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EDITOR

SUPREO CHANDA



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UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA
KOLKATA

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Editorial

Journal of the Department of Museology, University of Calcutta, is a refereed (blind) journal having ISSN and included in the approved list of journals of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Papers published here have been duly reviewed (double) by the internationally reputed reviewers. The Journal has achieved a set standard within a short period of its existence by publishing academically credible papers from India and abroad. The Journal has got a clearly defined Ethics Policy. A dedicated webpage is there for the Journal in the official University website bearing necessary details making the policies and principles quite transparent.

The Editorial Board decided to dedicate the current issue on the topic *Conservation of Heritage: Heritage of Conservation*. This volume contains twenty one relevant papers, which were finally selected from the forty received after thorough review and modifications, though some still have scope for improvements. Contributors comprise academics, museum professionals – senior, middle and junior, and research scholars. It must be admitted that unfortunately almost all the papers received restricted to the first part of the intended topic and the second part remained grossly unrepresented.

As usual, the editorial policy emphasised on maintaining uniformity in language, grammar, expression and reference system. Utmost care has been taken to exclude gross mistakes and controversial statements; nevertheless the freedom of expression has not been tampered with. A small number of papers definitely lack in terms of expression but have been included considering the uniqueness of topics dealt in. It is sincerely hoped that like the previous ones this issue of the Journal would also be able to meet the high expectations

of the stakeholders. Constructive suggestions are welcome for the betterment of the Journal.

I express my sincere gratitude to Professor Sonali Chakravarti Banerjee, Honourable Vice Chancellor; Professor Dipak Kumar Kar, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; and Professor Sudakshina Gupta, Dean (Arts) of the University of Calcutta for providing unstinted support.

At the last I would like to put on record my acknowledgement of active cooperation received in editing and making the publication possible to all the referees, who reviewed the papers meticulously and forwarded their unbiased views/ suggestions to improve the quality; my colleagues in the Department, Dr Mahua Chakrabarti, Dr Indrani Bhattacharya, Mr Sanjit Jotder, Dr Dhriti Ray and Dr Piyasi Bharasa; and the contributors of the papers. My sincere thanks are due to the Registrar of the University of Calcutta for kindly publishing it and Dr Apares Das, Superintendent of the CU Press, for printing the Journal so professionally.

24 April 2018
Kolkata

Supreo Chanda
Editor

The views expressed in the papers published in this issue of the Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor. Responsibilities of facts, figures, illustrations, photographs, etc., and authenticity rest with the Contributors.

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Conservation of Heritage: Heritage of Conservation

Atul Chandra Bhowmick

The topic has a palindromic (that reads alike backwards and forwards) sequence transposing (interchange) the syntax of repeated words to alliterate (beginning with the same words) rhetorically conservation in litotes (GK) (emphatic affirmation) but not phraseologies. The first part is a laboratory chemical persuasive curative surgical operation, while the secured part to related to concept of preventive attitude reflecting awareness about conservation of heritage elements hovering from historical perspective.

Heritage is that which is inherited from past generation, maintained in the present and allow to remain it for furtherance of use in society. It is more easily comprehended by a Sanskrit term *aitihya* denoting plurality of meaning, namely in – heritage, legacy, tradition, culture (*sanskriti*) and the like. Even *sanskriti* (*sam* = entire, *kriti* = to act) may commonly be equated to in totality the human activity in all works, the valued things passed down from previous posterity, termed enculturation in anthropological phraseology. Better it is referred to sum total of knowledge, attitude, idea and socially learned behavioural pattern, collective expression and to disseminate distinctive way of life of a homogeneous community in a particular zone.

Conservation is primarily concerned for rescue and restoring objects with protective technique for survival of heritage items irrespective of tangible or intangible falling to decay caused by mostly natural or artificial processes of destruction aiming to prolonging the life of objects as long as possible to return like to their original close physical condition and aesthetic look, for which a background knowledge of fine arts, history, archaeology is basic. Conservation is synonymous otherwise in every sense to preservation. Fundamentally conservation includes operations, such as cleaning, impregnation, consolidation, strengthening and stabilizing process to ameliorate objects ensuring preventing curative reversible methods mostly for rectifying the destructive deterioration factors anew. Damage is caused

mostly by the ill effects of bio-deterioration and other natural phenomena, save and except human malice, photo-chemical action, controlling climatic fluctuation of sensitive temperature and relative humidity of the environmental condition, shielding of accumulation of fine dust thrown against the wind and dirt particles, periodic cleaning, regular dusting, wear white cotton gloves to handle objects, preventing polluted obnoxious gases, maintain the right degree of temperature ranging between 20⁰-24⁰C and relative humidity between 45% and 60% in Indian tropical country, use of dehydrated silica-gel as dehumidifying device, preventing growth of harmful biological agents, like, insects, mildew, parasitic micro-organisms with evaporated volatile naphthalene or a corked open 40% formaldehyde vapour under 20⁰C and 60% RH in cupboards and showcase shelves, but not more concentrated formaldehyde as it tends to stiffen the fabric of the treated object for forming formic acid as insect fumigants or paradichlorobenzene act as insect repellent or rescued by thymol fumigation or proper ventilation for free circulation of air in galleries as a means to vermin growth besieging, use of protective louvre as light filter to absorb the emitted out UV radiation from light sources aided with yellowish Plexiglas UF-3 or acrylic sheet or coated with phosphorous or zinc oxide or titanium trioxide, controlling the intensity of the sun beam by velum of sun-breaker or Venetian blind or simply by curtain in caution, encapsulation with a membranous case to protect light bad effect, resizing, de-acidification, desalting soluble salts, like, sodium carbonate, calcium sulphate by immersion in water tested with silver nitrate with appearance of no further flocculent sediment precipitation of all purposes, these are alternative underlying guidelines providing effective safeties for relieving the displayed objects escorting against the evil influence of damaging.

Heritage conservation denotes manifold to prevention of damage, safe maintenance, up keeping, safe-keeping, safeguarding, protection and care in all senses. Conservation of cultural heritage as a distinct field of study initially introduced in the Koniglichen Museum at Berlin in Germany in 1988 for disseminating conservation approach.

The paper aims to safeguarding and reducing the rate of deterioration of heritage complex comprising tangible items of archaeological wealth, like, splendid timeless architectural marvels, sculpture, *Nataraj Shiva* bronze sculpture of Chola period in the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur in Tamilnadu, art and crafts of material objects, textiles not hung, placed on flat slightly larger slanting support for display, roll using acid free paper and intangible elements having no physical form of non material oral evidence of vibrant folk-tales, oral history, prevailing performing rites and ritual ceremonies, watchful faith and beliefs, art atelier, other living culture, even *mantra* (hymn) of sorcery mostly in the tribal society. The *Fakiri* song at Patharchapur *Uras* fair in Chaitra (March-April) at Siuri at Birbhum on Hazarat Dada Mehebut. Sahwyalis death anniversary each year and *baul* traditional song *Surjahan* peach music as *Sufi sutra* are to be noted as community identity and pride.

The tangible heritages are protected by qualified chemical professional expertise and their potential work forces passing away without bewildered, while intangible cultural heritages conservation awareness of the masses is highly acclaimed as preventing approach followed by oral recording, video recording, audition, even flex hoarding for posting and exploring and if these are lodged in safe custody of patrons, the commissions the high echelon of society horizon for taking care look beyond the care of its promotion and growth with liberty leading to conservation. In museological common parlance the aim of conservation is to ensure the significance of heritage elements with increasing understanding for guarding the decaying heritages without ignoring the whatsoever their value and importance, rather ascertaining its accreditation and affiliation.

The earliest historical harbinger of conservation in India is echoed from the attempt of Lord Buddha (568-486 BC) as early as 6th century BC, who advised *bhikkus* (*arahants*), the Buddhist mendicants/ monks to deal with reality this problem *per se* (L.) not to eat the flesh of horse, elephant, lion, snake, etc., as mentioned in the *Vinaya-Pitak* highlighting rather a symbolic relation between men and animals from conservation point of view.

Bodhisattava Avalokitesvara as *Kopiraj* (King of Monkey) in *Mahakopi jataka* saved other monkeys without further delaying in crossing over the formed hanging *sanko* (bridge) and in *Nigrodha jataka* Sakhamriga (monkey) saved a parturient pregnant deer about killing by Varanasi king Brahmadata, thus saving the continuity of birth of young.

Asoka (273-236 BC) protected many animals which are evident from the rock edict at Dhauli, Jaugada in the Ganjam district in Odisha in abolishing the sacrificial slaughter of heifer (she-calf), goat, ram and the Rampurba Pillar edict V in Champaran in North Bihar declared slaughtering of Parrot, ruddy geese, white pigeon, water bird *nandimukha*, tortoise, puputaka, a Ganges fish and the plethora of slaughtering in the full-moon of *Pous* (December-January) in *tisya* ceremony carried no sacrosanct value. Haltigumpha inscription at Udaygiri hills at Bhubaneswar in Odisha, Kalinga King Kharavela in the 2nd Century BC records heritage in extolling the performing dance, song, concert and acrobatics in a spirit of joy and vigour.

Tolmy Sotar I established a big library and a museum of curious heritage objects collected from different countries subjugated by Greek Macedonian King Alexander, the great (333-325 BC) during his war expedition for storing which as well echo a sense of preservation of heritage conservation, besides higher research intention.

Another paradigm of heritage conservation is found in the *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazal Allamy that Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) protected a non-flying large extinct bird dodo of Mauritius island in the Indian Ocean, near Madagascar island, east of Africa, but found also at that time in India, now reported to found dodo in Australia.

The *satras* of 16th century in Majuli island (502.21 sq. km.) of the Brahmaputra river of Assam, established by Sankaradeva (1449-1568) and Madhavadeva (1489-1586) keep safe the folk gods and goddesses, customs, faith, beliefs, the collective memory of cultural value of the people living therein through heritage items, like, *thogi* (platter of the holy *Bhagavata*, sarai (platter), *boha* (wooden cup), *satra's* architectural parts, collected by

bhakta sisyas (disciples) reflecting the religious feeling of the people living there about their *Vaishnava* faith with social wisdom.

In Egypt Pharaoh Culture embalming of mummy with aromatic herbal medicinal oil and filmy linen as long as 1323 BC was an ancient system of heritage conservation.

Helmut De Terre and T T Paterson of Yale – Cambridge University expedition in the Siwalik hills in 1935 was not allowed to take important historical and religious relics, which are considered as an attempt of heritage conservation from the Indian part.

Quite a few examples of heritage conservation from socio-religious angle are put forward for consideration. In the *Durga* family *Shiva* adores on neck a snake as garland, *Durga's* vehicle is lion, owl standing flaccidly over a Dexter figure of *Lakshmi*, goose standing gracefully of *Saraswati*, peacock of *Kartika* and rat of *Ganesh*. Owl eats rat, peacock snake, goose snail – all affecting the chain of ecological balance of nature but that is maintained in order by the presence of powerful lion as the controlling head. These as well infuse a sense to preserve the animal world of *bahanas*. Vulture is a *lanohana* of God *Soni*, which is necrovorous. Killing of vulture will be obstructed to keep clean the ambient environment, hence killing of vulture is forbidden as an age old tradition. Hilsa fish is banned by law to catch after *Durga puja* in October as that time the spawning season of it. Catching during that season is total annihilation of its fingerlings. If any one desires to send fired, palm balls or rice cakes to relatives living at distance, a pinch of salt or ash or both together considering as overdose protection is put over these for warding off the desirous ghost longing for over the food, a practice rises to a height of prevailing social behaviour in rural Bengal. Even Khanar *bachans* (dictums) like –

Mangaler usha budhe pa. Jetha ichchha setha ja.

or

Aage hate pichhe bhala jadi dake maya.

