). Similarly, the library of Bangladesh's National Museum provides knowledge in order to shape public understanding associated with national identity. Plus, its research and publications are one of the key resources of nationalism which is circulated.

Museums libraries have a significant role in showcasing posters, art, cultural memory, and promoting identity formation. These documents represent language, cultural history, traditions, and collective memory. Most of the museum publications including books and journals contribute to the construction of cultural and national identity. In countries like Bangladesh, Liberation War Museum and National Museum promote folk culture, heritage, and archaeological history to help reinforce narratives of nationalism and shared heritage.

Another reason for museum publication is associated with education and communication. Museum publications provide scholarly articles that are accessible to students. Those journals encourage people to understand historical themes and narratives. Researchers and students can apply those museum articles in their research projects. In contrast, the museum archive provides the mission and vision of the institution. This ensures deeper knowledge in museum study. Eventually, the museum archive remains available for future generations to gather information.

Furthermore, museums that publish works often support international researchers. Scholarly publications allow international collaboration in the field of history, art, and museology. Bangladesh National Museum contributes to global discussions with foreign scholars. This enhances the museum's reputation globally. However, the museum library strengthens visitors' interaction with nationalism. A staff member reveals that visitors have to go through a complicated process for library access yet helps researchers to collect data. Therefore, museum publications are necessary for historical knowledge, national, and cultural identity formation. Finally, museum libraries and archives educate visitors while providing knowledge. This way, visitors construct cultural and national identity within museum space.

3.2 Museums' Role in Cultural Programs:

Cultural programs in museums create national sentiment. Celebrating cultural functions transform museums from static exhibition spaces into active sites of representing national identity. These extend public participation through exhibitions. Bangladeshi museum's exhibit and practice nationalism by launching art competitions on Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year), poem recitation program on International Mother Language Day, and offer free entry on special occasions. They operate programs to accomplish the core mission- promote ideology. Often museums arrange social events to enhance civic engagement. This makes institutional narratives vocal.

In the context of Bangladesh, museums such as the National Museum, the Liberation War Museum, and the military Museum organize several cultural events every year. Those programs circulate narratives of sacrifice, unity, and struggle among visitors. For example, commemorative exhibitions on the liberation war, documentary screening, speech, conversation with freedom fighters regenerate nationalist viewpoints. Often dance performance, play, and patriotic music collectively strengthen feelings of nationalism and shared memory.

In addition, cultural programs foster participatory nationalism. Participants are not fully passive but they actively engage with national aspects through performance, workshop, and educational activities. Their participation in drawing competitions or poem recitation, helps internalize national values. The subject matter of the competition is always connected with nationalism. In Bangladesh, museum functions are based on national and cultural context. Museums therefore, become cultural spaces where nationalism is frequently practiced, remembered, and reproduced through strategic interaction.

In conclusion, cultural programs within museum space distribute state narratives. By celebrating cultural or national functions, they construct a particular view of the nation. Museums focus on

national narratives that cover the cultural aspect. Visitors uncover it through participating in the festivals. Museums arrange programs associated with Victory Day, Language Movement Day, and Bengali New year emphasize unity, secularism, and collective identity. Therefore, programs are shaping how citizens understand the nation and their devotion to nationalism beside individual interest.

Chapter 4: Comparative Analysis and Findings

Fieldworks discover the number of galleries and the amount of artifacts. In the National Museum 44 galleries are placed on the ground to 3rd floors. Each floor symbolizes different themes. A library is located on the 4th floor. The museum has an approximate collection of 4000 items that are on public display. Bangladesh Liberation War Museum consists of 4 galleries. The museum archive shows 1500 items are displayed across the galleries. The military museum has 4 galleries. It houses more than 1200 artifacts.

I have collected primary data from field work by analyzing 3 major questions. For example:

- A) Do all 3 Bangladeshi museums' structures promote nationalism?
- B) Do spatial arrangements of artifacts provide nationalist ideology?
- C) Do museum visitors interact with nationalist perspective?

My arguments are associated with these questions. Initially, all 3 museums have different missions but they provide a common ideology. That is national identity formation. In Bangladesh, cultural and national identities have different spaces. A debate on “Bangladeshi” VS “Bangalee” is dissolved through analyzing the three museums' galleries. The National Museum in Bangladesh often combines cultural and national aspects but its central focus on- Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. The other two either highlight liberation war or national defense.

I have taken in-person interviews for data collection. 10 people participate and provide vital information. Interviewees including teenagers, adults, and elderly women from The National Museum, Liberation War Museum, and Military Museum provide different answers. A couple of teenagers enjoy the museum space for either educational purposes or scientific advancement. Overall, visitors and curators give opinion on museums' spatial structure and exhibition.

I have asked a couple of questions to the visitors and curators of the National Museum. Most of them give different answers. The one and only question for visitors is:

- 1) What have you noticed regarding Bangladeshi culture and tradition in the museum galleries?

Almost every gallery of the National Museum illustrates Bangladeshi culture and tradition.

According to the interview, visitors observe the exhibition carefully. Often they let future generations know about Bangladeshi tradition. As a result, visitors interact with curated objects that provide nationalist perspectives. The museum does not only display curated objects but provides descriptions or details regarding them. The main purpose of it is to educate the visitors. A senior curator reveals how visitors ignore the museum item specification while visiting. This leads to visitors' limited interaction with the curated exhibition.

