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Folklore Academy

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Seminar II

Folklore is an essential element to identify any nation. All over the world folklore is recognized as a priceless asset. Mymensingh is considered one of the promise lands enriched with folk culture. This project is designed to conserve our rich folkloric heritage and to inspire others to practice it by taking them through a transition of space and experience.

Abstract

It is evident that there is no alternative to establish a folklore academy to collect, research, preserve and present our folklores which is an asset to our nation like any. To achieve this goal we need the most modern technology. Mymensingh is geographically on central position of the country and yet not the capital. Most importantly Mymensingh is rich with these folklores itself and thus it is quite natural to be holding this establishment.

Mymensingh Shilpakala Academy has taken initiatives to establish such an academy. The park road adjoining the site is already a cultural hub. Therefore there is a good possibility to turn the area into a heritage lane. It can be assumed that such an establishment should be designed as such so that the urban impact is positively large where folklore and folk culture will not only retain but also thrive through urban stitching. It has been emphasized that we are as though hold our culture and tradition to our utmost sentiment, cultural invasion has become a threat now and it is high time to establish such academy to protect our identity.

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1. Project brief and background

1.1 project brief:

Name of the project: Folklore Academy

Project type: Cultural, Academy, Archive

Client: Shilpakala Academy under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh

Location: Mymensingh

Site Area: 1.3 Acres

1.2 project background:

Folklore is an essential element to identify any nation. All over the world folklore is recognized as a priceless asset. Mymensingh is considered one of the promise lands enriched with folk culture. Beside the famous Pala songs there are still many which are yet to be collected and archived. “Mymensingh Geetika” is renown in the world. Initiatives taken by Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy and different organizations and researchers resulted the collection of folklore that we know today which due to lack of coordination and efforts is either becoming lost or damaged.

Beside Pala songs there are Ghatu songs, Jari songs, Kabi songs, Gazi songs and many more. There are stories, plays, dramas and folksongs which demands to be digitized and archived with the most advanced technologies that is available. The proposed project will not only take initiatives to collect these folk assets from Mymensingh but also from all over the nation. This academy will enable to research, collect, archive and present the materials which will not only save our cultural history but also inspire the next generation.

Thus there is no arguing about the necessity and importance of a folklore academy.

1.3 project rationale:

It is evident that there is no alternative to establish a folklore academy to collect, research, preserve and present our folklores which is an asset to our nation like any. To achieve this goal we need the most modern technology. Mymensingh is geographically on central position of the country and yet not the capital. Most importantly Mymensingh is rich with these folklores itself and thus it is quite natural to be holding this establishment. Moreover, Mymensingh Shilpakala Academy has taken initiatives to establish such an academy. Moreover the Zainul Painting Archive and Museum is nearby on the bank of Brahmaputra River. The connecting road holds more than a century old missionary school and chapel and a field which lead to the river bank which has become a civic space. Therefore there is a good possibility to turn the area into a heritage lane. It can be assumed that such an establishment should be deigned as such so that the urban impact is positively large where folklore and folk culture will not only retain but also thrive through urban stitching. It has been emphasized that we are as though hold our culture and tradition to our utmost sentiment, cultural invasion has become a threat now and it is high time to establish such academy to protect our identity.

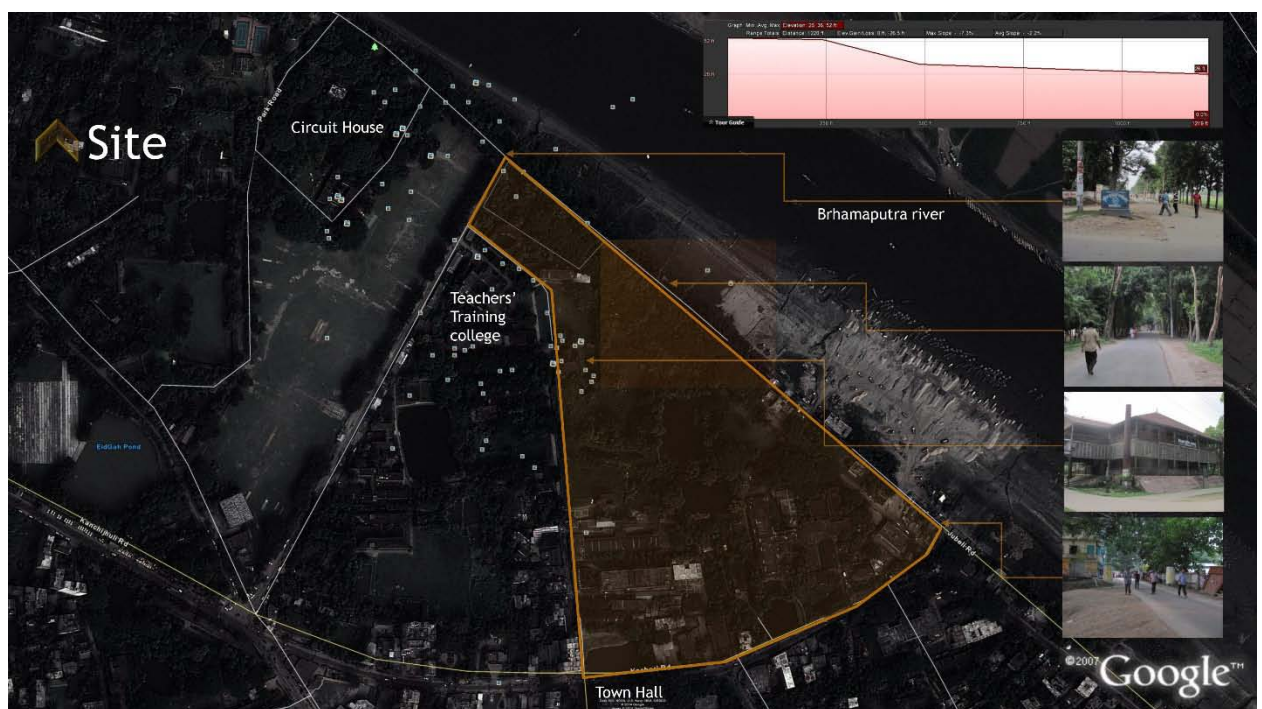


Figure 1- satellite view of the proposed site.

1.3 Programs:

- 1.3.1 Administration- 4000 sft
- 1.3.2 Open theatre/ performance place- 2000 sft
- 1.3.3 Museum- 4000 sft
 - 1.3.3.1 Archive- 1200 sft
 - 1.3.3.2 Exhibit- 2400 sft
 - 1.3.3.3 Curator's office- 400 sft
- 1.3.4 Library- 4000 sft
 - 1.3.4.1 Archive- 800 sft
 - 1.3.4.2 Sitting- 2800 sft
 - 1.3.4.3 Librarian's office- 400 sft
- 1.3.5 Cafeteria- 2000 sft
- 1.3.6 Auditorium- 2000 sft
- 1.3.7 Academic- 8000 sft
 - 1.3.7.1 Audio studio- 800 sft
 - 1.3.7.2 Video studio- 1200 sft
 - 1.3.7.3 Painting studio- 2000 sft
 - 1.3.7.4 Workshops- 4000 sft
- 1.3.8 Seminar hall- 2000 sft
- 1.3.9 Multipurpose hall- 4000 sft
- 1.3.10 Service and facility- 2000 sft
- 1.3.11 Book/museum shop- 400 sft
- 1.3.12 Press- 4000 sft

2. Site Appraisal:

2.1 Site location and area

The site is in Mymensingh, 115 km away from Dhaka. The specific site for the project is on the outskirts of the city and locally known as Shaheb Quarter. It is across the DC bungalow on the Mymensingh highway adjacent to the existing Mymensingh Shilpakala Academy building. The area of the site is 1.3 acres.

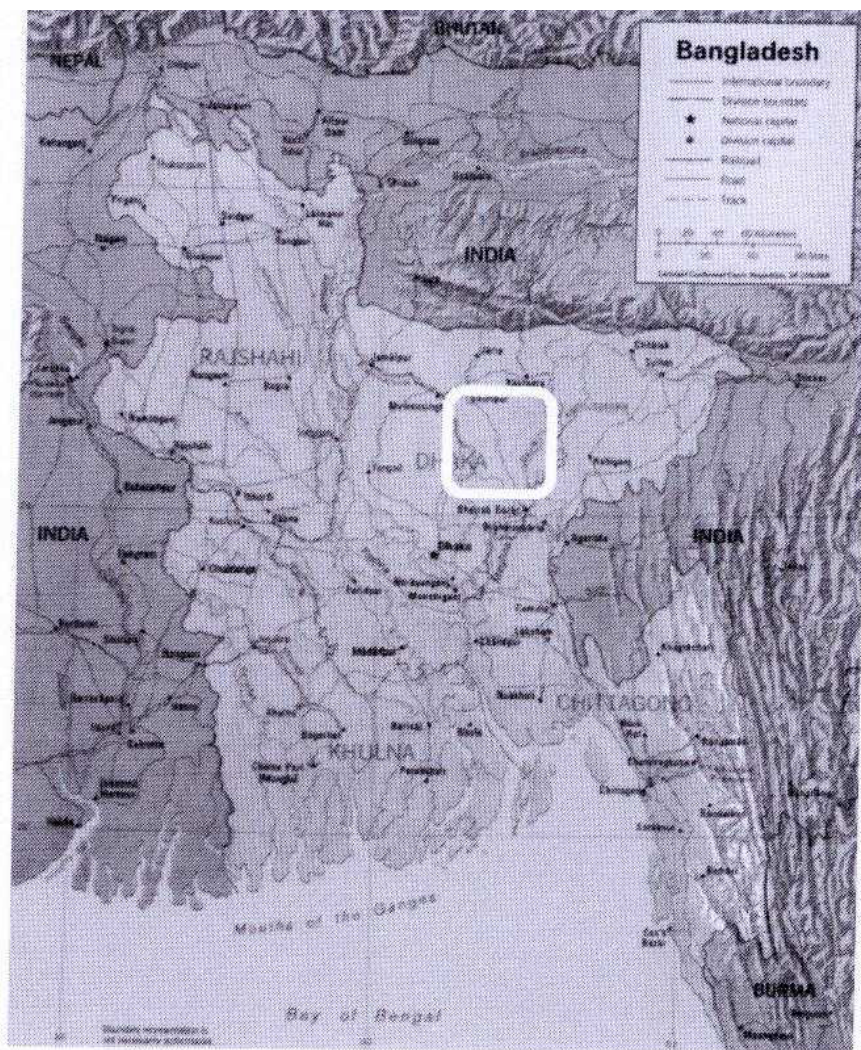


Figure 2 - Map of Bangladesh showing the Mymensingh Region
Source: Map of Bangladesh, 2005