These all become shastric prescriptions of social behavioural context elevated to heritage pattern followed by orthodox conservatives at time not to go out from home in *Magha*, the tenth star among twenty seven stars, viz., *Bisakha, Anuradha, Jyestha, Mula, Purbasara, Sravana, Dhanistha, Satavisha, Purbafalguni, Magha, Uttarfalguni, Hashta, Chitra, Swati, Purbasadha, Purbavadrapada, Uttarbavadrapada, Rebati, Aswani, Varani, Kritika, Rohini, Mrigasira, Adrya, Punbrasn, Pusya, Aslesha* as an inauspicious moment in the *Aswayadi* constellation grouped to form an imaginary horse in the *jyotirmandal*.

Military personnel even took step to conserve heritage artefacts, which is evident from General Eisenhower, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Second World War who issued a formal warning for safeguarding the cultural property on 29 December, 1943 that is the duty of each army commander within the limits of possibility for protection and salvation of literary and scientific works, original artistic, historical monuments, historical archives, historical documents, antiquities, libraries, museum valuable materials of the country in which the troops are engaged, since the cultural heritage truly symbolizes the civilization. That idea was not followed subsequently, Naval Admin, Deputy Director of the National Museum, Bagdad, Iraq repeatedly requested in 2004 the American Army Officers to provide a few armed guards for the protection of museum objects. Notwithstanding no help was rendered. Antiquities were damaged and looted out.

The whole range of prevailing antiquarian laws enacted for conservation of heritages was the Indian Museum Act, no. X in 1814, followed in framing laws by Government are the Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878 by Lord Lytton, Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 by Lord Elgin, Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, no. 24 and Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, no. 52, which was subsequently improved and amended to cope evenly with arisen situation.

Finally, conservation of heritage is for social ethos of man and man for heritage. The Archaeological Survey of India is the organization for protection of the remains of national importance and owns 3650 enlisted heritage

monuments and archaeological sites, mausoleums, observatories, national parks, railways, caves, rock-shelters, forts, temples, mosques in India, of which 133 in West Bengal including 29 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The World Heritage Sites are considered to be bearing outstanding universal value, integration for legal protection beyond any frontier barrier.

The World Heritage Sites in India are – 1) Agra Fort (1983), 2) Ajanta Caves (1983), 3) Ellora Caves (1983), 4) Taj Mahal (1983), 5) Mahabalipuram Temple (1984), 6) Sun Temple, Konarak (1984), 7) Kaziranga National Park (1985), 8) Keoladeo National Park (1985), 9) Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985), 10) Fatehpur Sikri (1986), 12) Khajuraho Monuments (1986), 13) Monuments of Hampi (1986), 14) Elephanta Caves (1987), 15) Chola Temples (1987, 2004), 16) Pattadakal Monuments (1987), 17) Sundarbans National Parks (1988, 2005), 19) Sanchi Buddhist Monuments (1989), 20) Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993), 21) Qutb Minar, Delhi, (1933), 22) Mountain Toy Trains – five in number, viz., Western Ghat, Konkan-Neral Matheran (1999, 2005), Nilgiri Hills-Kunur-Udagamatalam (2010), Kalka–Shilma, Kulu, Himachal Pradesh (2014), Kangra Valley-Pathankot-Joyindarnagar and Siliguri-Darjeeling, West Bengal, 23) Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya, Bihar, 24) Bhimbetka Sprawling Rock-Shelters, Madhya Pradesh (2003), 25) Champaner-Pavagarh Archaeological Park (2004), 26) Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus, Maharashtra, 27) Red Fort, Delhi (2007), 28) Jantar Mantar, Jaipur, Rajasthan (2010) and 29) Bombay University (2018). The World Heritage Sites in India had been declared first in 1983, maximum number 4 continued till 2010. The Chola temples and Western toy train way different parts in two years. West Bengal has two World Heritage Sites only, namely the Sundarbans National Park and the Darjeeling Mountain Railway.

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Intangible Heritage and Biocultural Diversity Redefined

B Venugopal

1. INTANGIBLE HERITAGE (IH):

1.1. UN Conventions: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. Cultural Heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value. Natural heritage refers to outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants and areas with scientific, conservation or aesthetic value. By regarding heritage as both cultural and natural, the Convention reminds us of the ways in which people interact with nature, and of the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two. From 1972 when the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was launched, Heritage always meant Tangible Ones only. However, from 2003, when the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was launched, Heritage means either Tangible or Intangible. Accordingly we may consider World Heritage into two categories, Tangible Heritage based on the 1972 Convention and Intangible Heritage based on the 2003 Convention. For the purpose of the UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage "means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural

spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.”

- 1.2. IH Domains: The “intangible cultural heritage”, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested *inter alia* in the following 5 domains:
 - 1.2.1. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the ICH;
 - 1.2.2. Performing arts;
 - 1.2.3. Social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - 1.2.4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
 - 1.2.5. Traditional craftsmanship.
- 1.3. Asian concept of Heritage: Accepting the general feeling of Asian countries where it is difficult to distinguish between the cultural and natural aspects of Heritage, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as mentioned in the 2003 Convention, has been re-designated as Intangible Heritage (IH) which is considered as a coin with Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and Intangible Natural Heritage (INH) as its two sides. While the domains 1, 2, and 3 come under ICH, the domains 4 and 5 are under INH.

- 1.4. Intangible Natural Heritage (INH): The domains 4 and 5 of IH (i.e., Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe as well as traditional craftsmanship) include knowledge, know-how, skills, practices and representations developed by communities by interacting with the natural environment. These ways of thinking about the universe are expressed through language, oral traditions, feelings of attachment towards a place, memories, spirituality and worldview. They also strongly influence values and beliefs and underlie many social practices and cultural traditions. They, in turn, are shaped by the natural environment and the community's wider world. This domain includes numerous areas such as traditional ecological wisdom, indigenous knowledge, knowledge about local fauna and deforestation and the ongoing spread of deserts.
- 1.5. Urgent need for protection of INH: The importance of documentation of INH equivalent to TKBD (Traditional Knowledge about Biodiversity) is highlighted by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) itself. The document on Biodiversity Action Plan, by the MoEFCC mentioned that "The documentation of traditional knowledge available in our ancient texts is being undertaken by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), in the form of a computerized database called Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL). Preparation of PBRs is expected to document the un-coded oral traditional knowledge of local people. Considering that this would be a stupendous and time consuming exercise, there is a need for an All India Coordinated Project on Traditional Knowledge for documenting the un-coded, oral traditional knowledge of local people, especially of little-known bio-resources of potential economic value" (Page 19, *National Biodiversity Action Plan*, MoEF, New Delhi, November 2008). Accordingly there is urgent need to launch an All India Coordinated Project on INH/ Traditional Knowledge about Biodiversity similar to Projects of MoEFCC such as All India

Coordinated Project on Taxonomy, All India Coordinated Project on Ethnobiology, etc.

- 1.6. Geographical Indications (GI): One of the important aspects of INH is GI. These are indications which identify goods as originating in the territory or a region or locality in a territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. By registering a Geographical Indication in India, the right holder can prevent unauthorized use of the registered geographical indication by others and promote economic prosperity of producers of goods produced in a particular region. Typically, such an indication conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin in that defined geographical locality, region or country. For example, “Kanjeeपुरam Silk,” “Katputhlis of Rajasthan,” “Lucknow Chikan Craft” and “Darjeeling Tea” are geographical indications designating the specific geographical origin from which they originate. Several traditional products, produced by rural communities over generations that have gained a reputation in the market for their specific qualities also qualify as GI.

2. BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY (BCD):

- 2.1. Diversity of life in all its manifestations is important for the survival of life in this planet Earth. It is generally called as Biocultural Diversity. It comprises the diversity of life in all of its manifestations – biological, cultural, and linguistic. .
- 2.2. Policy-makers tend to focus narrowly on protecting only the intellectual component of knowledge systems – while for communities it does not make sense to protect knowledge and not the resource with which it is used. In the indigenous worldview, intangible knowledge and tangible resources cannot be separated. The concept of BCD reflects this holistic worldview where traditional

knowledge (TK), biodiversity, land, cultural values, linguistic diversity and customary laws are closely inter-linked and interdependent and these may indeed be the key elements that sustain in practice.

- 2.3. The concept has allowed a better understanding of the conditions and trends affecting TK, and of the responses needed to effectively protect TK from loss as well as alienation. Thus, many of the tools developed have focused on protecting rights to biocultural diversity systems as a whole, not just TK. As a general rule, TK and traditional varieties are being lost fast, and protection from loss is often as or more important for communities than protection of rights.
- 2.4. Components: The different components involved in BCD are given below:
 - 2.4.1. Biological Diversity (BD): Biological diversity – or biodiversity – is the total variety of living organisms found in a given ecosystem, biome, or the whole biosphere. It can be measured in a number of ways: at the level of species, of their habitats, and of their genes. Species richness (the number of species in a given area or globally) is the most commonly used measure of biodiversity. Because most species have not yet been identified and classified, estimates of the number of species on earth have varied greatly. Recent estimates suggest that there may be as many as 8.7 million species of animals, plants, fungi, and protists (single-celled organisms) in the world today (plus perhaps 10,000 species of bacteria and archaea), of which only slightly over 1.2 million have been catalogued.
 - 2.4.2. Cultural Diversity (CD): UNESCO has defined cultural diversity as the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted

through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used (2005, Article 4) ... Cultural diversity is the variety of human cultures, that is, the variety of worldviews, lifeways, knowledge and value systems, practices and forms of expression displayed by different human societies. Some have suggested that the total diversity of the world's cultures forms an "ethnosphere" – a global web of human cultures. How many different cultures there are in the world is difficult to quantify, because cultural boundaries are permeable, and many cultural traits overlap across multiple social groups. Due to these complexities, commonly the number of different languages is used as a proxy for the diversity of cultures. This is because language is a fundamental marker of cultural identity and the main tool for the transmission of culture.

2.4.3. Linguistic Diversity (LD): LD is the variety of human languages spoken in a specific region, or in the world as a whole. There are about 67,000 different languages in the world today. Language and culture are interlinked. Language is the main tool for the transmission of culture. It is also a fundamental marker of cultural identity.

2.5. USES OF BCD:

2.5.1. The diversities of culture and biology representing the BCD, and their respective traditional knowledge systems (i.e., ICH and INH respectively) are utilised judiciously by the Communities through Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) so that the same are carried over to the future generations. These are described below:

2.5.2. Sustainable Development (SD) of Biological Diversity: SD is defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs.’ Traditional bearers of ICH are often located among marginalized sections of the society. It is a ground reality that poverty is created by lack of opportunities and employable skills. Recognition and revitalization of traditional knowledge and skills as livelihood provides opportunities for economic regeneration and poverty alleviation. Safeguarding strengthens community identity, recognition, and pride. This encourages the artists to integrate more fully in society and take part in the development process. Impact includes non-monetized outcomes like reduced migration, improvement in health, education and other quality of life indices as people start taking interest and ownership in achieving the sustainable development goals.