In contrast, Visitors from the Liberation War Museum observe educational programs, replacement of objects, and history. Though the museum building uses spatial narratives, visitors are unable to decode. Curated objects perhaps distribute nationalist narrative. Liberation war is the central focus of the spatial arrangement, flowing chronological order. Despite the poor maintenance of the museum bus, a symbol of a mobile museum provides a dynamic view. The museum, moreover, highlights the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation through its curated artifacts and spatial design. Despite its beautiful architecture, museum surroundings are damaged. An artificial lake inside the museum complex is polluted. The water has turned toxic and faces mosquito infestation. The lake is filled with plastic bags, garbage, and moss. Dirty water can destroy biodiversity. Lack of regular cleaning and management, turning the water green and causing a foul odor. This degrades museum space. The museum loses functional

connectivity of the landscape. Moreover, visitors reduce their visibility and lower aesthetic lens towards museum surroundings.

Apart from the Liberation War Museum, the spatial design of Bangladesh Military Museum is partially connected with nationalism. Interiors such as: dynamic escalators, holographic models, VR, and simulation devices distract visitors from nationalist narrative formation. Advanced technologies overshadow the curated exhibition. Visitors focus less on the galleries because external architectures are dominant. The interview part justifies how the Military Museum is organized open space to attract visitors' interest. However, its selected items construct national identity. For example; military suits, weapons, tanks, missiles, naval equipment, and jet flights are associated with Bangladesh's national defense. A souvenir shop within space distributes national narrative.

Furthermore, theoretical frameworks legitimize the argument that the spatial structure of Bangladeshi museums promote nationalism. Althusser's ISA and Lasswell's propaganda model are applied to justify the claims. Again, Hiller's theory of space syntax defines how museum space legitimizes state oriented ideologies.

According to Lasswell, 5W model refers to "Who" (Communicator), "What" (Information), in "which" channel (Media), To "Whom" (Audience), with "what" effect (Effect). In the context of Bangladesh, museums are cultural institutions that act as communicators. They spread propaganda about state oriented nationalism. Especially, National Museum and Liberation War Museum are state funded. They disseminate state approved interpretations of nationalism- "Bangladeshi" identity. The museum's authorities provide messages or information through cultural programs, workshops, and public gatherings. The channel is medium in Lasswell's model. Bangladeshi museums use spatial structure and artifacts to distribute knowledge. As a

result, spatial arrangement of objects becomes the medium for spreading nationalist narrative.

The audience transfers into museum visitors. Diverse groups including students, researchers, and families participate in discussion. Their interaction within the spatial environment constructs a narrative. Museum artifacts reinforce national consciousness. While visitors internalize the consciousness, they feel the effect on their everyday behavior. Likely Lasswell's model emphasizes the effect of propaganda, Bangladeshi museums reinforce national identity formation. In Bangladesh, the propaganda is politically motivated yet internalized by the visitors.

Again, Althusser's ISA functions predominately by ideology (80-81). ISA refers to Bangladeshi museums and their role in establishing ideologies. Military Museum and Liberation War Museum focus on the liberation to spread nationalist narrative. These institutions are funded by the government and so they promote state oriented ideology. Even museum curated items are aligned with that certain narrative. In contrast, the National Museum has a separate narrative regarding ethnicity and culture yet provides state promoted nationalism. Often museum authority removes and adds artifacts just to align with state narrative. Moreover, state funded organizations shape visitors' behaviors. In contradiction, visitors are not always passive, they can actively reject or accept museum organized ideology. They can use strategic methods to analyze museum space and nationalism.

Hiller's theory of space syntax defines how spatial configuration shapes social behavior. Likely museums in Bangladesh have complex spatial structures that represent culture, tradition, and history. Museum spaces are developed to address a social relation between visitors and curated items. According to Hiller, space syntax describes the approach to spatial morphology that reveals the social logic and function of built space. His view on spatial vocabulary associated with grammatical and syntactic rules. Instead of treating space as neutral or empty, Hiller's

framework explains how physical structure shapes human behavior (8). The architecture of Bangladeshi museums produce nationalist ideology as well as disseminate it. For example, visitors observe curatorial narratives such as; nationalism or national identity formation within museum space that justify Hiller's space syntax. In addition, spatial experience shapes visitors' behaviors and influences their everyday practices.

Conclusion

All three museums promote nationalism yet they have different spatial structures. The Bangladesh National Museum highlights cultural history and its heritage. The Liberation War Museum emphasizes liberation memory and the Military Museum focuses on military achievement and national security. Despite their different missions, all share a common ideology- nationalism, which refers to citizens' loyalty and devotion to the nation over personal interest. Bangladeshi nationalism remains central within the museum space, even ethno-linguistic identity appears through cultural heritage. Initially, spatial representation of artifacts fosters national perspective. Museum architecture regarding exhibition, curated objects, and surroundings shape visitors' interactions. Museum narratives are not neutral but highly political. Finally, the curated ideology of Bangladeshi museums works as a tool for identity formation.

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