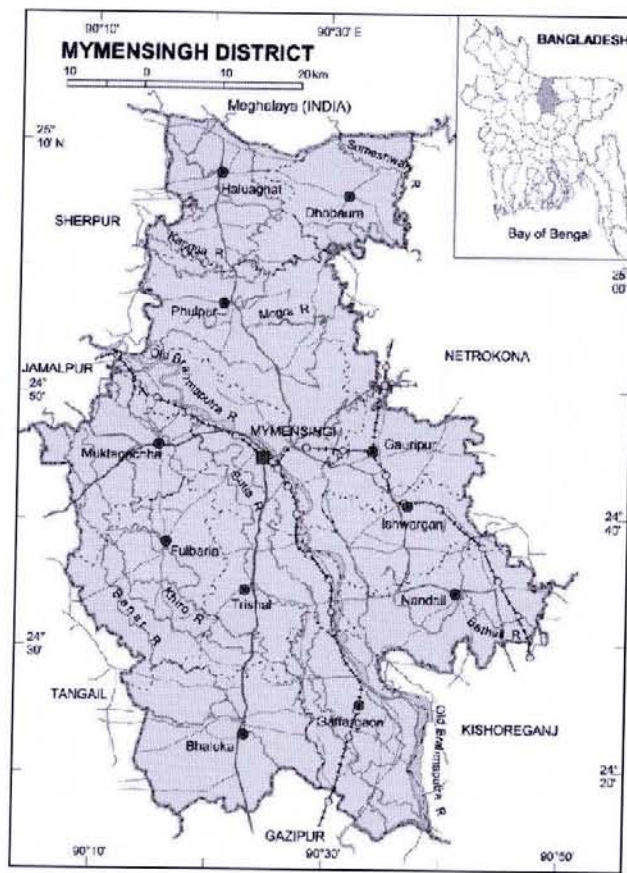


Figure 3 - District Map of Mymensingh
Source: Map of Bangladesh, 2005



Figure 4 - Mymensingh Sadar Upazila Map
Source: Map of Bangladesh, 2005

a. Site surroundings and conditions

The site is on the bank of the Brahmaputra River on Park road on the abandoned project of a folklore center, of which in the southeast is mahila Udayan Bidyalay and on the north-west is District health complex, on west is Govt. Laboratory school and on the south west is the Rajbari (a heritage site). On the south there are quarters of officials and principal of the Teachers' Training College. The site is full of indigenous trees measuring up to 50-70 feet.

The park road is already culturally vibrant and the strip to which the proposed site belong to is an academic one.



Figure 5- view of the site from Teachers' Training College.



Figure 6- view of the park road adjacent to the site.



Figure 7, 8: section of the site [google earth] and contour study.

b. Site climate

The climate of Mymensingh is cooler than that of Dhaka, as it is closer to Himalayas. The winter temperature can be as low as 15 degree centigrade during November to February. During the monsoon throughout the months from May to August rainfall is heavy and the temperature ranges from 15-20 degrees. Summer temperature is extremely high and humid leading up to 40 degree centigrade, especially during April to May.

c. SWOT analysis

i. Strength

1. Mymensingh is comparatively a quiet town.
2. Distant from city center, yet not too far away from it.

3. Site is only 3 hrs drive away from the capital.
4. Site is near on the bank of Brahmaputra River.
5. Existing vegetation.

ii. Weakness

1. No direct contact with the main motor way.
2. Site is small to functional requirement or to become a civic space.
3. Existing structures within the site.

iii. Opportunities

1. Being near to old establishments and other cultural establishment, the site has the potential of becoming a cultural hub and create an urban impact.
2. Being surrounded by government buildings it ensures a large area can be designated as public plaza.
3. The field nearby can be used for the open gatherings and other events.

iv. Threats

Can ruin the existing landscape- vegetation, river bank.

3. Contextual analysis

3.1. Geography

Mymensingh is situated between 24°02'03" and 25°25'56" north latitude and 89°39'00" and 91°15'35" east latitude. A physical marker of boundaries of Mymensingh is the Brahmaputra River flowing along its north. Some other markers include Agricultural University, the Medical College, Cantonment and Sultanabad- a township built for the followers of Aga Khan. A railway line connecting Dhaka has divided Mymensingh into two parts.

3.2 Historical Background

Mymensingh is one of the 16 oldest district of Bangladesh, which was once constituted by the British East India Company in 1787 during colonial times. Being 220 years old, Mymensingh presents a rich cultural and political history. Due to various patterns of settlements and colonization the city has been inhabited by Muslims, Hindus and close to the site Christians. Yet Mymensingh has always been a center for secularism.

Vidyamoyi Uchya Balika Bidyalaya and Muslim Women's College have played vital roles in educating women which led to gradual empowerment of women in Bangladesh.

3.3 Important structures and establishments

Mymensingh include Boro Kali Bari Mandir, a temple dedicated to hindu goddess Kali, for which Hindus congregate to pay tribute in the annual holey fest, Kali puja. Another point of interest is the Mymensingh Rajbari which was built in 16th century for the royals residing in the area at that time. Rabindranath Tagore stayed here in 1926. This building represents its era and thus of historical significance. Other significant establishments include Liberation War Monument in Shanbuganj, the Boro Masjid and the sculpture at the Shoshi Lodge.



Figure 10 - Mymensingh Rajbari
Source: Mymensingh Information Resource at Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.com

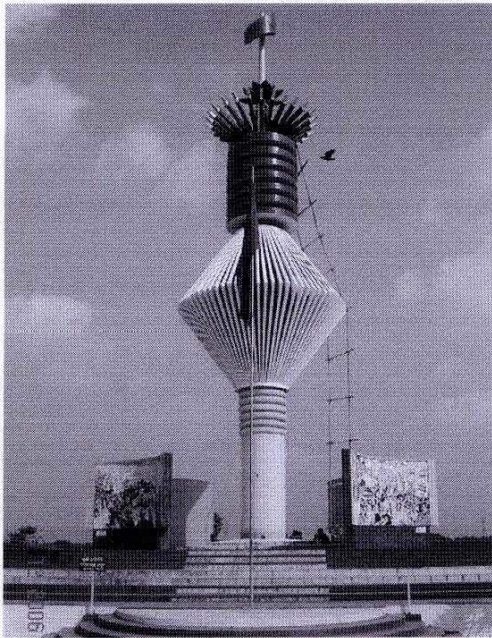


Figure 11 - Liberation War Monument



Figure 12 - Sculpture at Shoshi Lodge

Source: Mymensingh Information Resource at Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.com

4. Literature review

From the third century onwards, the Mouryas, the Guptas, the Palas, the Senas and the Muslims came one after another to rule the land. As a result, they grafted their ways of life and cultural traits on the indigenous population. Subsequently, Portuguese, French and English ships anchored in the harbors of Bengal. They left not only their merchandise but also their customs. Each race left its own mark and it was not only physical but also cultural, which collectively formed the basis of the culture.

Folk music and song

The musical tradition of Bangladesh is lyrics-based, with minimal instrumental accompaniment. We can classify folk songs in seven categories: love, ritual, philosophy and devotion, work and labour, profession and occupation, satire and fun, and mixed. On the other side there are different forms of Folk music, Baul, Gombhira, Bhatiali, Bhawaiya, kavigan, ghatu gan, jhumur, baramasi, meyeli git, jatra gan, sari gan, etc. The Baul tradition is a unique heritage of Bangla folk music, and there are numerous other musical traditions in Bangladesh, which vary from one region to the other. Gombhira, Bhatiali, Bhawaiya are a few of the better-known musical forms. Folk music of Bengal is often accompanied by the ektara, an instrument with only one string.

Gitika or ballads

Gitika means Ballads though it tends to be longer than western ballads. Gitika is of two types: purbabanga-gitika & Nath Gitika.

Purbabanga-gitika

It's mainly from Mymensingh and includes 'Mahuya', 'Maluya', 'Chandravati', 'Dewana Madina', 'Kanka O Lila', 'Kamala', Dewan Bhavna' etc.

Maimansingha gitika

Maimansingha gitika or Mômemonshingha gitika is a collection of folk ballads from the region of Mymensingh and around of Bangladesh. Chandra Kumar De and Dinesh Chandra Sen were the collectors and editors; the collection was published from Calcutta University, along with another similar publication named purbabanga-gitika.

Nath gitika

It's on stories of the conversion of Prince Gopi Chandra (Manik Chandra Rajar Gan, Govinda Chandrer Git, Maynamatir Gan, Gopi Chandrer Sannyas, Gopi Chander Panchali etc.) and on the miracles of the Nath guru (goraksavijay, Minchetan).

Chottogram Gitika Published (1993) By Bangla Academy Editing By Momen chowdhury and Collect By Abdus Sattar Chowdhry(1919-1982)

Folk tales

Folk tales are stories that are handed down orally from one generation to another. They are in prose and can be simple or complex. Based on subject, meaning and form, folk tales is of fairy tales, mythical tales, religious tales, adventure stories, heroic stories, sage tales, historical tales, legends, animal stories, fables, or comic stories. The lead character of Bangla folk tales are fate and divinity dependant and execute magical power rather than intellect, wisdom, labour, struggle or work.

Folk drama

Folk drama is combination of dance, song, music, and acting called as Bhasan, jatra, pala gan, ghatu, gambhira, alkap, kavigan, puppetry, etc. It can be for entertainment or educational purposes. Jatra is the most popular form of Folk drama. In Jatras, legendary plays of heroism, mythological stories, folktales of love and tragedy, and similar countless themes are enacted in open air theatre. While some folk dramas emphasise songs, others stress dancing or acting. Folk drama are commonly based on stories of Rama and Sita, Arjun and Draupadi, Radha and Krishna, Nimai Sannyas, Behula and Laksindar, Isha Khan Dewan, Firoz Dewan, Zainab and Hasan, Sakhina and Kasem, Hanifa and Jaigun, Rahim Badsha, Rupban, Baidyani etc. Folk dramas usually have a mythical, historical, religious and political flavour.

Rhymes

Rhymes (Chhara) can be classified into the following groups: nursery rhymes, play rhymes, social rhymes, historical rhymes, satirical rhymes, occupational rhymes, educational rhymes, rhymes for rituals, and magical rhymes. Rhymes are recited or sung to calm and entertain

children, many are for fun or to educate people on ethics, morality, mathematics, astrology etc. Some rhymes originated in historical events and preserve the memory of these events.

Proverbs

Proverbs are the shortest form of folk literature. Generally they are composed on the basis of human experience, pragmatic consideration, and wisdom. Many proverbs are found in the vedas and the upanisads as well as in the charyapada, the oldest specimen of bangla literature.

The Folk Literature refers not to written, but to oral traditions. It may be in prose or verse, often mythological or historical, it can be narrative epic, occupational verse, ritual verse, praise poems to rulers and other prominent people. Whatever it may contain it highlights the exemplary wisdom of illiterate peoples.