- 2.5.3. Safeguarding Practices (SP) of Cultural Diversity: One of the important component part of the 2003 UN Convention is “Safeguarding,” which means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage. Safeguarding Practices related to Mudiyetu are assumed to be responsible for the inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge among Mudiyetu IH Practitioners.

3. COMPARISON OF IH AND BCD

- 3.1. It may be seen, from the foregoing paragraphs, that there are similarities between BCD and IH. The major difference is on the inclusion of Language as a separate entity itself in BCD where as it is under Domain 1 of the 5 Domains of IH.

3.2. The following Table gives a comparison:

No.	Name of Domain	BCD	IH
1	Language or Oral Traditions including Languages	LD	ICH
2	Performing Arts	CD	
3	Social events, Rituals and Festive events		
4	Knowledge about Nature, Universe	BD	INH
5	Traditional Craftsmanship		

3.3. However, these definitions seem to incomplete as it ignore the due importance to the Geological Diversity (GD) which is the basic of all diversities. Geological diversity, botanical diversity, zoological diversity, cultural diversity and linguistic diversity are the sequential aspects of diversity of life in the world based on the study of origin and evolution of life on Earth. There is no biological diversity (botanical and zoological) without geological diversity; there is no cultural diversity without biological diversity; there is no human diversity without biological diversity; and there is no linguistic diversity without cultural diversity.

3.4. Here it may be pertinent to know about the following

- 3.4.1. Geology, Botany and Zoology constitute Natural history or Natural Heritage.
- 3.4.2. Botany and Zoology constitute Biodiversity
- 3.4.3. Anthropology in India was originally a part of Zoology. Here it may be mentioned that the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) was established, from the collections of Zoological Survey of India which owes its origin from the Indian

Museum, Kolkata. As person who worked as the Director of the Indian Museum during its 200 years anniversary, it is fortunate for me to go through some of the records in this regard.

- 3.4.4. Anthropology has two major divisions: Physical (dealing with Science) and Cultural/ Social (dealing with Culture).
- 3.4.5. Culture is part of anthropocentric approach to life.
- 3.4.6. Before language as we know today (written language) came to existence, communication was through visual forms. It is considered that rock art communication preceded textual communication. Language is considered as an indication of Culture.
- 3.4.7. Accordingly we may consider the following sequence while discussing about Diversity: Geology ... Botany ... Zoology ... Anthropology (Physical) ... Anthropology (Cultural) ... Linguistics.

4. IH AND BCD REDEFINED:

- 4.1. Out of the two approaches to Diversity (i.e., IH and BCD) mentioned above, the latter gives only lip service to the role of geology. While considering Diversity of any type, it is important to give priority to geological diversity on account of its being the starting point in the sequence of all diversities. Accordingly, a new approach is suggested which may be called as Nature-Culture Diversity (NCD), which may further be grouped into Natural Diversity and Cultural Diversity. While the former may be sub-grouped into Geological diversity and Biological diversity, the latter may be sub-grouped into Cultural diversity (proper) and Linguistic diversity.

4.2. The following Table gives a summary of the various approaches to Diversity:

No.	Subjects/ Discipline	APPROACHES TO DIVERSITY			
		Intangible Heritage (IH)	Bio- Cultural Diversity (BCD)	Nature-Culture Diversity (NCD)	
1	Geology	Intangible Natural Heritage (INH)		Geological Diversity (GD)	Natural Diversity (ND)
2	Botany		Biological	Biological	
3	Zoology		Diversity (BD)	Diversity (BD)	
4	Anthropology (Physical)	Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)	Cultural Diversity (CD)	Cultural Diversity proper (CDp)	Cultural Diversity (CD)
5	Anthropology (Cultural)				
6	Linguistics		Linguistic Diversity (LD)	Linguistic Diversity (LD)	

4.3 Accordingly, the terms Nature-Culture Diversity (NCD) as well as Intangible Heritage (IH), encompass all types of diversities prevalent on Earth where as the term Biocultural diversity (BCD) does not.

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Conservation of Oral Ritual Narratives and Proverbs: Some Reflections

Swati Bhattacharya

This paper is basically an attempt to seek out the answers to such questions that have been troubling me for quite some time. I had the good fortune of being born at a time when technology had not encroached in our life to such a great extent; so much so that I had seen a number of *bratas* being performed both in the rural and urban settings. They had appealed to me initially for the stories, which had a touch of the magic realism about them, narratives where the tree separates itself to hide two hapless girl, the cats not only talk but argue with their patron goddess Sasthi, where the sad wife of a polygamous husband talks to the utensils of the kitchen and curses her co wives. Besides the narratives the visual aspects of each and every *brata* highly appealed to me. Not only the *alponas* associated with these ritual performances but the color of the different seasonal flowers and fruits fascinated me too. Later on while attempting to do an extensive study on oral narratives and the *brata* art of Bengal I was overwhelmed by social significance the variety of narrations and displays in different parts of Bengal.

For example let me take up the story narrated as a part of Ashoka Sasthi a *brata* performed by the women folk, especially the married women with children to avoid diseases and untimely death leading to inconsolable grief or soka (a = no – soka = grief). The narrative is about a girl Ashoka who had been adopted by a sage. She gets married to a king and the sage gives her some seeds of the Ashok tree to be scattered all the way to her in-laws' house. After enjoying years of marital bliss, one fine morning she wakes up to find all the members of her family had died. Devastated she follows the trails of the Ashoka trees and reaches the sage's hut. The sage finds out that Sashti Devi is enraged and gives her some holy water to be sprinkled on the dead. She is also advised to eat the dried ashoka flowers and observe a fast on the *sasthi* in the month of Chaitra to avoid disastrous happenings in the

family. As you can make out this oral ritual narrative addresses the issues like conservation of the environment, and the time places the narrative in the heart of Bengal at a time when ashoka flowers are in full bloom, eating of ashoka flowers indicates the need to seek refuge to nature to avoid disasters, etc. But the question is – are we eager to decode these oral ritual narratives which had been an integral part of our hegemony?

It was in searching the answer, that I had realized how in a country like India where one finds a rich array of cultural diversity, and the oral narratives, still very much in vogue, contributes silently to “an aesthetic of immediacy.” I prefer to call them oral narratives because they do not always adhere to the fixed formula of a beginning middle and end, prose and verse often overlap each other and quite often they appear to be disjointed narrations almost as if the narrators/ or performers were just thinking aloud. Last but not the least is the fact that they are all word to mouth tales of communities transmitted from generation to generation. These genres belonging to the world of orality comprise of the different tales, doggerels, proverbs and rhymes. Yet they remain the imaginative formations of generations of anonymous story tellers, and not of any particular individual. Having a very flexible configuration and its dependence on the repetitive style, these oral narratives have often been stretched to the optimal point to include all the supplicants present and often condensed or stretched to suit the temperament of the participants present. These were considered as the chattels of the entire female members of a particular community. Storytelling sessions had not only helped in educating the younger generation and making them aware of the tradition and custom of the community life. In the indigenous community life of Bengal these tales served both the purposes of entertainment and keeping alive of the oral genres of the *rupkatha* (tales of kings and princes) and *upakatha* (stories about fairies and demons) by turning them into *bratakatha* or ritual narratives. Thematically they are variations of the folktales and generally follow the indigenous, oral style typical of a particular community. They provide a paradigm to the audience who are prompted to work on the oral dynamics of a participating group of people.

The conservation of intangible resources like the oral narratives, both ritual and general, and proverbs has seldom been carried out consciously. This happens mainly because despite the awareness about its import it often becomes difficult to situate the community in terms of emergent urban myths and politicized ambience of the modern setting. The study and conservation of oral art of narration involves lot of effort because of the fast dwindling traditions. With the advancement of protective movements the need for conservation of intangible heritage seems to be the need of the day. It is virtually impossible to indulge in any sociological, anthropological or cultural studies by ignoring the oral narratives so integrally connected with the life of the people of Bengal or so to say India.

As these oral genres were primarily the forte of the people, the folk goes without saying that, considered as resources, they create and form the space as well as the dynamic backdrop against which the human drama has been enacted for centuries, in different parts of Bengal. These swiftly sketched anecdotes with hurriedly drafted scenario that comes rapidly to the point (in most cases the focusing on the good health of the spouse/ brother/ father/ father-in-law, in other words the male members of the family, and their financial gains) reverberate with secret wishes much beyond their immediate context to create a up-to-the-minute fantastic world of comfort.

The conviction that intangible resources like oral ritual narratives are like the souls of historic areas is yet to register deeply enough to reach the grassroots levels. I admit that lots of books are being written based on the field works done by the young and the matured scholars but these attempts though laudable, often fail to reach the goal. Primarily the oral ritualistic narratives like the *bratakathas* in prose or in verse tell only half of the story the rest depends heavily on the intonations, and spontaneous and traditional activities. In other words these aspects of performances are left to one's imagination. However the people reading them might or might not be familiar with those performances, consequently the readers, often fail to re-enact the scene in their mind and the whole performance become de-contextualised yet failing to attain a new perspective. In fact the genre of ritual narration

takes for granted the presence of two agents the performer and the listeners. As is obvious the performers' works were mere emulations of time-honoured performances. Yet it cannot be denied that these oral narratives along with the performances construct kind of a moral fibre of the time and therefore the survival and transmutation of its spirit become vital to the living national and regional cultural heritage. All these ritual narratives have an element of drama at the core and are often narrated as a conversation between two characters. In a famous *brata* known as *Asotthopata brata* (performed with the help of the leaves from the Peepal tree) one hears a conversation between Siva and his consort Parvati. It should however be remembered neither Siva nor Gouri in these narratives have much similarity with the classical deities. Siva here sounds more like a curious husband asking his wife the benefits of performing this particular ritual. Gouri in her turn chants a few lines that kind of justify the need for observation of this particular ritual. The supplicants in their turn would repeat those two lined verses and take a ritual dip in the river/ pond.

Besides, the aesthetics and artistic facet of these ritual performances can be traced back in the everyday philosophy of the simple people whose struggles and travails have prompted them to seek refuge to gods of small things, the gods who don't demand much from the financially dependent women of a household. The artistic *alponas*, usually drawn with the rice paste and a piece of rag on the floor are integral part of the ritual performances. Yet they are nothing more than symbolical motifs arranged in the form of a design and are often appreciated as distinctive, symbolical and highly artistic, too are products of years of training at times refined by the individual skill or inherent talent. In my view these served as a moral code of conduct and a boundary to their hopes and desires ambitions and desperations. The proverbs on the other hand were the safeguards to these codes. These pithy sharp and coined statements held in them lessons for the members of a particular society/area and community and art at the same time had a reflection of the world view or *jibon darshan* of that particular group of people. It was absolutely integrated to the everyday vocabulary of these illiterate people who could use these as guidelines.

Since we are discussing the importance of protecting the oral ritual narratives one should in this case have to be very particular about the use of language, the words they use the typical accent of the area should be focused on. As we all know language is like a flowing river it keeps on gathering new words and embracing them with the passing of time but the words used in the colloquial Bengali or so to say in other similar languages are often dying an untimely death due to our craze for the so called global and cultural superimposition Bollywood national language. But it is well known to everyone interested in and working with oral narratives that the words used by the illiterate and semi literate village folk are often illustrative in a strange kind of way. These words which are almost impossible to translate hold in them the flavor of a particular language. The very use of a particular word can be the identifying marks for the people of a certain area, but in our attempt to document these, the words are often changed to suit the taste of the urban readers or the scholars. The refinement though common is not always desirable. The language encases important linguistic features both in phonology and morphology too, and is therefore a treasure house of resource of studies in linguistics. Most of these colloquial terms have yielded place to their more refined versions and with them is lost much of the entertainment values of the ritual chanting. Some of these words did not have any literal meaning but had been adopted for the sake of rhyme. Yet these rhymes throb with the novelty of idiom, and sincere emotional ardor of some illiterate but worldly-wise women keen to express themselves.

In this context it wouldn't be irrelevant to recall a well-known comment by Rabindranath Tagore who was one of the pioneers of collecting the rhymes from the villages and the aesthete in him was somewhat disappointed at the use of so called slangs in the poems. These rustic words add the local flavour to this prose/ verse narratives and often add very sharp visuals to them. One can recall the description where the woman of the house is praying for her future happy life and what is that? "The fire in the hearth burning/ the fan constantly moving/ comfortably in a new home/ heartily shall I spend time as the lucky woman who dies before her husband." The simple wish, simply

narrated, does not fail to portray the picture of a cosy home and a content wife in it.

By now it must have been apparent that comprehensive understandings of the folk rhymes/ narratives associated with the *bratas* allow one to gain an insight into the popular culture. These *bratas* reflect the basic aspirations and customary social trends in an otherwise static enclosure of the world of the women and as a binary, to that of the men. The relevance becomes apparent because it reveals the intricate and complex designs, the undercurrents running deep down. It gives us an opportunity to delve deeper into the psyche of the group of people where quite often preconditioning the position of the other and marginal were the order of the day. From the very childhood the girls were fed with the ideas of the husband like Rama, a brother-in-law like Lakshmana and the concept of Sati *nari* were ingrained in their mind. On the one hand we get sayings like, I will get a husband like Rama/ a father-in-law like Dasaratha/ a brother-in-law like Lakshmana/ I will be as chaste as Sita / Will be a mother like Kunti ..., etc.

On the other hand there are proverbs like “only after a woman is burnt on a pyre after her death and ashes fly to the sky can a woman be praised for her qualities.” Again there were proverbs prevalent in the society which justified the polygamous careless husband by comparing them to a golden ring which even when twisted didn’t lose its value. These chauvinistic views in their reveal the root cause of the insecurities that had prompted the women to take refuge in the magic world of these ritual worship/ narratives in search of some psychological stimuli. Thus in most of the *brata* narratives one gets lines like:

“the sons would be born but wouldn’t die,
 Let it be as I never need to cry
 my son being rocked in the lap of my husband
 Let the Ganges be my death bed”

Above and beyond the network of *Brata* narratives reveal much more than are apparent. In them one finds references to child marriage, polygamy,

relation and status of the various members in the family and the desire to have enough male children so as to achieve complete control over the polygamous husbands. The venomous lines uttered in the form of ritual chanting often appear shocking. The woman draws the image of a ladle on the floor, puts a flower on it and chants, "Ladle o ladle, oo ladle/ eat up my co-wife's head, o ladle," the deep sense of betrayal she feels at her husband's remarriage seeks its expression through this chanting which to her appears to be potent with a magical power. At times in these narratives are implied references to the socio-historical events too. Strange as it may sound one finds references to women being abducted by the whites. In the context the synergetic aspects of these narratives should be considered too. The rhymes and rituals associated with ritualistic performances of *naldaka* for agricultural bounty, and a few other observances like *chashar chheleder bhiksha* (begging alms for successful cultivation) are chanted both by the Hindus and Muslims.

Way back in 1997 in the intangible Cultural Heritage Programme intangible resources were given the highest priorities in the cultural field as a means to fill the hiatus in the concept of world heritage. Still the idea of conservation in this context can never be confined within mere literary documentation but also as some kind of interpretation, evaluation and penetration into the socio/ cultural perspectives. The purpose would be to figure out the reality scientifically that relies neither on glorification nor on indifferent and impersonal documentation where facts and figures appear as data but the human mind and its thoughts are obliterated. Ideally it would provide an insider's view that can emerge only by working in unison with the members of that particular group community or area still using this oral narratives as the backbone of their world which geographically might not be far from the urban centers but ideologically and intellectually these two ways of life have a gulf between them. No doubt it's easier said than achieved. Undoubtedly there are certain huge problems like the understanding that these intangible resources are gradually becoming couched, a memento of an era where each word and discourse had evolved out of a world of myth beliefs social norms and religious ideas. Naturally certain methodological difficulties

would arise, the primary among them being the fast disappearing world of belief that had contributed to growth and integration to the society offering them a mode of entertainment too. Again audio visual sources and models, and replicas of different objects used could be utilized in order to preserve and protect these intangible resources as proper conservation would imply perception of their whole existential reality of historical events, aesthetic views, natural environments, myths and beliefs. These narratives taken together along with its visuals/ installations and performances could aim to make up part of what Ramanujan calls the “indissolubly plural” nature of India’s oral traditions, and the multiplicity of women’s (and men’s) perspectives encoded within. Thus the aim should be to highlight the knowledge, artistry, skill and wisdom of culture bearers and to compromise with them during the research production compilation and presentation. Only then it would emerge like a cultural dialogue relevant to contemporary life.

Reorganization of Museum Storage – A Proactive approach of Preventive Conservation: IGNCA's Initiative

Achal Pandya and Shilpi Roy

Abstract

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: IGNCA has been making efforts for launching a national campaign on 'Reorganization of Museum Storage' in active collaboration with the ICCROM, aiming to safeguard the rich resources that have been haphazardly stored for long times in varied museums throughout the country. 'Re-org' is a proactive approach of preventive conservation which provides a systematic, step-by-step approach to improve the collection's prospective for use and access, while ensuring its long-term conservation, and thereby efficient functioning. This paper aims to combine know-how, experience and networks of IGNCA towards this initiative to contribute significantly in establishing best practice to assist museum professionals to execute meaningful changes in their storage.

Keywords: ICCROM, IGNCA, Preventive Conservation, Re-org, Storage

Introduction

Preventive conservation is an enduring process that continues throughout the life of cultural property to mitigate deterioration and damage through the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures. It is a multidisciplinary orientation that uses indirect measures and actions to improve existing situation and to circumvent future deterioration or loss of cultural heritage. Preventive Conservation is defined by International Committee for Conservation of International Council of Museums (2008) as follows:

all measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss. They are carried out within the context or on

the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. These measures and actions are indirect – they do not interfere with the materials and structures of the items. They do not modify their appearance.

Scientific research on the factors of deterioration in cultural heritage have made possible to pertain more specific methods of preventive conservation. Two major deterioration mechanisms that threaten cultural heritage are identified (Fig.1) as: the factors that slowly deteriorate cultural heritage materially such as environmental, storage material or place of storage issues; and the incidents that rapidly and catastrophically destroy cultural heritage in a very short time period for example, water damages such as floods, fires, sabotage, natural disasters, terrorist activities and so on.

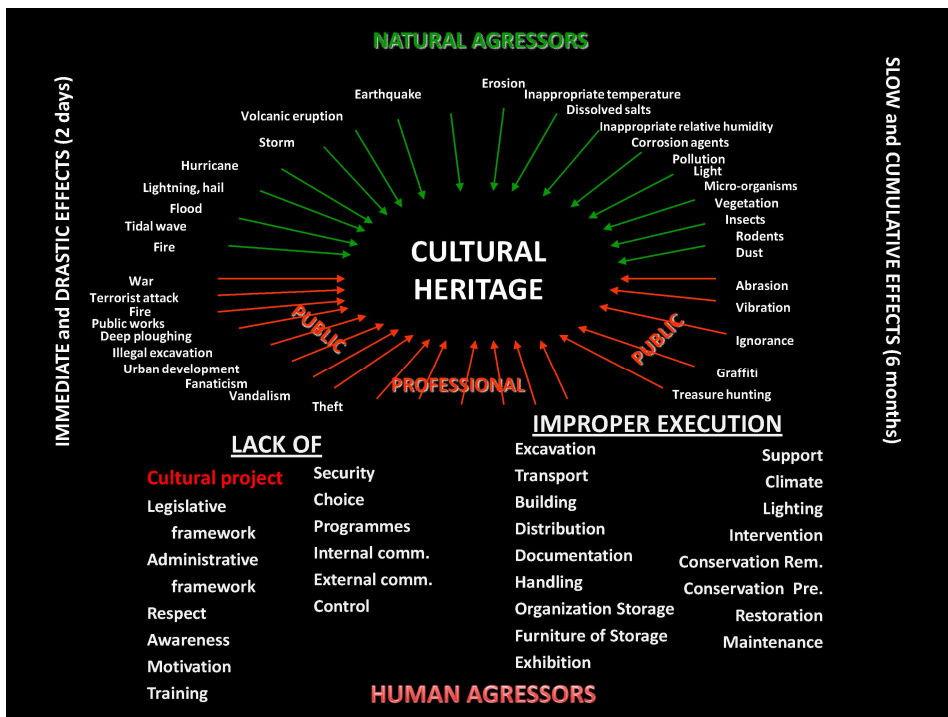


Fig.1: Factors of Deterioration of Cultural Heritage

With poor storage conditions over a considerable period of time, it is challenging for museum professionals to efficient use of collections for study, education and enjoyment; furthermore, effective emergency response may be compromised. A recent international survey indicated that approximately two thirds of collections in storage were at serious risk. Nowadays, museum storage has been getting an increasing attention, for museum professionals due to growing awareness that vast amounts of public funds are being spent annually to maintain collections that are neither accessible to the public, nor in suitable condition to be used for research and exhibitions. Moreover, the number of museums and the size of collections have been growing rapidly with sparingly extending resources, particularly in developing countries. The development of Re-ORG methodology is very influential for this critical context of slow deterioration mechanism to work as a potent preventive conservation method to recover an existing situation deteriorated over time that has led to inaccessible collections, incapacitated documentation systems, exacerbated conservation conditions along with ambiguous errands.

Re-org Methodology: Origin & Development:

Museum Storage is considered as heart of the museum as it is closely associated with other activities, such as research, consultation, exhibitions and display, conservation and loans and plays an essential role in the development of a museum and its programmes and therefore it needs to be maintained efficiently. A three-year partnership was made between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) in 2007, for the “Preventive Conservation of Endangered Museum Collections in Developing Countries”. It focused on strong political support and the major involvement of decision-makers on two major issues: documentation of collections and access to storage in museums at both institutional and professional levels. RE-ORG is the final outcome of this partnership. ICCROM and UNESCO conducted an International survey about condition of museum storage over 136 countries during 2011. The summary of survey results are as follows:

- 1 in 4 Museums – Circulation in storage: difficult or impossible
- 2 in 3 museums – lack of Space
- 1 in 2 museums – Lack of storage units, Overcrowded storage units
- 2 in 5 Museums – Lack of management support for storage related activities, Lack of trained staff, Large backlog of objects to be accessioned, Storage units not adapted to the types of objects
- 1 in 4 Museums – No object movement register, No accession register (or not up to date), No location codes for storage units or aisles, No main catalogue (paper or computerized), Objects directly on the floor
- 1 in 5 museums – Unsecured doors and windows, Recorded damage due to flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes or fires, Large amounts of non-collection items in storage (rubbish, exhibition panels, packing materials, display showcases, personal effects of staff, etc.), Many objects stored outside designated storage areas (hallways, offices, etc.), Active pest infestation
- 1 in 10 museums – Object theft
- It was recognized that 60% of museum collections are at serious risk due to overcrowding and poor conditions.