[Source: Wikipedia]

Back of all literature stretches and unmapped and immeasurable world of oral tradition which may roughly be called Folklore. As in other countries in the world in Bangladesh also we can discover an enormous amount of influence of folklore on our old and modern Bengali literature. It has now become proverbial that, "Necessary that he should be familiar with the folkloric heritage of the country." The writer of this paper, however, will endeavor to give a short historical background of folklore scholarship and its prospect in Bangladesh.

The abundant folklore of present-day Bangladesh, therefore, contains a variety of elements, which is partly to be explained by historical forces. From the third century A.D. on, the Mouryas, the Guptas, the Palas, the Senas and the Muslims came one after another to rule the land and they grafted their ways of life and culture traits on the indigenous population. Subsequently Portuguese, French and English ships anchored in the harbours of Bengal, and left not only their merchandise but also their customs. Among these foreign traders, The British became most powerful and were able to consolidate their authority at the expense of the fading empire of the Mughal rulers. The battle of Plassey in 1757 ended with the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal.¹ This British victory ensured the supremacy of the British East India Company over the entire Sub-continent including Bengal for nearly two hundred

years. As a result the folklore of Bangladesh will present an interesting variety both anthropological and sociological.

There is no denying the fact that the first phase of folklore collecting was started by the British rulers of India, though the purpose behind it was obviously political and administrative. As soon as the British East India Company became ruler of Bengal, it requested the British civil officers to learn about the people of the land through their traditions and customs. Consequently under the directives of the company, scholars like William Jones (1746-1794), a judge of the old Supreme Court, Calcutta, established the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in the year 1784. This Society promoted the study of the humanities, including materials later recognized as folklore, which were published in the journal of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal*.² The first volume of *Asiatic Research* contains an interesting article, *Trial by Ordeal* by Ali Ebrahim Khan, a Magistrate, (vol. 1, 1798, pp. 389-404). Khan discussed in this article various kinds of ordeals then prevalent in this country. Solvyns Balt, a French artist, published *The Costumes of Hindustan* in four volumes from 1804-1812 which contained sixty coloured engravings explaining the costumes, manners and custom in India.

Under the British initiative, the study of folklore was advanced primarily by British civil officers and European missionaries. In order to present the folklore activities of this period, the writer of this book will discuss these two groups separately.

After the Sepoy Revolution of 1857, we find a more congenial atmosphere in which to investigate folklore. In 1848. By the proclamation of Queen Victoria, the administration was transferred from the East India Company to a Viceroy, the representative of the Queen of England. From then on, the English officials, before leaving England, were instructed to mix with the Indian people, to try to gain their confidence, and also to respect their religion, culture and customs. The officers who came to India were clearly familiar with the importance of anthropology, ethnology and folklore. Such journals and serials were founded as : *Indian Antiquary* (Bombay, 1872-1933), *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* (Calcutta, 1886-1936), *North Indian Notes and Queries* (1891-1896), the *Imperial Gazetteers* (26 vols., London, 1892, 1907-9), *the District Gazetteers, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1905-) and *Man in India* (Ranchi, 1942-) etc. All of these publications recorded an enormous quantity of folkloristic, ethnological and

anthropological material. Additional data on Indian folklore also appeared in non-Indian journals such as *Folk-Lore* (London, 1890-), *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1843-), *American Journal of Philology*, (Baltimore, 1888-), and journal of American Folklore (Boston, 1888-) many other native journals. Scholars must examine all these volumes and other journals in local languages very carefully.

Because of space limitations, we wish to mention here only the contributions of prominent civil servants and some other important scholars. William Wilson Hunter, then a Commissioner at Dacca, published his *Annals of Rural Bengal* in 1868 in London. He was the first scholar to collect and publish Santal legends. His collection has proved to be of immense anthropological importance. The Santals, a tribe found in Bangladesh and in the north-east section of India, engaged such active British ethnologists as Dr. A. Campbell (*Santal Folk-tales*, Manbhum, 1891), C.H. Bompoas (*Folk-lore of Santal Parganas*, London, 1909), P.O. Bodding (*A Chapter of Santal Folklore*, Kristiania, 1924); and (*Santal Folk-tales*, 3 vols., Oslo, 1925-29). The importance of the Santals in the study of primitive races is now firmly recognized.

Thomas Herbert Lewin, Deputy Commissioner at Chittagong Hill Tracts, offered an authentic ethnological survey of tribal people in his *The Hill Tracts in Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein* (1869) and the *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870). He recorded some myths, creation stories, customs and superstitions directly taken from oral tradition. He supported his comments with documentary notes and pictures.

D.T. Dalton, Colonel, Bengal Staff Corps and Commissioner at Chuto-Nagpur, published his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* under the direction of the Council of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1872. He studied the people of Bengal and presented a number of widespread folktales and legends. He was the first scholar to publish a comprehensive ethnological history of Bengali people.

G.H. Damant, another Britisher, who was a Deputy Commissioner in Rangpur, contributed a series of folktales, legends, charms and myths to the *Indian Antiquary*. The very first volume of this journal (1872) contains some well-known tales of North Bengal (Dinajpur) which he collected. His harvest of twenty-two tales makes him the first major collector of Bengali tales from Bangladesh.³

Sir Georn Grierson (1851-1941) whose love and deep interest for eastern folklore and language has already become proverbial, arrived in 1973. Ultimately he published material on 179 languages and 364 dialects of this continent. Because of this scholarship, he received a Knighthood in 1912 and the Order of Merit in 1928 from the King of England. Grierson spent 26 years in India. While in charge of Rangpur District, from 1873-1877, he collected from the peasants folk-rhymes, folksongs and ballads such as the widely known *Manik Chandrer Gan'* (the Song of Manik Chandra). After these songs were published in *the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1878), the search for similar songs was carried out in earnest. In 1898 Grierson was appointed the Superintendent of the Linguistic Survey of India. The famous Norwegian linguist and folklorist Sten Konow assisted him in this work. They decided that a piece of folklore or some other passages in narrative prose or verse... [should be] taken down...from the mouth of the speaker on the spot" as a specimen of language of dialect. Grierson's nineteen volume Survey contains folklore specimens from many languages and dialects of Indian Sub-continent. Volume V. devoted to the Bengali language, is probably the most valuable one. Here he cites much folklore material, including ballads, songs and tales. Grierson is the first major collector of Bengali ballads, songs, and rhymes. His folklore essays published in the *Indian Antiquary* and *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* still serve as authentic references. The scholars during this period were greatly influenced by the establishment of a Folk-Lore Society in London in 1878.

Major Alan Playfair, then a Government officer, who studied the tribal people wrote *The Garos* (1909) which gives an excellent account of the Garos, many of whom live in the Mymensingh District. This valuable contribution to the ethnology of the primitive peoples was one of the series published under the sponsorship of the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. S.A. Peal was one of the civilians who contributed excellent articles on the "River" and "Place" names in 1897 in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Mention should also be made of H. Beveridge, District Magistrate, Bogra, who published excellent articles on the 'Antiquities of Bogra' in the same journal in 1878. J.D. Anderson's *Some Chittagong Proverbs* (1897) contains excellent example of proverbs from the Chittagong area. Mention is needed of William Crooke, who in his *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India* (2 vols. 1893) gave a scientific explanation of what is known as folk-cult, folk-religion and folk-rituals.

In *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (2 vols. Calcutta 1891) Herbert H. Risley of the Indian Civil Service applied to Indian anthropology the methods of systematic research followed by European anthropologists. This work, besides containing a great deal of anthropological information, included myths, legends and fictional folktales from Bengal.

Sir F.B. Bradley-Birt, a District Collector of Bengal, compiled *Bengal Fairy Tales* (London, 1920). This book contains some excellent marchen typical of present-day Bangladesh; although Birt does not disclose his sources, however, the folklorist can easily identify international tale types in his collection. Many of these tales will be found in the collections of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder, mentioned later.

Along with the civil servants, the missionaries of Great Britain, Europe and the United States contributed importantly to folklore collection and publication. Since their aim was to preach Christianity among the natives, it was incumbent on them to know the native customs. Among the missionaries, the name of William Carey deserves special mention. Carey served in Fort William College from 1800-1831 and with the help of native *munshis* he published a series of Bengali books, edited newspapers and encouraged the translation from Sanskrit and Persian of folktales known in oral traditions.

Right, Rev, Reginald Herber (*Narrative of a Journey through Upper Provinces of India*, from Calcutta to Bombay; 2 vols., 1824-25), Thomas Bacon (*Oriental Annual*, 2 vols.: 1840) and Caleb Wright (*India and Its Inhabitants*: 1856) on the other hand, were though casual travelers, kept excellent information in their books about the customs and tradition of our country.⁴

Reverend James Long was a prolific collector of Bengali proverbs and sayings. His publications include *Three Thousand Bengali Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings Illustrating Native Life and Feelings among Ryots and Women* (1872), *Eastern Proverbs and Emblems Illustrating Old Truth* (London, 1881) and *Two Thousand Bengali Proverbs (Probad Mala) Illustrating Native Life and Feelings* (1868). Many folk rhymes and charms also have been incorporated among these proverbs and sayings which were used by later compilers of Bengali rhymes.

The missionaries were followed by such native collectors as Kanailal Ghosal (*Probad Pustaka, A Book of Proverbs*, 1890), Dwarakanath Basu (*Probad Songraha, A Book of*

Proverbs, 1893), and Rajendranath Bannerjee (*A Collection of Agricultural Sayings in Lower Bengal*, 1893).

William McCulloch's *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912) may be regarded as one of the best folktale collections of Bengal because of its notes and organization. Though the tales were collected from a Brahmin informant around 1886-87, the book was published in London in 1912 after McCulloch had retired. His notes refer to parallel examples of both literary and oral stories in other eastern and western collections. It should be noted that the above mentioned writers were influenced by the English Anthropological School headed by Darwin, Tylor and others.

Lal Behari Day, a native Christian, whose father came from Dacca, published a series of books and essays on Bengali festivals, holidays sports and games, caste system, village folk and folk life in Bengal. His *Folk-Tales of Bengal* (London and Calcutta, 1883), collected from an old maid, mother of Govinda, created considerable interest among European and American readers. Many versions of these tales have since been collected in East Bengal. Day's *Bengal Peasant's Life* (1874) is a realistic and objective study of folk life. Day influenced a host of writers such as Kasindranath (*Popular Tales of Bengal*, 1905), Shovana Devi (*Orient Pearls*, 1915) and others in collecting and compiling oral tradition. It was, however, Sarat Chandra Mitra, who made excellent studies of folklore on the harvest made by former collectors and scholars. He published nearly 250 articles in various native and foreign journals which have always been referred to many research publications both in country and abroad. Another prolific writer was Abdul Wali of Khulna who also contributed much too various journals including Asiatic and Anthropological Societies especially on Lalon Shah.

The Second phase of the folklore movement was introduced by Bengali scholars of nationalistic tendencies. Rabindranath Tagore was the pioneer during this period. From 1885 to 1899, he published four essays showing the importance of folk-literature. These four essays were compiled in his book *Loka-Sahitya* (Folk-Literature) in 1907. Tagore patronized others and he himself collected a large number of folklore materials from his vast estate in East Bengal. He himself wrote, when I was at Selaidah, I would always keep close contact with the Bauls (mystic folksingers) and have discussions with them, and it is a fact that I infused tunes of Baul songs into many of my own songs." (*Folklore*, II, Calcutta,

1961, p. 14). Dr. Dusan Zbavitel, Professor of Indology in the Oriental Institute of Czechoslovakia, writes: It is my firm belief that without staying in the countryside for as long as he did, Rabindranath could never have become what he was, either as a man or a poet. (*ibid.*, p. 14). Critics have commented that Tagore has used numerous folklore themes in many of his poems, songs, dramas, novels and short stories. Tagore's example was followed by the leading Bengali journals. *Bangiya Sahitya Parisat*, a Bengali literary society, which was established under his encouragement in 1893. The Sahitya Parisat Journal, from the year of its inception (1894), began publishing folklore materials collected from the various regions now comprising Bangladesh.

The first decade of the present century witnessed a turbulent nationalistic and political agitation, better known as the Non-Cooperation Movement." British merchandise was boycotted and homemade products received preference. Traditions and folklore now were acclaimed. Calcutta University encouraged its professor of Modern Indian Language Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, to collect ballads. Dinesh Chandra, a resident of East Bengal, who read Percy and others ballad collections, was aware of the rich ballad heritage of Mymensingh. Chandra Kumar De of Mymensingh was appointed to collect ballads from this area, including information about the singers. Four large volumes of Eastern Bengal ballads: (one Mymensingh) with separate texts in both Bengali and English, were published from 1923 to 1932. These ballads attracted attention all over the world. His other works, *Glimpses of Bengal Life* (1915), *Prachin Bangal Sahitye Musalmaner Abodan* (1940: (Contribution of Muslims to Old Bengali Literature) and especially, *Folk-Literature of Bengal* (1920) are invaluable. In the latter book, a comparative study of some Bengali tales with those of Europe he boldly expressed the view that in India, the highest level of culture was for ages represented by Magadha. Since lower Bengal, the Banga proper, was an important gateway for enterprising foreign people who traded with India, one consequence was the circulation of the Jatakas, the birth-stories of Buddha, from Bengal or more probably Magadha, throughout the countries of Europe and the Middle East.⁵

Abdul Gafur Siddiqui of Khulna, Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisarada of Chittagong and Ashraf Hossain Sahitya-Ratan of Sylhet, all in Bangladesh, collected a considerable amount of folklore from their own areas and published articles in various popular journals. Scholars are using this material in comparative studies.⁶

The folktale collections by Upendra Kishore Roy Choudhury and Daksinaranjan Mitra Majumder deserve praise. Choudhury's collection of animals tales, *Toontoonir Boi* (1910; Book of Toontooni) and Majumder's marchen and ritual tales *Thakur Dadar Jhuli* (1908; Grandfather's story), *Thakur Mar Jhuli* (1906; Grandmother's story), *Than Didir Thale* (1911; Grandmother's bag), *Dadamoshær Thale* (1924; Grandfather's bag) and others were published during this period. Majumder was probably the first collector to use a phonograph in field collecting, and all his books faithfully reproduce typical folktales and folk life in the then east Bengal. Jogindra Nath Sirker's *Khukumanir Chara* (1902; Folk Rhymes for Children) in an authentic collection of Bengali rhymes. It is interesting to note that almost all of these writers used materials found mostly in East Bengal-now Bangladesh.

Mansur Uddin, another prominent folklorist of Bangladesh, took up the task of collecting Baul songs, which had been started by Tagore. After the publication of the first volume (1939) with perface form Tagore, in 1942, Calcutta University published his second volume of Hara-Mani (Lost Gems), which included a few hundred songs. Since then 12 additional volumes of his collections have been published in Dacca. Jassim Uddin, who started his career as a collections of folksongs and folktales. He was, however, most famous for his use of folklore themes in dramas and in poetry. His published folksong collections include Rangila Nayer Majhi (The Boatman of the Green Boat) in 1938. His collection of humorous folktales, published in Bengali as *Bangalir Hashir Galpa* (1960) appeared along with English translation. He also published *Jarigan* (1968) and many other publications. Special mention should be made of Late Abbas Uddin, a scholar, accomplished singer, and collector of folksongs. His influence in the contemporary folklore movement of our country is immense. Hundreds of his genuine folksong records pressed by commercial recording companies sold like hot cakes. Popularly known as the father of Bengali Folk-songs Abbas Uddin has made folksongs popular and has created a school of folksingers in Bangladesh. These three scholars, Mansur Uddin, Jassim Uddin and Abbas Uddin, represented the country at Folklore Conferences held in London, at Indian a University in Bloomington and the Germany, in past years.

The third phase of the folklore movement was begun in Dacca, then East Bengal, in the year 1938. In that year a conference was held under the auspices of the Eastern Mymensingh-Literary-Society, at Kishoreganj. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, then Chairman of the

Department of Bengali at Dacca University, a lover of folk-tradition, in his presidential address lauded the great value of folklore study and his remarks were carried by many of the journals and newspapers of the country. This enthusiasm resulted in the formation of the Eastern Bengal Folklore Collection Society' at Dacca University. Dr. Shahidullah became its President, and Asutosh Bhattacharya its Secretary. Chandra Kumar De, a collector of Eastern Bengal Ballads, Sirajuddin Kashimpuri, Ashutosh Choudhury and Purna Chandra Bhattacharya, other enthusiastic collectors, and Jassim Uddin joined their efforts in this project. A.K. Fazlul Huq, then Chief Minister of Bengal, patronized the project and promised substantial monetary support. Shortly, courses in folklore were included upto the graduate level in Dacca University.

Shahidullah's contribution (a follower of Benfey's Indianist school) was important because he clearly pointed out that folklore materials pass from one country to another and hence a comparative outlook was a must. While Dr. Shahidullah showed the international aspect of folklore, Guru Saday Dutt, an inhabitant of Sylhet and later posted in various districts of East Bengal, as a civilian, contributed a series of articles on folk arts and crafts of Bengali in international journals. Asutosh Bhattacharya's *Bangla Mangal Kayjer Itihas* (1939) and *Banglar Loka-Sahitya*, (1954) are however, prominent works during this period. His books include much materials from his native East Bengal which he collected while he was residing here.

Folklore activities was, however, much accelerated when the then Government established The Bengali Academy in Dacca in 1955 to promote research work on Bengali language and literature. The council of the Bengali Academy, in its very first meeting made a decision to promote collecting, preserving and publishing of folklore materials. Sufficient funds were allocated for this purpose. Circulars were issued all over the country through newspapers, private organizations and government agencies, requesting that folklore materials be sent to the Academy.

A number of folklore collectors were appointed by the Academy to work on the project in the regions rich in folklore. As a result, folklore materials of high quality poured in an unending stream. While collecting was thus being established on a systematic basis, the Academy began to publish folklore collections. The first publication, *Momenshahir Loka-Sahitya* (Folklore of Mymensingh), collected and edited by Rowshan Izdani, came out in

1957. His book contains specimens of different genres of folklore material of his native Mymensingh district. Izdani was, however, a good collector.

In May, 1960, mainly based on the proposal of the present writer, a fresh graduate from the Indiana University and chief of Culture and Folklore section the Folklore Committee of the Bengali Academy resolved that the folklore materials collected by the Academy should be edited by eminent scholars before publication in a scientific method. The Committee decided that each editor should work with a particular kind of material from a specific region. In the introductory chapter, the editor was instructed to cover the following points:

1. Information about the field and the informants
2. Social and cultural background of the material
3. Functional use of each genre
4. Typical regional characteristics, if there are any
5. Historical elements, if there are any
6. International circulation, if it can be determined
7. Literary value, etc.

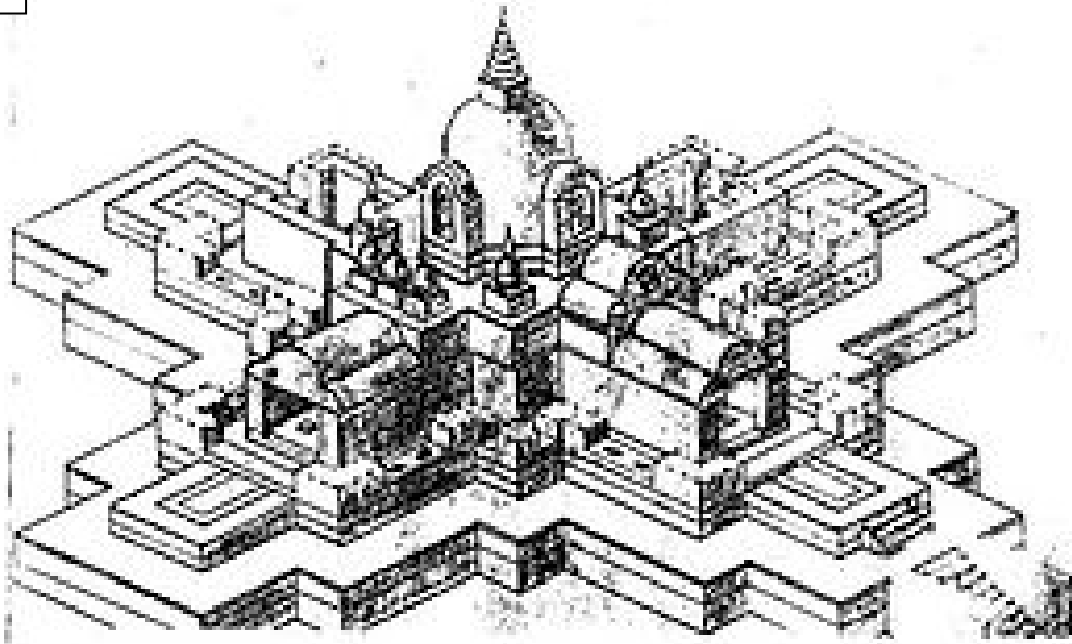
So far the Bengali Academy has published a huge number of books including some in English, thousands of books may now be compiled from the huge material collected by the Academy.

[Source: Folkloric Bangladesh by Dr. Ashraf Siddiqui]

5. Case study

Paharpur or Sompura Mahavihara is the most ancient academic structure found in Bangladesh and the oldest relic of folklore "Charjapad" is found in the same vicinity.

fore this structure holds great significance in terms of function allotment, zoning,



planning and geometry.