The RE-ORG methodology was designed by ICCROM to address storage issues with specific context of small institutions with limited access to resources or expert technical advice and approved by ICCROM General Assembly in 2011 in which India is one of the member states. According to RE-ORG, museum storage must take following core principles:

1. There is at least one trained member of staff in charge;
2. There is a basic documentation system (complete and up to date);
3. Storage areas are reserved exclusively for the collection;
4. Every object has an assigned location;

5. Every object is retrievable within three minutes;
6. Every object is movable without damaging another;
7. The building is designed or adapted for conservation.

To accomplish this aim, RE-ORG is expressed in 4 phases: Getting Started, Storage Condition Report, Storage Reorganization Project and Storage Reorganization Implementation. To make storage reorganization more manageable, the methodology addresses the four main areas of responsibility related to storage condition: Management, Building & Space, Collection and Furniture & Small Equipment. Each area of responsibility is a key element of functional and professionally managed storage. For best practice, access and use of the stored collection, each area of responsibility should fulfil certain criteria defined by RE-ORG. Each phase includes a series of farm duties that are grouped by area of responsibility. Every duty is explained by a worksheet that describes its importance, objective and final outputs, the materials required, as well as remarks, advice or relevant discussion points. Each worksheet is supported by examples, forms, didactic images, online resources and additional guidelines. As of February 2011, the Storage Reorganization Methodology along with related supporting materials and the Documentation Practical Guide are freely accessible on the RE-ORG website (<http://www.re-org.info>). The storage reorganization methodology also provides original didactic material for instructors in the fields of conservation, museum studies and collections management to help them integrate storage reorganization into their teaching curricula. A brief summary of each phase of the Storage Reorganization Methodology is described in the following paragraphs:

Phase 1: Getting Started: This phase outlines what one needs to have, to know or to do before starting reorganization of storage. Users can download the Self-evaluation Tool, which is used to acquire a clear picture of the existing situation and to identify crucial problems. Key essentials for this phase are the creation of a reorganization team and depiction of the Cultural Project.

The Cultural Project is a concise but comprehensive expression of the projected use of the stored collection and the experience that its users are expected to have. Having a well-defined Cultural Project is indispensable to ensure that reorganization progresses in the desired direction.

Phase 2: Storage Condition Report: The reorganization team must collect information of the existing situation, analyze it credibly and produce a finding before the physical reorganization can begin. The Storage Condition Report is a constructive means that can be used to attain the institution's approval to move forward.

Phase 3: Storage Reorganization Project: Based on the inferences made in the Storage Condition Report, the reorganization team identifies all actions required to accomplish the desired outcome and schedules them in a Storage Reorganization Project plan.

Phase 4: Storage Reorganization Implementation: In this phase, the reorganization team puts the Storage Reorganization Project into action, monitors its development, and establishes appropriate systems to ensure the sustainability of the reorganization.

IGNCA's initiative towards preventive conservation with special reference to Re-Org Methodology

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) was established in 1987 as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts. Recognizing the need to encompass and preserve the distributed fragments of Indian art and culture, a pioneering attempt has been made by IGNCA to serve as a major resource centre for the arts, especially written, oral and visual materials. IGNCA also had been identified by the UNESCO as nodal agency for the development of regional databases for the South and South East Asian countries on art, cultural heritage and life-styles through the application of state of the art technologies for standardization, exchange and dissemination of data. At present, IGNCA,

New Delhi, with its nine regional centres in eight states and one Union Territory, at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Bangaluru (Karnataka), Guwahati (Assam), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir), Panaji (Goa), Vadodara (Gujarat), Thrissur (Kerala) and Puducherry works directly with the communities in local areas and professionals of respective field to preserve and disseminate rich tangible and intangible heritage of India. The IGNCA has 9 functional units –

- (1) Kala Nidhi, the multi-form library contains research and reference material in Humanities and the Arts
- (2) Kala Kosa, is devoted mainly to the research and publication of fundamental texts in Indian languages.
- (3) Janapada Sampada, is engaged in lifestyle studies and its dissemination.
- (4) Kaladarsana, is mandated to manifest the activities of IGNCA in the form of exhibitions, performances, concerts, workshops and lectures.
- (5) Cultural Informatics has emerged as an outstanding documentation unit that demonstrates the manner in which heritage can be recreated virtually, in the holistic and integrated perception. It also acts as digital repository of manuscripts, slides, books, audio and video holdings of IGNCA.
- (6) Adi Drishya, is dedicated to the study of prehistoric rock art.
- (7) Conservation Lab is specialized in the areas of preventive conservation, conservation training, and conservation of tangible objects of varied kinds.
- (8) Sutradhara, the administrative section acts as a spine supporting and coordinating all the activities, and
- (9) Media Centre is endeavoured to do audio/visual research documentation and archiving them for prosperity and implementing worldwide dissemination as well.

Conservation Division of IGNCA was formed in 2003 with a very basic setup. The Division specializes in the areas of preventive conservation, conservation

of varied objects including books, manuscripts, paintings, metals, wooden objects, ethnographic objects and conservation training. It also undertakes research and documentation projects in the field of cast iron objects and rust converters.

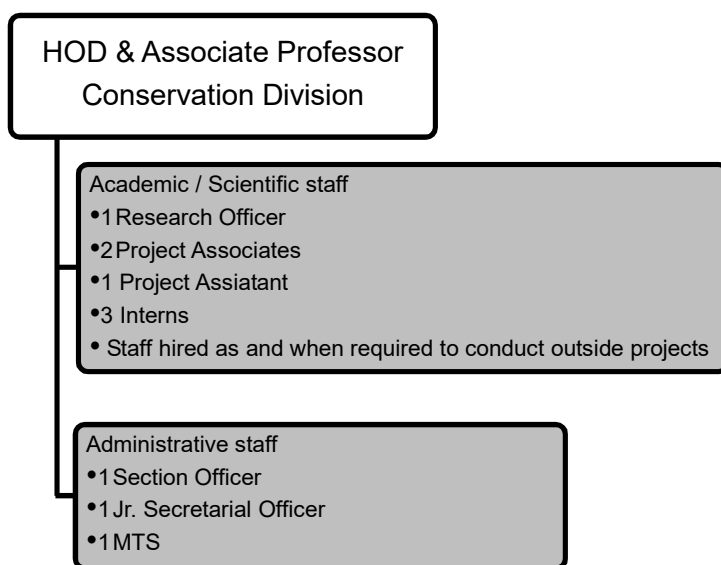


Fig.2: Present organizational setup of the Conservation Division, IGNC A

The Laboratory has qualified researchers and conservators drawn from University of Calcutta, Kolkata; National Museum Institute, New Delhi; National Research Laboratory of Conservation of Cultural Property (NRLC), Lucknow; Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management, New Delhi; and Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The laboratory is very particular in following well established principles of conservation; all the treatments done in the Lab are based on the principle of minimum intervention and reversibility. At present, it is considered the finest conservation laboratory in the country in terms of infrastructure, facilities, resources and expertise. After 15 years of dedicated hard work, IGNC A believes this Conservation Laboratory can take lead as the National Conservation Laboratory to contribute significantly

by establishing best practices to help professionals and cultural custodians, to improve prospects of the artefacts, while ensuring long-term conservation. The following equipments/ Instruments are available and being used in the Laboratory.

S.No.	Equipment/ Instruments	Function
1.	Low Suction Table	Stain removal, flattening of object and lining of canvas painting
2.	Potenstiostat	Study of EIS and rate of corrosion
3.	pH meter	Measurement of pH of solvents and objects
4.	Stereomicroscope	Microscopes with Leica Camera and polarizer for detailed documentation
5.	Magnetic stirrer	Preparing solvents
6.	Weighing Balance	Measuring the weight
7.	Camera D90	Photo documentation
8.	Ultrasonic Humidifier	Humidification of the objects prior to flattening
9.	Binding Stand	Archival binding
10.	Sandblaster	Cleaning of stone
11.	Micro motor	Cleaning of Metal and stone
12.	Hot Spatula	Consolidation and strip lining of canvas painting
13.	Multimeter	Measurement of Potential
14.	Pressure Machine	Pressing of books after conservation

Fig.3: Equipment/ Instruments presently available in the Conservation Laboratory, IGNCA



Fig.4: Photographs of some of the facilities of Conservation Division. First Row, L-R: Ultrasonic Humidifier, Stereomicroscope, pH meter. Second Row, L-R: Low Suction Table, Magnetic stirrer, Potentiostat. Third Row, L-R: Tool Table, Weighing Balance.

Conservation Division has started Post Graduate Diploma Course in Preventive Conservation (PGDPC) in July 2017 in collaboration with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi. The Division has collaborations with several institutions in India and abroad including ICCROM. Indeed, it has started developing capacity building programmes on RE-ORG method in active collaboration with ICCROM for Indian museums with special reference to smaller institutions of which collection is at risk due to growing problems related to rapid expansion, overcrowding, difficult access to collections and most importantly lack of expertise. Since 2011 IGNCA has organized 6 successful Re-ORG workshops.

S No.	Year	Place	Workshop Duration	ICCROM Expert	No of Participants
1.	2011	IGNCA, New Delhi	1-10 February	Geal de Guichen , Simon Lambert	15
2.	2012	National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, New Delhi (commonly known as Crafts Museum)	13-25 March	Geal de Guichen, Beniot De Tapol	18
3.	2013	IGNCA, New Delhi	15-27 April	Geal de Guichen, Beniot De Tapol	18
4.	2015	Alwar State Museum, Rajasthan	24 July- 7 August	Geal de Guichen, Vesna Zivkovic	20
5.	2016	Assam State Museum, Assam	29 February - 11 March	Geal de Guichen, Laura Tapini	20
6.	2016	Udaipur City Palace Museum, Rajasthan	1-10 November	Geal de Guichen	18

Fig.5: List of Museum Storage Re-ORG Workshops organized by IGNCA

The achievement of these workshops is described in following paragraphs in accordance with 4 Re-Org phases.

Phase 1 – Getting started: The first 3-4 days of the workshop are usually spent to focus on the key elements of preventive conservation. A Re-org team is formed with curator and other participants, followed by session of group discussion which resulted in a better understanding of each team member's strengths, which helped to provide a comprehensive definition of roles for the reorganization to formulate a cultural project. For example, In 2011 IGNCA Re-org workshop, the Cultural Project was defined as: the storage of ethnographic collection of the Janapada Sampada division will be actively used by the institution for weekly exhibitions and loans and monthly by occasional scholars, however will remain closed to the general public. It will be stored according to object type, and provisions should be made for its rapid expansion. A common objective of creating a professional storage area is formed in these which further include, i) a space for storing collections. ii) a space for loading and unloading. iii) a space to prepare the temporary exhibitions. iv) a space for study and research and so on as defined by specific cultural project. This discourse leads to define 4 main Re-org functions: Management, Building & Space, Collection and Furniture & Small Equipment. A hand-drawn outline is presented to relate the physical changes that would likely take place in the storage area. To finalize the groundwork, the team prepares a list of all required materials such as hammers, nails, steel wire, scissors, fabric, staplers, electric jigsaw, electric drill and so on for adapting the furniture and working on the collection.