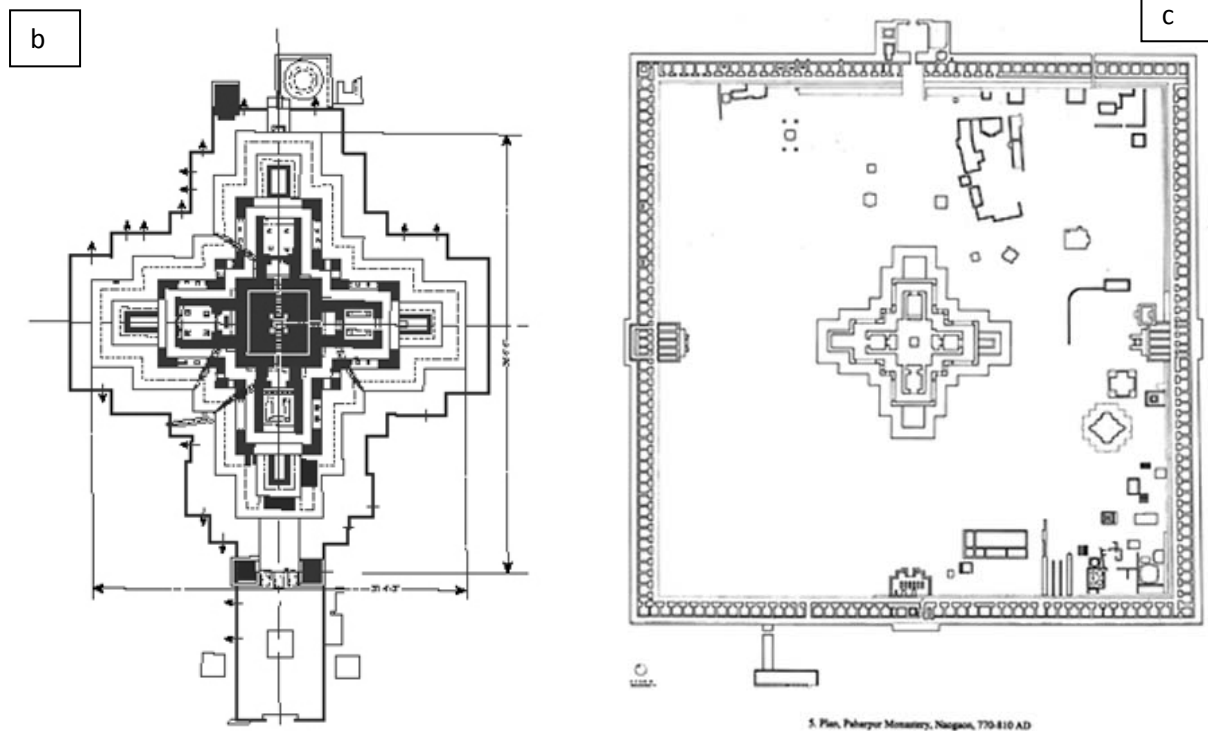


figure 13, 14, 15 : a. sketch of somepur mahavihara. b. plan. c. masterplan [wikipedia]

Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) is a multi-arts Centre located in Jaipur in India. It was built by Rajasthan government with the purpose of preserving Rajasthani arts and crafts. The centre has been made in eight blocks housing museums, one amphi theatre and the other closed auditorium, library, arts display rooms, cafeteria, small hostel and art-studio. It also houses two permanent art galleries and three other galleries. And host its own theatre festival each year.

[Source: Wikipedia]

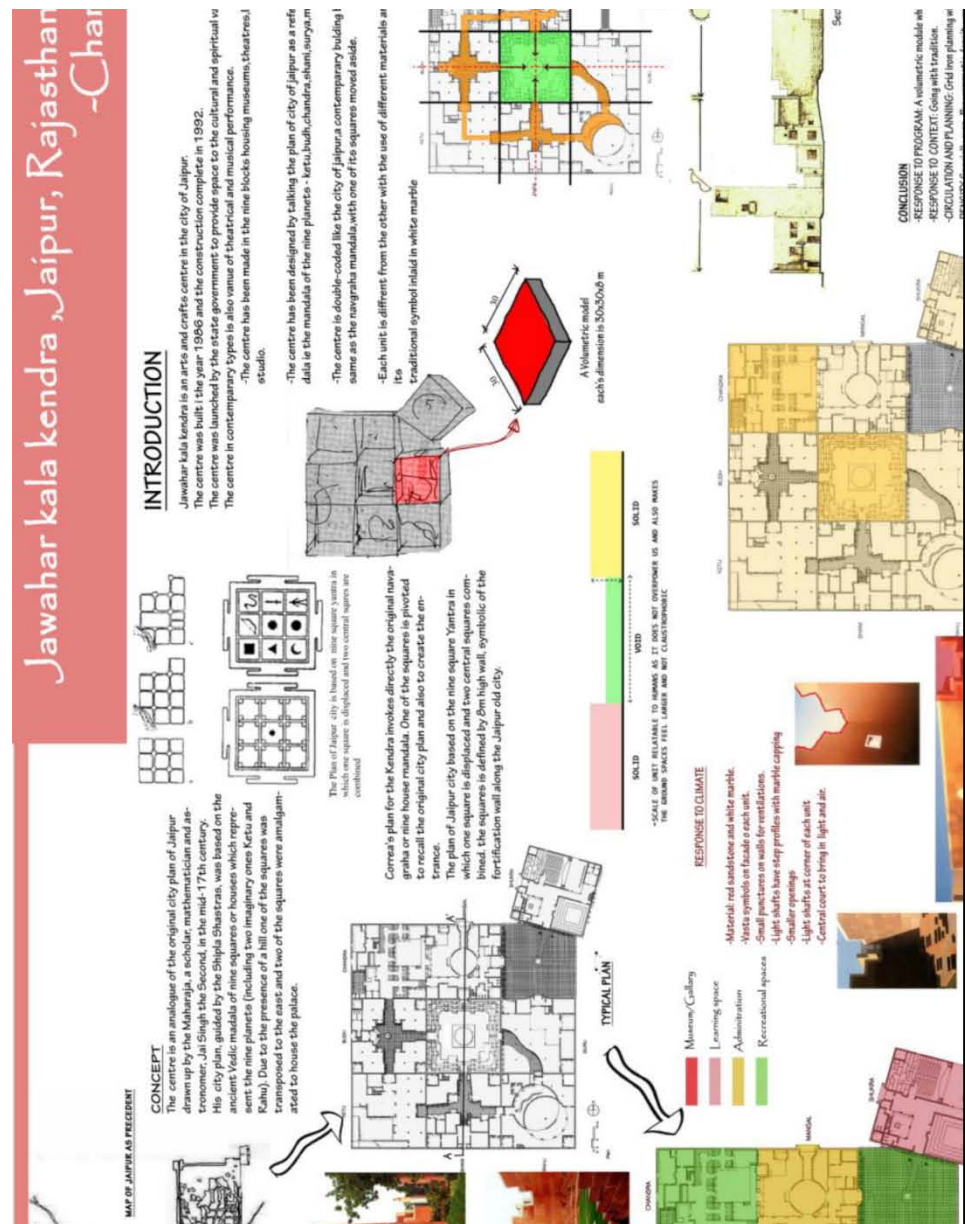


Figure 16: comprehensive study of JKK [Saajan Sharma]

CHAYANAUT BHABAN

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, DANCE, DRAMA & PERFORMING ARTS
DHANMONDI R/A, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

NOMINATION FOR 'GREAT MASTERS AWARD' (GMA)
OR 'CHAIRMAN'S AWARD' (CMA)

PROJECT- 5.05

CLIENT	: CHHAYANAUT
ARCHITECT	: BASHIRUL HAQ
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	: SAIFUL BARI
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	: MUSLEH UDDIN AHMED
PROJECT COMMENCEMENT	: 2004
PROJECT COMPLETION	: 2006
TOTAL BUILT AREA	: 42,000 SFT.
COST	: TAKA 46,000,000.00
PHOTOGRAPHER	: Ar. NURUR RAHMAN KHAN

The Chayanaut Bhaban houses a very special cultural organisation in Bangladesh. Established in 1961, Chayanaut was part of the movement for an independent Bangladesh and provided a space for cultural expression and protest. It has since become a music school, and its students over the years have become the main standard bearers of the music and dance traditions in this country.

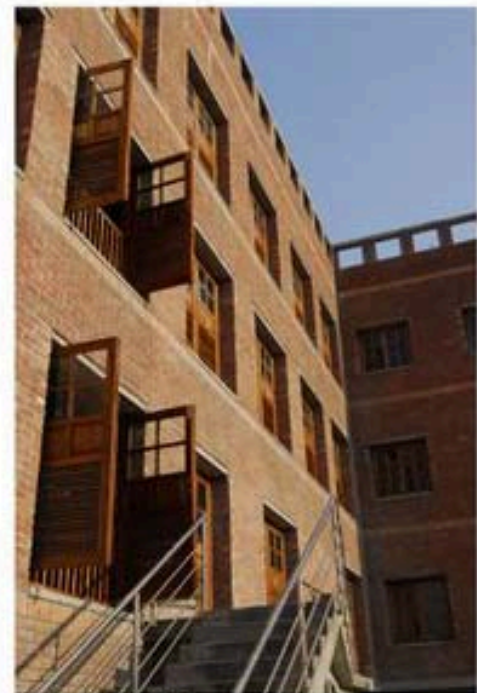
Designing this school and cultural centre was a special honour for any architect in the country. The task was to design a building that would reflect our culture and traditions, as well as give a sense of the struggle that marked the history of this organisation. The financial constraints demanded an innovative design solution. Coupled with financial constraints, the site was also not very conducive to the creation of a cultural space, situated as it is on one of the busiest roads of Dhaka city

Given these factors, the architect opted for a simplicity of expression, and to bring in natural elements into the building. Simplicity and closeness to nature were taken as the main elements of Bengali culture, which this building was to symbolize. The use of natural materials such as brick and wood was thus emphasised. The building had to embody a return to nature even within these very urban surroundings, bringing in memories of the rural within the urban. Simplicity of form and rusticity of style had to be transformed into an aesthetic form which would cater to the multifarious uses of the building.

As a music school, the Chayanaut Bhaban required spaces for classrooms, music and dance studios and discussion rooms. As a cultural centre, it had to have an auditorium, including green room and so on, smaller performance spaces, a musical archive and resource centre. Common spaces for cafeteria, 'hang-out' spaces for students and visitors had also to be incorporated into the building.

An atrium has been designed to bring in light and air, and also to provide circulation space around it. A skylight at roof level brings light directly into the entrance foyer. There are also jalousies to help air flow. On the first floor, the cafeteria provides the common space. Entry to the auditorium, with a separate staircase, is also from this floor, so that the cafeteria can be used by students as well as performance audiences.

Greenery has been carefully designed. Existing trees were retained to create a sound barrier and protection from the westerly sun. This greenery has been taken into the building, where the light and air qualities of the entry foyer are used for indoor plantation. Moreover a roof garden over the stage area has been designed to enable students to enjoy the outside environment.



VIEW FROM TERRACE



VIEW OF ENTRY LOBBY



VIEW OF CAFETERIA



VIEW OF SKYLIGHT ABOVE ATRIUM



VIEW OF CIRCULATION AREA AROUND ATRIUM

NOMINATION FOR 'GREAT MASTERS AWARD'
OR 'CHAIRMAN'S AWARD'
CHAYANAUT BHABAN-PROJECT 5.05



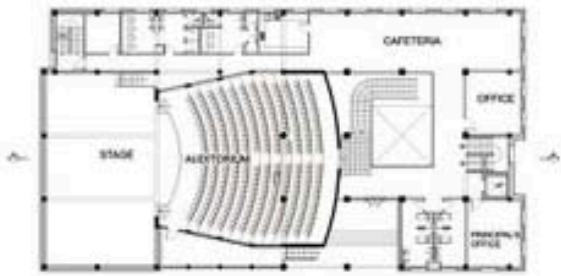
3RD, 4TH & 5TH FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2ND FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1ST FLOOR PLAN

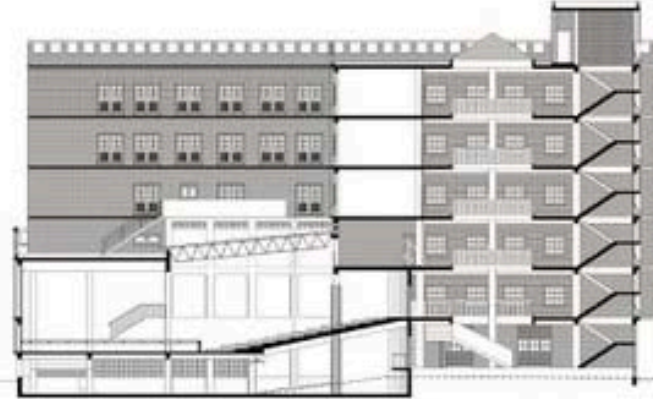
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN

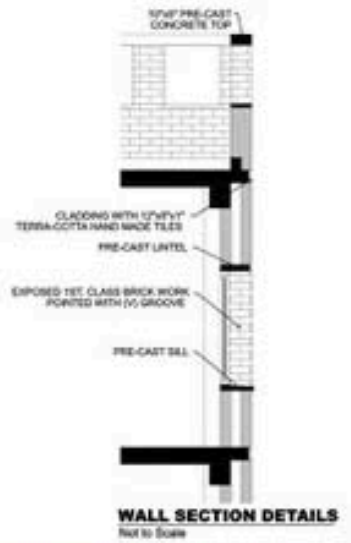
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

SAT MASJID ROAD



SECTION A-A

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



WALL SECTION DETAILS
Not to Scale



VIEW FROM SOUTH-WEST

Figure 17, 18, and 19: plans, section, elevation and analysis of Chayanaut by Great Masters Award or Chairman's Award. [Source: Facebook/pages/Architect of Bangladesh]

6. Conceptualization

As the site is on the bank of the river Brahmaputra from which this city and civilization has emerged, it only makes sense that folklore is the connection- a bridge- or a gateway between the past and the present, between the river and the city.



Figure 20 and 21: conceptual sketches.



7. Program development

Programs are divided in separate blocks according to departments and zoned vertically in terms of accessibility.

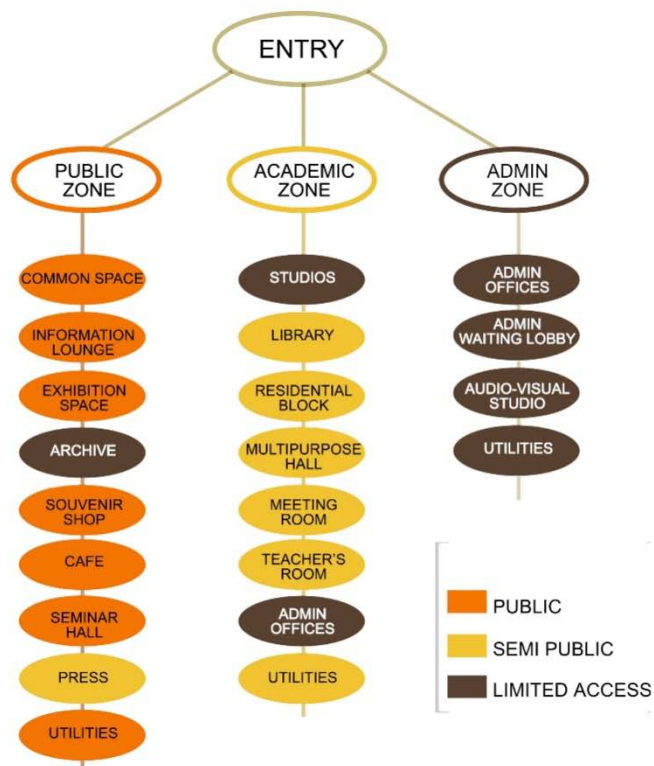


Figure 22 and 23: schematic bubble diagram and accessibility zoning.

To accommodate main three departments:

Department of folk arts and crafts, Department of folk music and Department of Folk performing Arts. Addition to that, there is archiving and printing departments in which there are exhibit and library as sub departments respectively.

As the primary function of this facility is academic therefore the function has been kept in ground level for clarity and accessibility. Yet this is a semipublic function, whereas the public functions are taken to the sunken level such as exhibit, cafeteria, press, auditorium etc. these public function is adjoined by an amphitheater which also works as a plaza and a gathering place.

More restricted and private functions are taken to the upmost level and placed in such a way which has control yet has the utmost accessibility from the inside. Therefore functions



such as administration, offices, studio and digital archives are placed on the top level. The residential block has been placed totally separated from the main programs.



Figure 24: placement of different type of functions.

8. Form development:

From the study of 9 squares in JKK which was derived from “vastu shastra” the climatic considerations were accepted in designing this project.

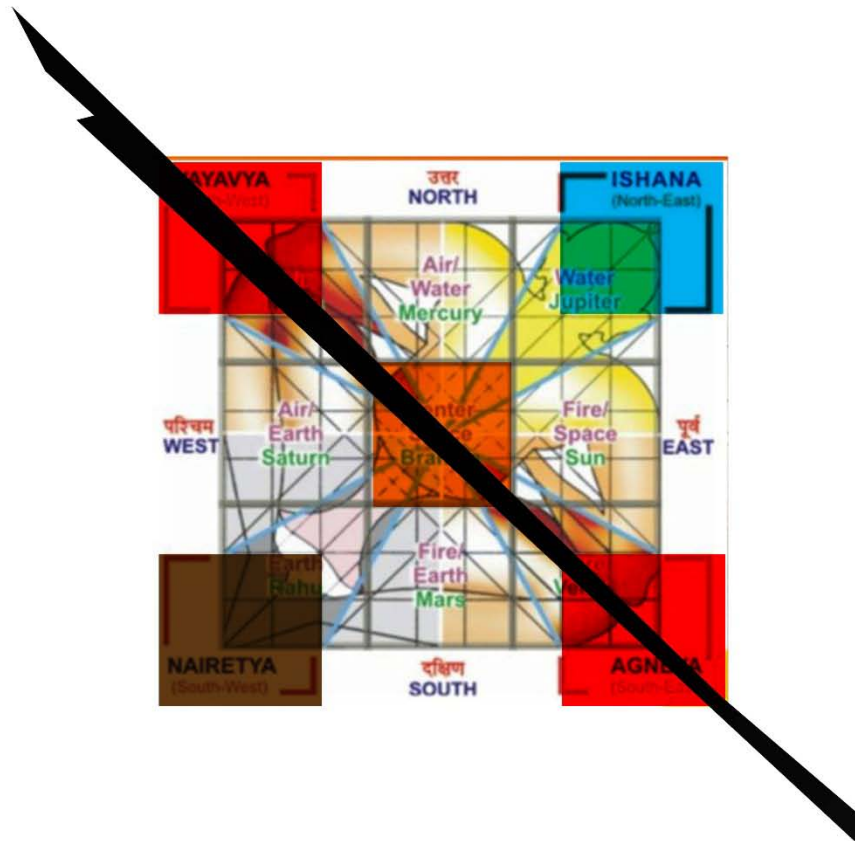


Figure 25: orientations, spaces and elements according to vastu shastra. [image: Wikipedia]

As the site has water on the “ishan” corner as same as and similar conditions on as above, these considerations played a key role in the design. As “brahma” signifies both the pinnacle and the courtyard, both were accommodated and secondary courtyards were introduced which gave rise to four main blocks in the ground level, 2 in the sunken level joined by the plaza and one on the top level.

Blocks were set so that nairatya or south west gets minimal exposure and air may flow through south to north or south east to North West.

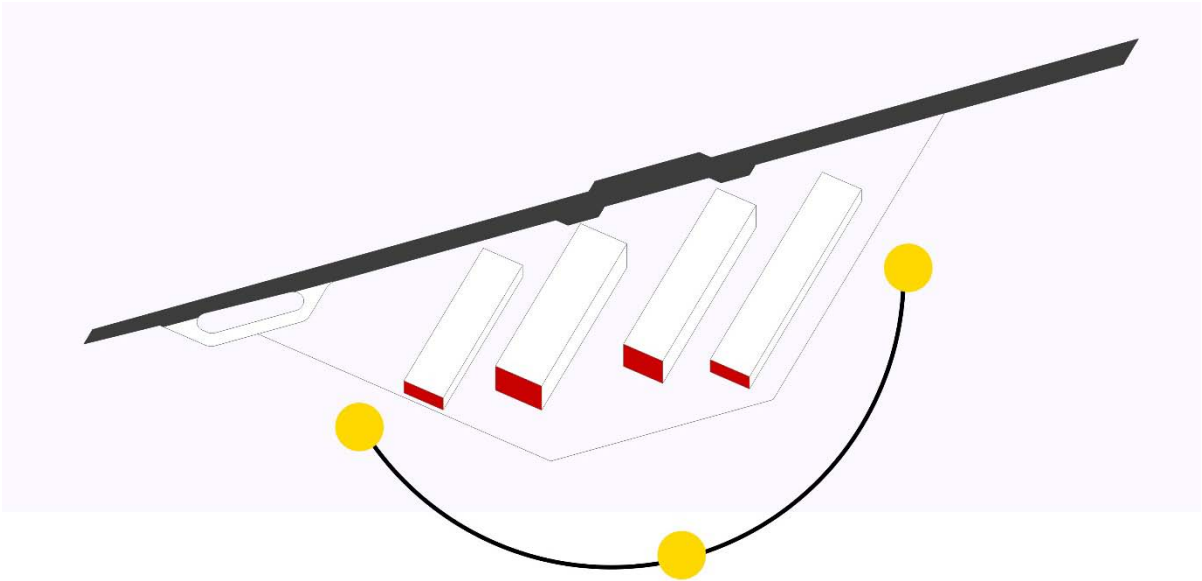


Figure 26 and 27: sun path consideration and wind flow consideration.