Fig. 6: hand-sketches prepared in Crafts Museum workshop 2012, Phase-1 to present storage found before starting the Re-org method (above) and proposed plan for Re-organization (below).

Phase 2 – Storage Condition Report: After a brief introduction to the information needed to diagnose the storage area in all four areas of responsibility: Management, Building & Space, Collection, and Furniture & Small Equipment, the reorganization team is divided into sub-teams such as: Team 1, would be responsible for conducting the collection analysis, all relevant statistics on the composition of the collection; Team 2, would draw the floor plan of the storage area and map the collection and non-collection items, Team 3, would be responsible for collecting all management-related information such as job descriptions and procedures; listing past disasters and incidents, inventorying small equipment, building systems, storage furniture, non-collection items, etc. Approximately two hours is needed for each sub-team to collect data for preparing the condition

report. The sub-teams then presented their results to the others, and discussed aspects requiring further explanation.

Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No storage-related written job descriptions or procedures (handling, security, object movement, etc.)
Building & Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No known incidents or past disasters had occurred in the storage area, though the sprinkler system was said to have gone off by mistake 2-3 years ago in another location of the building. Building systems: sprinkler system and fire detectors on ceiling. A floor plan was drawn to scale. The collection and non-collection items were marked on this plan.
Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection analysis (449 objects) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 102 Masks, small (<25 cm) 48 Masks, medium (25-35 cm) 127 Masks, large (>35 cm) 9 Textiles, painted (120 cm) 14 Puppets (cloth), small-hand (<50 cm) 14 Puppets (cloth), large (>50 cm) 78 Puppets (leather), shadow (20-90 cm) 18 Scrolls (40-100 cm) 15 Bronzes, small (<25 cm) 2 Terracotta objects (50 cm) 16 Basketry (20-70 cm) 6 Large fragile elements - Tazza (100-200 cm) Non-collection items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87 Photographic reproductions for exhibitions 26 Didactic panels for exhibitions 6 m² of material to discard (papers, plastic sheeting, pieces of wood, boxes, etc.)
Furniture & Small Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No storage furniture: all the collection is on the ground No small equipment specifically assigned to the storage area. Furniture found in hallways that could be re-used to house the collection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 adjustable metal shelving units (30 x 100 x 250 cm) 4 wooden boxes (220 x 180 x 30 cm) 1 metallic cabinet (30 x 100 x 100 cm) 1 wooden shelving unit (20 x 100 x 210 cm) 7 rolling exhibition panels (210 x 150 cm) 2 drawer cabinets, 6 drawers (110 x 90 x 70 cm)

Fig.7: Summary of Condition Report in IGNC workshop, 2011

Following these presentations, the overall situation is evaluated using the RE-ORG Self-evaluation tool (http://www.re-org.info/en/contact-us/tool-kit-files/self-evaluation-tool_savecalc.pdf), the results of which will indicate the existing condition of storage. For example, In Crafts Museum workshop 2012, the condition report shows that among the four areas of responsibility, Management, and Furniture & Small Equipment were at serious risk, Collection required a Reorganization Project while Building & Space required small improvements. It was identified that only 47% of the available storage space was being used by the actual collection, although the initial feeling that the storage area was almost fully occupied. Major factors behind this can be categorized as: lack of storage furniture, which gave the impression that objects were occupying more space and existence of considerable number of non collection

items such as exhibition panels, plastic wrapping, paper, foam, batting, cardboard boxes, pieces of wood, and non-accessioned photographic reproductions and so on.

Phase 3 – Storage Reorganization Project: After getting an overall picture of the situation, the reorganization team will be able to define the actions required for creating professional storage. Key areas of deficiency should be identified immediately. Commonly found deficiencies include: lack of administrative framework such as procedures, job descriptions, etc., lack of furniture for all collections, dust and improper handling. The lack of furniture poses a serious threat to the collection. For each deficiency, sub-teams defined a desired quality standard such as all large masks are housed in a shelving unit and can be retrieved without moving more than one other object. Then, they listed the actions required to achieve this standard (e.g. find eight shelving units, clean shelving, adjust shelf height, etc.). Finally, they listed all actions needed to maintain this standard in time. To resolve the lack of furniture, the sub-teams proposed solutions based on materials or furniture that could be found in the institution at no additional cost, whenever possible. For each object type, they calculated the precise number of storage units needed to store all of the objects in that collection by examining how many objects could fit in one unit and dividing this by the total number of objects. At the end of this exercise, each proposal was discussed with the entire reorganization team. The long list of immediate actions was organized in a schedule for the two remaining days of implementation. This was reproduced on a large whiteboard to allow the team to follow the progress of the reorganization as it unfolded. This schedule was used to identify any outstanding missing materials before the start of the implementation on the following day. Due to time constraints, it was decided that the team would address the remaining deficiencies (i.e., the drafting of job descriptions and procedures for handling, cleaning, inspection, security, object movement, etc., and the dust proofing of objects) in the weeks following the workshop.

Phase 4 – Storage Reorganization Implementation: It is started by storing each collection in a professional way, according to their type, measurement and weight, etc., in suitable furniture including efficient reuse of old and unused furniture. For example in Crafts Museum workshop 2012, among 4800 ethnographic objects were stored as follows: heavy objects such as stone , wooden objects

were placed in shelves, small objects (decorative and ethnographic objects) were kept in cupboard, the textile and mats and the collection of puppet stored in cupboard in hanger.



Before (left) & After (Right) photograph of Re-Org Workshop at IGNCA New Delhi; 2011



Before (left) & After (Right) photograph of Re-Org Workshop at Crafts Museum, New Delhi; 2012



Before (left) & After (Right) photograph of Re-Org Workshop at Alwar Museum, Rajasthan; 2015



Before (left) & After (Right) photograph of Re-Org Workshop at State Museum Assam, 2015

Fig.8: View of Storages, before starting and after completion of the reorganization method, of IGNCA workshop 2011, Crafts Museum workshop 2012, Alwar Museum workshop 2016 and Assam State Museum workshop 2016.

Proper Documentation is an indispensable part of Re-org Method. During these workshops, it is not possible to accomplish the complete documentation for collection. Thus, the reorganization team only focuses on creating location codes, and not the other elements of the basic documentation system such as accession register, object numbering, main catalogue and movement register and so on. For the time being, each object was assigned a particular location, identified with one letter and one number. A theoretical training on Documentation System was organized for museum professionals in IGNCAs workshop 2013 to impart practical knowledge about documentation system.

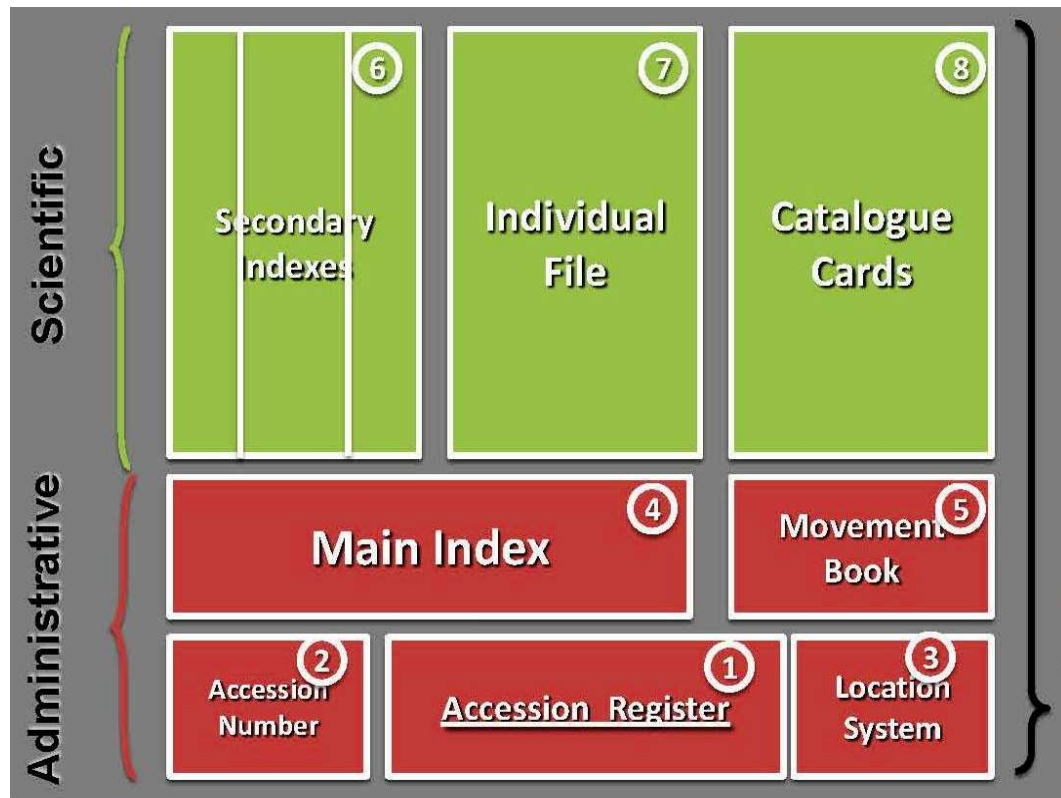


Fig.9: Basic elements of a documentation system, according to Re-Org Methodology.

Conclusion

RE-ORG was developed to address a problem of vast extent: the serious risk of damage and hindered access to the tangible collections throughout the world as a result of improper storage and documentation. Practical experiences in storage reorganization have gained through past workshops highlighted a number of important issues such as the absolute necessity of defining a Cultural Project perceptibly before any work begins; more specifically, the clear statement of the curator's vision for the storage area. Furthermore, it is most important that curator with entire team working on storage reorganization must be attentive to the potential challenges in tackling the aspects regarding the area of responsibility of "Management." To ensure the success of the reorganization and its sustainability, procedures must be written to produce a procedural manual for future use which should include fundamental deeds at least such as object entry, object movement, cleaning, proper handling and security, as these were identified as key deficiencies. By applying RE-ORG to the Janapada Sampada ethnographic collection storage of IGNCA, New Delhi; National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, New Delhi; Alwar State Museum, Rajasthan; Assam State Museum, Assam and Udaipur City Palace Museum, Rajasthan; it has been possible to witness what can be achieved by a team of 15-20 people in just 10-15 days. Though the management and documentation issues were not completely addressed during 10-15 days workshop but in all these workshops the Self-evaluation score was improved significantly for all 4 areas of responsibility such as Management, Building & Space, Collection and Furniture & Small Equipment.