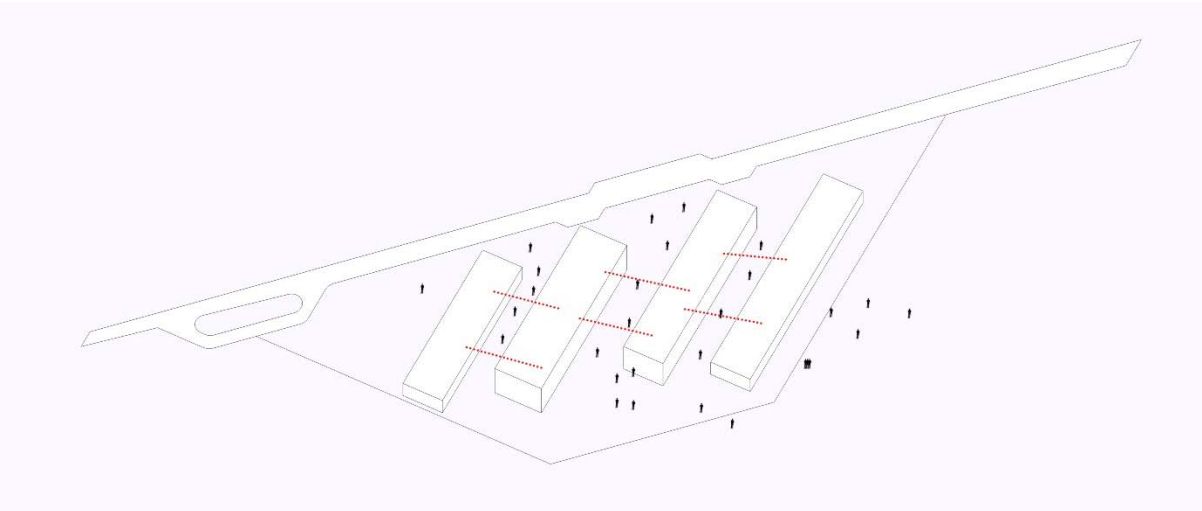
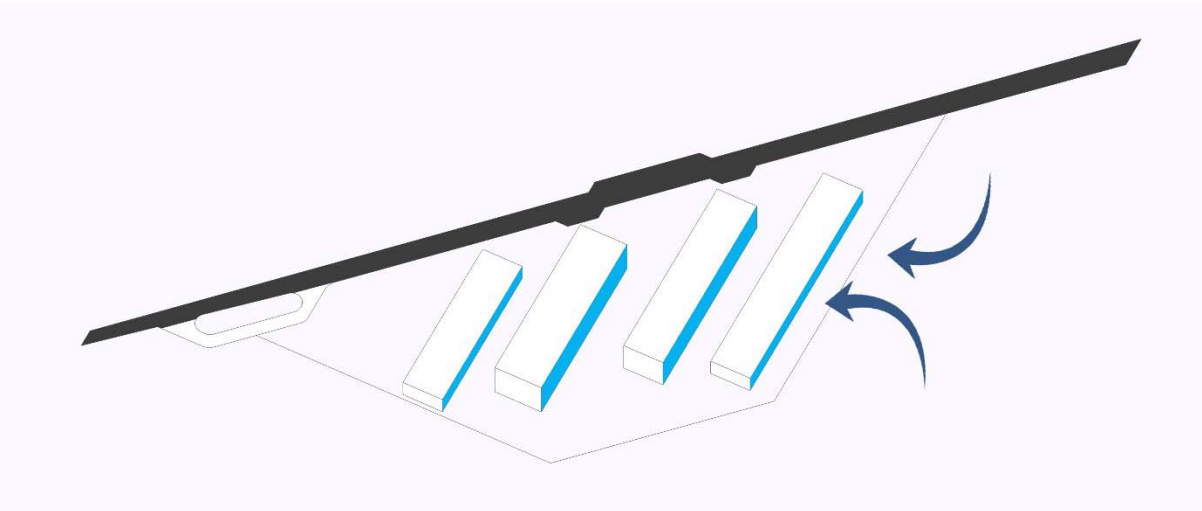


Figure 28: inter-block connections and east-west considerations.

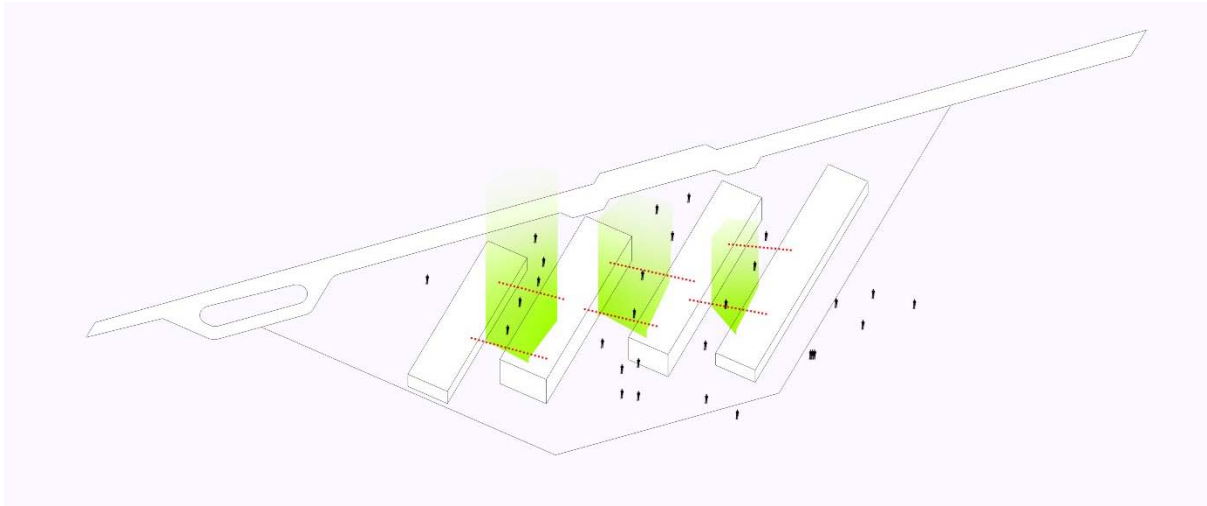
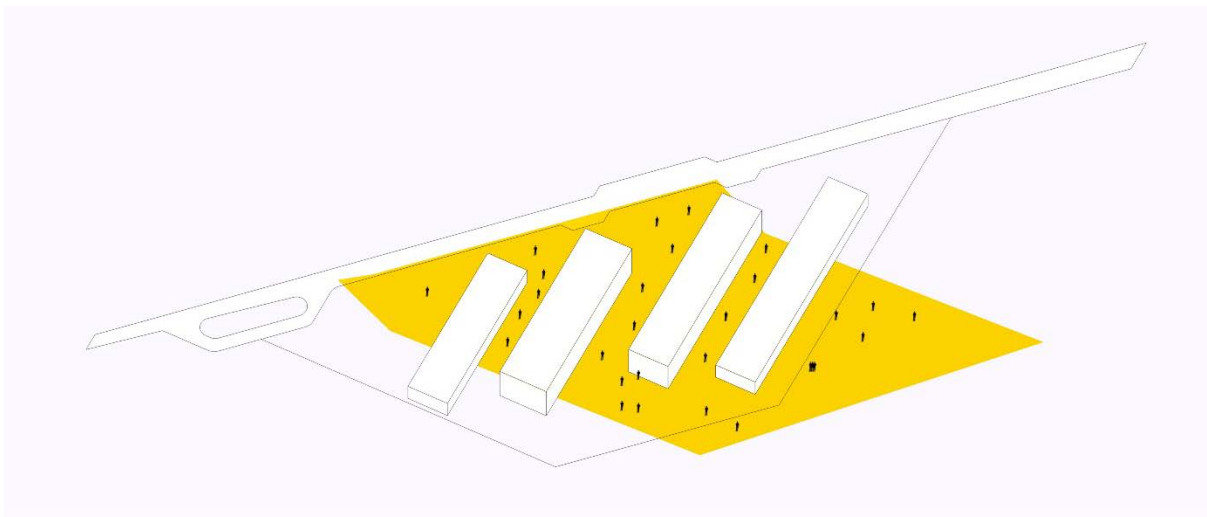


Figure 29 and 30: formation of courtyards and plaza.



Keeping in touch with traditional architecture and site conditions, climatic considerations from Vastu Shastra and master planning and geometrical study of Shompura Mahavihara, Jahar Kalakendra by Charles Correa and Chhayanaut by Bashir-ul Haq has been key factors to design this Academy. Additional functions and opportunities has have been implemented for the completion of this project as well as creating a civic space by creating a Mukto Moncho (for which the Government already has a separate proposal) has been incorporated in the design.

In scale the project has been considered so the mass does not over power the site and can blend in with the landscape.

RESPONSE TO PROGRAM: Emphasis on creating well defined volumetric module.

RESPONSE TO CONTEXT: Inspiration from history and heritage, time and experience.

CIRCULATION & PIANNING: Manipulating grid-iron planning and connectivity according to functions and space generation.

DENSITY: Provision of various density to regulate the play of spaces.

HIERARCHY: Definition derived from the functional division of spaces.

COMMUNITY SPACE: Flow of formal and informal spaces within grid, the void as the Experiential Transitional space

RESPONSE TO CLIMATE: Central void to channelize cool wind and drive out hot air from the complex, small wind catcher openings at south and big exits at north to ensure both natural light and ventilation

BUILDING LANGUAGE: Derivation of tradition, user-comfort and Vastu vidya

MATERIALS: Local materials, traditional elements

RELATIONSHIP TO LANDSCAPE: Blend-in with the morphology

In the end this establishment is design in such way so that it will not only conserve our rich folkloric heritage but also inspire others to practice it by taking them through a transition of space and experience.

9. Design phase:

Considering above factors the following plans, sections and elevation are produced. In which the attempt was taken to blend it in with the landscape at the same time the grandeur of inner spaces kept intact.



Figure 31: ground floor level plan.