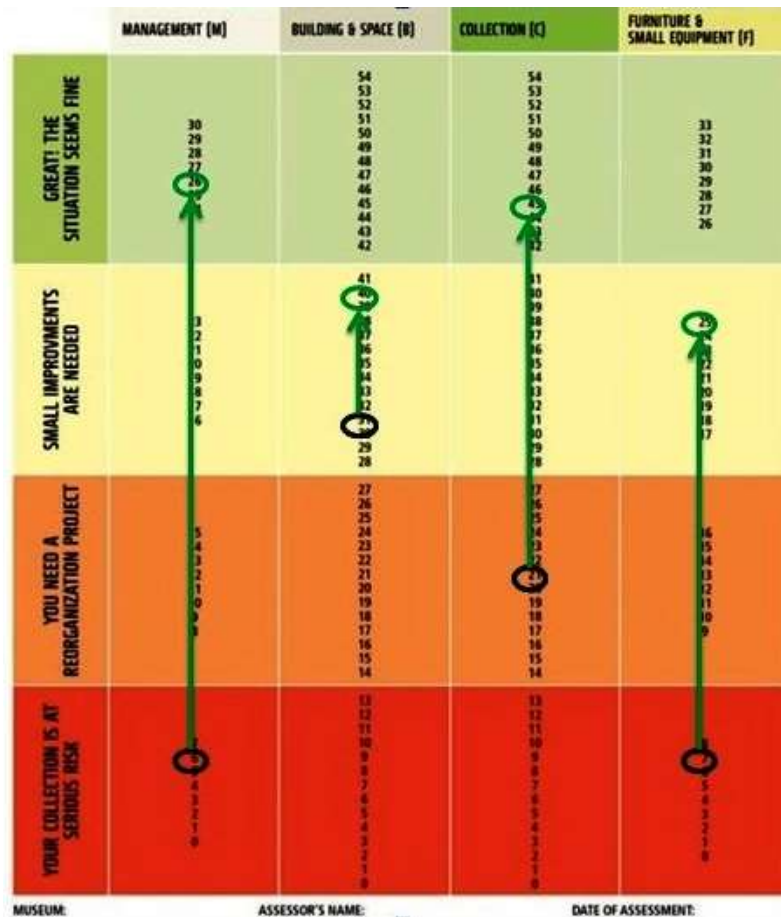


Fig.10: Self-evaluation score before applying Re-org (marked by black oval) and after applying Re-org method (marked by green oval) in Crafts Museum workshop 2012, which reflects clear-cut improvement in all 4 areas of responsibility.

IGNCA being a National organization has a mandate for the conservation and preservation of rich cultural heritage of our country. The capacity development at IGNCA would be useful for launching the Re-organization of Museum Storage Methodology nationally. For this purpose, IGNCA has planned to organize a two-week Re-Org “Training of trainers” course to help museum

professionals to become Re-Org mentors in their context and beyond. It will also organize a two-week National Re-Org workshop, targeting 20 museum professionals from 10 different museums in our country. A full storage reorganization project will be completed during the workshop which will serve as an example for all the other participating museums. Furthermore it would be worth mentioning that the expenditure for entire reorganization of storage ranges between Rs. 25,000/- 30,000/- on an average. Hoping, this reality will surely encourage museums of our country, especially small museums to embark on a much needed storage reorganization project for safeguarding their prosperous collection.

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Permanent Workshop in Museums and Archaeological Sites for Preserving Heritage: A Need

Dhriti Ray

Astract

Museums are the repository of objects concerned with history and heritage as well as of various archaeological sites. A museum makes history and heritage alive referring the evidences through exhibiting artefacts either original or fabricated. Considerable number of people throughout the World visit museums and sites to see wonders. They purchase souvenirs from museum shops or site shops as memento to memorize their visit along with their experience with the history and heritage. In this way knowledge of ancient heritage propagates from continent to continents and from one culture to another. Unlike museum shop which is the place only to sale souvenirs, the permanent workshop along with the provisions for selling objects gives information about the raw materials and production techniques that indeed give knowledge about the manufacturing techniques of heritage objects. It also gives opportunity to visitors to take active part in manufacturing process of objects as well as cultural exchange process through direct interaction with the craftspeople that not only orient visitors but also entertain them more along with a long lasting memory. A few museums in India has permanent workshop, accessible to all visitors and are serving well to visitors in knowing about different heritage of India and by giving them opportunity to participate in various activities. Other than Indian museums, in museums and archaeological sites outside India, the concept of keeping a permanent workshop running throughout the year is gaining importance for preserving heritage. These workshops are drawing attention of more and more tourists. These

workshops are also giving opportunity to local artisans or ethnic group of people to produce their art works and also provide them a market that is assisting them to sustain their indigenous knowledge and conserving heritage. An attempt has been taken up in this paper to establish the need of a permanent workshop in museums and archaeological sites for preserving heritage analysing the three case studies in museums and archaeological sites in China, Thailand and in a museum in India.

Keywords: Workshop, Exhibition, Conservation, Heritage

Concept of Permanent Workshop

Workshop is the place where things are planned, manufactured and repaired. This infrastructure is the part of any industrial work as well as of any organization or institute which holds tangible objects for public interest. Institutions like museum sets up with an objective to make history, heritage and science alive by preserving and exhibiting original specimen or through the process of objectification. Museums need permanent workshop, where fabricated objects, models, dioramas or themes are developed to exhibit the human history or natural history through a meaningful expression to visitors. Few museums in India and abroad have good workshops where they develop objects to illustrate human history by making it tangible. Unlike museums, science centres also have workshops to develop objects to illustrate various branches of natural and physical sciences by preparing taxidermies, developing interactive models, fabricated objects and landforms, etc. Unlike the conservation laboratories where restoration and conservation works on original objects are done, museum workshop generally deals with development of objects for museum purposes and manufacturing objects at large scale for public interest following the traditional techniques, styles and features. Though many Indian museums and museums in abroad have workshops or modelling units but in maximum cases these areas are restricted

for the visitors' entry. Visitors can buy souvenir items from museum shops but they remain unaware of its manufacturing skill, materials compositions and hardship of artists, etc. Contrary to museums many archaeological sites have souvenir shops where replicas, models, etc., as souvenir objects are sold out to visitors.

Since the last decade, museums all over the world have taken initiative to set off more audio-visual displays to disseminate information and knowledge in addition with its static display. Some museums are using digital labels to overcome the limitations of the traditional printed label and providing more information about a single object through visuals. Positive responses of visitors towards the more innovative modes of display, opportunities of interactions and engagement programmes encourage museum professionals to explore more avenues to attract visitors and to make them understand with enjoyment. As the ultimate goal of museum is to preserve heritage and its knowledge dissemination, apart from curative and preventive conservation of heritage objects, more emphasis is required on knowledge preservation and information dissemination. Coming out of the conventional trend of workshop of museums and heritage sites as restricted place for visitors, few museums and heritage sites across the world open its access to common visitors. This new endeavour has proven an excellent result in visitors' engagement, knowledge dissemination and in preserving heritage that any dynamic museum and heritage site can follow. Three case studies has been discussed taken from the three countries including India, China and Thailand in museums and archaeological sites to establish how workshops are serving an important role in heritage preservation among common people and attracting more and more visitors.

Case Study 1: Queen's Museum, Grand Palace, Bangkok, Thailand

The museum is located within the Grand Palace complex in Bangkok, Thailand. The palace is established in 1782 and at present is the official residence of the King of Thailand. Though it is the high security palace but a part of it is opened to national and international tourists and it is the most popular tourist destination

in Bangkok. The Palace has many buildings which were constructed during the last two hundreds of years and one of such buildings is modified into a museum and well known as Queen's Museum. This museum was visited and studied in May, 2015.

The museum exhibits objects of the royal family like textiles, family photographs, dining sets and articles, a living room, etc. Apart from its regular galleries on royal objects the museum has an adjacent permanent workshop on textile and serving as an additional permanent gallery, opened to all visitors. This workshop is at the first floor of the museum adjacent to the textile gallery where visitors get an opportunity to see how the textiles are made in looms. Here all the ingredients are kept for visitors understanding. They can feel the cotton seeds, silk cocoons, cotton & silk fibres extracted out of seeds and cocoons. Visitors here can see and spun cotton and silk threads, weave textile in handloom with the help of artisans following a given pattern or they can also develop designs of their own. They can take out with them the design they developed on an art paper as memento. There is an activity corner where visitors can get an idea about the local costumes and textile heritage. A supporting audio-visual presentation is there that enhances the knowledge of visitors about the history and manufacturing process. Visitors can also purchase things that are produced in this workshop as souvenir item to memorize their precious visit.



Photograph 1: A documentary film is shown in the television set inside the workshop that demonstrates about the entire process of manufacturing cotton and silk textiles in various traditional looms.



Photograph 2: There is an opportunity inside the workshop to take an active part in the manufacturing of textile in handloom and visitors are enjoying this rare chance that they might never get in their daily life.



Photograph 3: An artist is developing design and weaving the textile



Photograph 4: An activity corner adjacent to the weaving section inside the workshop



Photograph 5: Activity corner inside the workshop for visitors to know about the textile heritage



Photograph 6: Exhibition cum sales section. Here visitors can see and buy objects produced inside the workshop

It has been found that the time a visitor spent in this workshop is much more than they spent in each gallery. It is because they feel more interested in this workshop by getting opportunity to participate in the manufacturing process. As they are more taken care of by the artists in this workshop and can interact with the weavers directly whatever they want it satisfies more to them. This information they gather from the artists gives a pleasure of knowing the unknown. This kind of workshop which runs throughout the year has scope to serve tourists round the year who may come once to this museum in their lifetime. It also helps museum to increase their annual sale. Moreover, artists who are engaged in this workshop get the opportunity to sustain their livelihood by manufacturing their indigenous products. Through this initiative the indigenous item, designs and quality can be preserved in the modern world generating interest amongst the global people.

Case Study 2: Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Mysore

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya is the museum on Ethnology, located in Mysore. This museum is serving under the main museum the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal. It is a unique museum which emphasizes more on workshop activities rather than permanent display. The museum has few galleries only that exhibit household objects of different ethnic groups in India. Out of them few are collected from the respective fields and majority of the objects is made in the museum workshop by the respective ethnic group during their stay. The museum was studied during February, 2016.

The museum has a permanent workshop space where ethnic groups from different parts of India come and stay for 1-3 months. They develop their dwelling houses out of clay and dried straw and manufacture objects of their daily life. They also perform their music and dance in the evenings. The museum gives an opportunity to local people to participate in the workshop to interact with the respective ethnic group, know about the life style and learn how they make artefacts along with its uses in daily life. They also come to know about their ethnic medicinal practices, useful herbs and also get opportunity to see their performing arts, etc. As they stay for more than a month, sometimes local people also get chance to see their traditional festival, unique way of celebration, their rites and rituals. Here, the Museum is playing an important role in giving an opportunity for both the ethnic group and local urban people to understand each other. This initiative helps the ethnic people to preserve their own culture, tradition, and continue manufacturing of their age old artefacts like earthen pots, basketry, textiles, blacksmiths, etc., which may otherwise subdued by the modern products with the wave of globalization.

The museum also supports the artists by selling their products. It has been found that there is a huge demand of their products among local people. The museum also assists the artists whose products are not sold during their time of stay. The authority sells the product later on and sends their earnings to their respective residential addresses. It is a wonderful way of preserving heritage by benefitting the actual ethnic people and by spreading the knowledge as material evidences amongst the urban common people of modern generation.