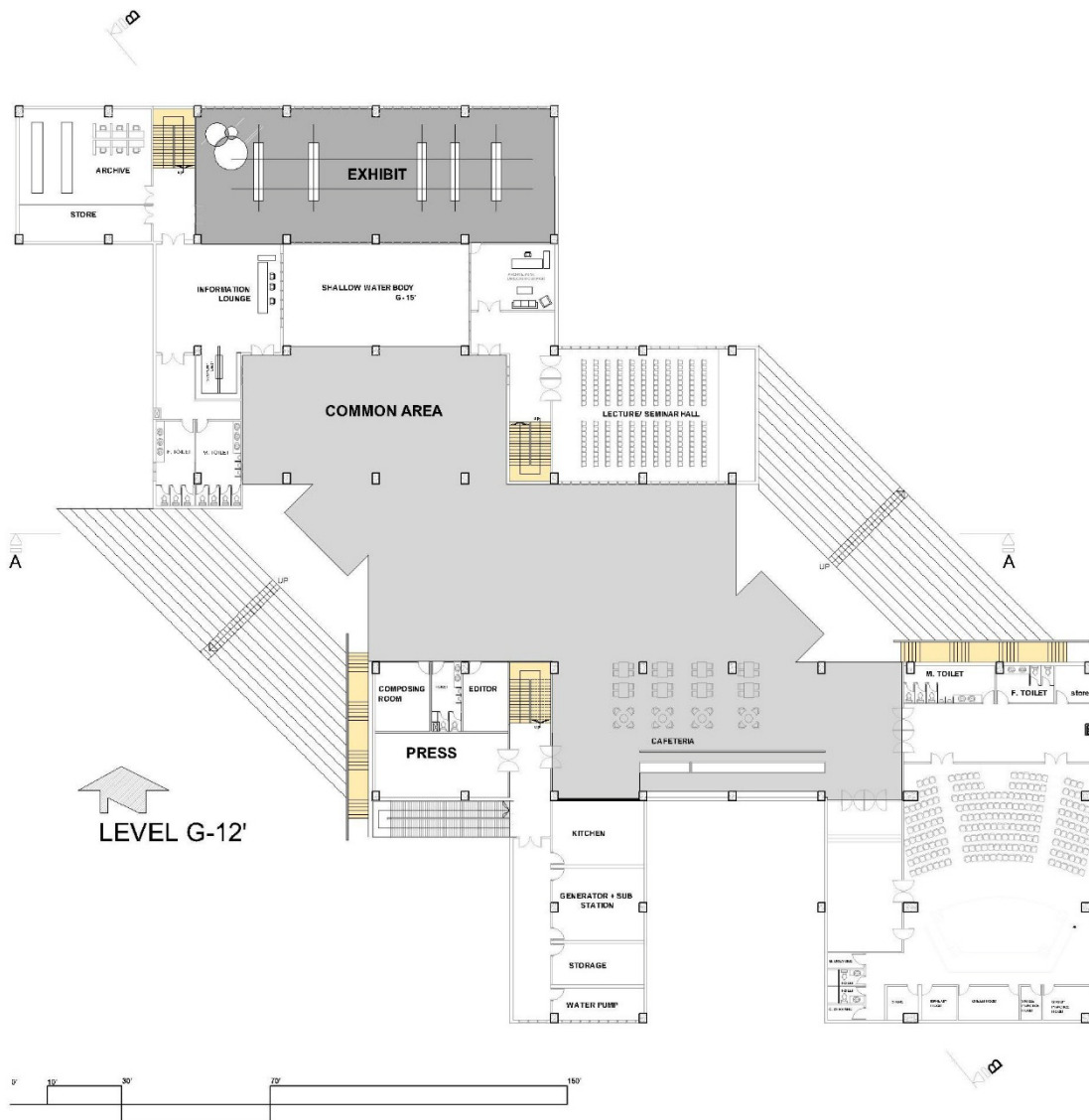


Figure 32: sunken level pan.

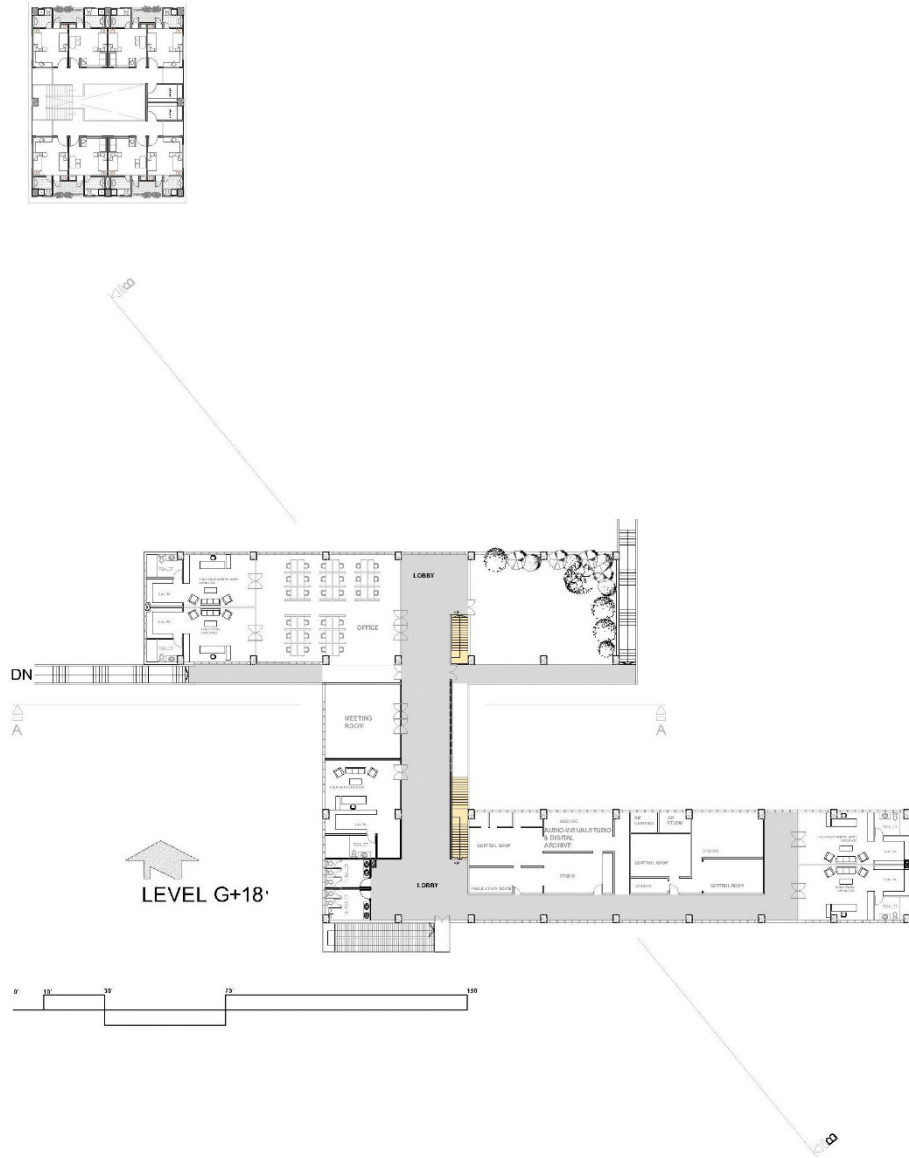


Figure 33: first floor level plan.

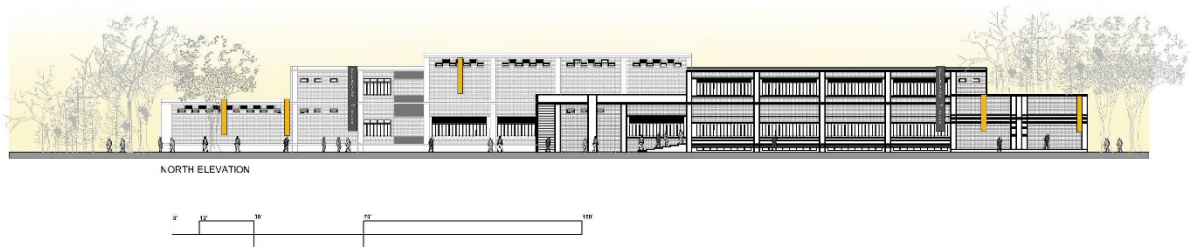


Figure 34: north elevation.



Figure 35: section A-A.



Figure 36: sectional perspective B-B.

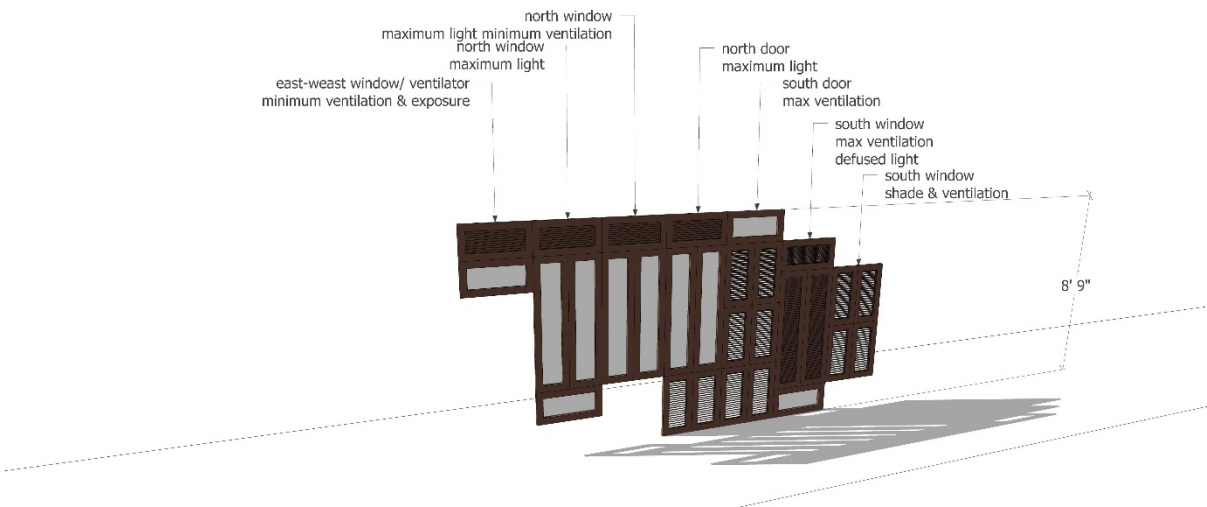
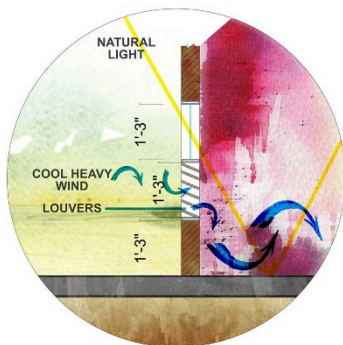


Figure 37: door-window typology.

Figure 38: window-louver detail.



CONTINUOUS NATURAL VENTILATION BY CREATING AIR TUBULATION WHERE LOW-POSITIONED LOUVERS AS SMALL OPENINGS CATCHING HEAVY COOL SOUTHERN WIND

10. Conclusion

A folklore academy that represents the heritage at the same time shows the possibility of a brighter and enriched future was goal of this project. Through the modesty of its exterior and the grandeur and playfulness of the interior the philosophy and essence of our folklore has tried to be harnessed.

The inspiration from tradition has been taken and strived to put the intangible to tangibility.

Thank you.