Photograph 7: Exterior of the Museum Building decorated by various terracotta objects made in the museum workshop by the ethnic group. Source tourmet.com



Photograph 8 : Various decorated earthen utensils are prepared by the respected ethnic group in the workshop which are kept on display and for sale. Source IGMS, indiaholidays.com



Photograph 9: Pottery making by the ethnic people during their stay in museum and participation in the workshop. Source igms.gov.in



Photograph 10: Exhibition cum sale of traditional herbs in museum during the workshop by the respective ethnic group of people. Source igms.gov.in



Photograph 11: Participation of local people in the clay model making guided by the ethnic group of people. Source indiaculture.ac.in



Photograph 12: Celebration and performance of respective tradition, rite and rituals wearing the traditional attire by the respective ethnic group of people. Source timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Apart from the conventional mode of operation of a museum, this museum by emphasizing on workshop activities by inviting an ethnic group of people into the museum for 1-3 months serving greatly on preserving heritage. Amidst of the urban people this ethnic people are acquiring inspiration for preserving their own heritage and also orient themselves with the modern sciences that are required to adopt by them for their survival needs. Through this kind of interchange and exchange of ideas people as a whole are being benefitted mutually.

Case Study -3: The Terracotta Army, Xi'an, China

It is a huge archaeological site of 3rd century BCE, found and excavated in 1974 near Xi'an, in the Shanxi Province in China. This is famous for funerary art of life-size terracotta army who are guarding the tomb of the first Emperor of unified China, Qin Shi Huang, who died in 210 BCE. The mausoleum of the King Qin Shi Huang is about a size of a football pitch and it is still unopened possibly due to concerns over preservation of its artefact. It is believed that the terracotta army is guarding his tomb as per his wish in his lifetime. Recent excavation at the site revealed that the army consisting of more than eight thousands terracotta soldiers, about 130 chariots with 520 horses, and 150 cavalry horses, majority of them is still buried in the three opened pits. It is expected that there are more army still buried around the tomb which the

archaeologists do not want to open due to concerns over preservation issues. It is found during the excavation that all the soldiers were painted but within few seconds of unearthing the colours disappeared and the artefacts became dull or blackish in colour. The site is expected to scattered more than 2 kilometre radius around the tomb of the King. It is the largest terracotta sites ever found in this world. The Chinese people considered the site as the eighth wonder of the ancient world. The UNESCO declared it as one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

A large number of international tourists from all over the world as well as national tourists visit the site every day. This is the most visited site by the international tourists in China after the Great Wall of China. It is one of the places in this earth that reminds about the human beliefs of after-life. The site enlivens the human desire of a king to be lived as king after his death with everything that he had during his life-life including his entire army. According to the ancient Chinese historian Sima Qian, Emperor Qin Shi Huang with the name of Zheng ascended the throne at the age of thirteen. She also mentioned that Quin Shi Huang immediately after his ascending in the throne initiated the planning of his own funeral with the digging and preparation work of his tomb at the Mount Li. When he unified all the small kingdoms and became the first Emperor of the unified China he employed 700000 men from all over his kingdom to complete his eternal empire. (Clements, 2007)

During the excavation the terracotta army figures were found broken in maximum cases. Thus, to enliven the history the Government of China took initiative to restore the terracotta Army sculptures and placed them inside the pits in proper order so that visitors can understand the actual site. For this purpose the Government of China set up workshops outside the protected site area and engaged the local craftspeople. In this workshop the local craftspeople using local materials have crafted missing heads, arms, legs, and torso separately and then assembled the pieces together and placed the terracotta figures according to the rank of soldiers and their duty. Interestingly, the faces

of all soldiers are made different to make them more natural. The craftspeople created life size soldiers according to their ranks; they are Army General, Sergeant (who stands at the both sides of Chariots), standing archers, kneeling archers, warriors and military officers. They also prepared chariot drivers. All these complete life-size figures are then placed in the pit 1, pit 2 and pit 3 for the understanding of visitors, national and international tourists. They not only have prepared terracotta soldiers but also manufactured chariots and horses. They also developed life size soldiers painted with different colours to give an idea about how the figures were actually during the 3rd century BCE. All these figures are on the display in the newly developed museum established within the site complex adjacent to the Pit 3.

Along with this workshop that is devoted to develop, restore or repair exhibits, there is another workshop that is opened to common tourists or visitors to see how these terracotta figures are being developed by the local craftspeople. This workshop not only prepares life-size figures of different army men of different rank wearing different uniforms but also manufactured these figures in different sizes as souvenir items. The craftspeople here take every group of visitors into the workshop, demonstrate them everything about the material, process of manufacturing, preparation of colours etc. Visitors can ask everything to the craftspeople whatever they want and also can feel, touch and participate in the process of manufacturing. All visitors including national and international tourists visit the workshop that not only enhance their knowledge but they also purchase the miniature army as souvenir of their lifetime visit in the Terracotta Army site. Visitors can take photographs inside the site and workshops. The site along with the workshop was studied during the May, 2017 and explored a unique role that the workshop is serving here for the site and visitors



Photograph 13: Pit 1 of the Terracotta Army Site in Xi'an China. Here the fragments of the terracotta army were found. The life-size army in the photograph is partly recreated in the government workshops.



Photograph 14: This is the life-size chariot with horses recreated according to the fragments recovered during the excavation in the government workshop. This is now placed inside the adjacent site museum for the understanding of visitors.



Photograph 15: Miniature terracotta army, chariot set, developed in the workshop as souvenir items for the visitors.



Photograph 16: Kiln in the workshop, which is accessible to visitors to understand the process of terracotta making.

Workshop and Preservation of Heritage

Preserving heritage is one of the objectives of museums as well as archaeological sites across the world. To fulfil this mandate museums and archaeological sites apart from the preventive and curative conservation are now undertaking many innovative approaches. They are regularly organizing temporary exhibitions and workshops, developing new user friendly galleries, engaging craftspeople, conducting awareness programmes, participatory activities and many more. To preserve intangible cultural heritage museums and other cultural organizations are giving platforms to local artists to perform their folk songs, dance, lore, plays, etc., and also selling their audio or video CDs and DVDs. Apart from all such efforts a permanent workshop in a museum and alongside of an archaeological sites can play a vital role in preserving heritage. It has a scope to demonstrate all those historical facts that objects cannot exhibit silently in the galleries or audio-visuals cannot give adequate impetus. In workshops authority can give an opportunity to all visitors to interact with the craftspeople and give them a real touch of clay, colour and technique. Here the age old tradition of art making can be revive and preserve by involving the actual ethnic group of people. It can also generate affection of common people towards the use and utility of indigenous material culture and create a potential market in the modern technocratic world. Through this initiative authority can help craftspeople to sustain their age old tradition stopping the commercialization of indigenous art. Considering the positivity and utility of a permanent and active workshop round the year in museums or near sites for preserving heritage, authority can think differently in the Indian context. It is a unique way to preserve and disseminate knowledge of history and heritage among common people of different land irrespective of their nation and linguistic identity.

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Heritage of Sundarban: Threat to Biological Conservation

Sanjit Jotder

Abstract

Sundarban biosphere reserve includes the Royal Bengal Tiger Reserve, Sundarban National Park and three wildlife sanctuaries, viz., Sajnekhali wildlife sanctuary, Lothian Island wildlife sanctuary and Haliday Island wildlife sanctuary. This mangrove ecosystem is the natural abode of many groups of animals and plants species. It is also the largest honey hunting place in the world. Indian Sundarban is bound on the west by river Muriganga and on the east by rivers Harinbhaga and Raimangal. Other major rivers flowing through this eco-system are Saptamukhi, Thakuran, Matla and Gosaba. Human being tried to establish his own command over other animals to get food and shelter. There was indiscriminate felling of trees, hunting of wildlife, encroachment on their natural habitat and also disturbing the ecosystem for own interest. The last part of twentieth century, human being realized the necessity or in true sense, the essentiality to conserve the ecosystem, its components like plants and animals and to mitigate, as far as possible, the damages already done to the nature. By that time many plant and animal species had become extinct or on the way of extinction. So many species had been declared as "Endangered" or "Rare". Considering the importance and impact, Sundarban Tiger Reserve had been established for in-situ conservation of Royal Bengal Tiger and other indigenous species of that locality in the year 1973. Then a management plan for that protected area is to be prepared which would cover all the aspects like boundary, topography, climate, etc., of that area as well as the revenue and budget for a determined period for planned management of the area including feeding, healthcare, protection, breeding, etc., of the conserved animal populations. The method of in-situ conservation should

religiously observe and maintain all the above mentioned formalities with the restoration of natural habitat keeping the eventual goal of rehabilitation of the endangered species.

Keywords: Biosphere, Ecosystem, Conservation, Management Plan

Sunderban is the largest contiguous mangrove forest area in the world comprising a total area of 9827 sq. km., which lies both in India and Bangladesh, while Indian part alone constitutes 4264 sq. km. and one of the World Heritage Sites of India designated by the World Heritage Convention. This reserve includes the Royal Bengal Tiger Reserve, Sundarban National Park and three wildlife sanctuaries, viz. Sajnekhali wildlife sanctuary, Lothian Island wildlife sanctuary and Holiday Island wildlife sanctuary. It is also the largest honey hunting place in the world. A large number of honey hunters and fishermen gathered in the forest area every year.

Features of the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve

The main objective of the marine biosphere reserve is protection, conservation and judicious utilization of the marine environment. The Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR) stands distinguished from all other mangrove sites in the world due to the following salient features, which are unique to this region:

- The Sundarban is the single largest mangrove forest in the world.
- It is the only marshy mangrove tiger land in the World Heritage site.
- This region houses a very high biodiversity with unique flora and fauna.
- The mangrove forest gives effective protection and acts as a natural barrier against storms and erosion.
- Tidal amplitude and fluctuations of the Sundarban mangrove is very high (7 m).
- Sundarbans mangroves support coastal fisheries in the East Coast of India.
- Sundarban Mangrove is the home of many endangered species.

Present status of flora & faunal resources

About 16 species of algae, 35 species of mangroves and 184 species of fungi have been there. Rare and endangered plant species of the reserve are *Acanthus volubilis* (Acanthemolle), *Nypa fruticans* (Nipah palm), *Sonneratia alba* (Mangrove apple), *Sonneratia caseolaris* (Crabapple mangrove), *Aegialitis rotundifolia* (Nilarixora manila), *Xylocarpus granatum* (Cannonball mangrove), *Heritiera fomes* (Sundari), *Ceriops tagal* (Tagal mangrove) and *Lumnitza racemosa* (Sandy mangrove). 58 species of mammals and 55 species of reptiles are found in Sundarban area. 248 species of birds including a large number of migrants from the higher latitudes visit the area in winter. Over 120 species of fish are reported to be commonly caught by commercial fishermen in the Sundarban.

Extinct Species

A number of species like Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*), swamp deer (*Cervus duvauceli*), hog deer (*Axis porcinus*) and marsh crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*) became extinct during the last 100 years from the Sundarban. It provides in-situ conservation of biodiversity of natural and semi natural ecosystems and landscapes and contribution to sustainable economic development of the human population living within and around the biosphere reserve.

Threats to Biological specimens

- Anthropogenic impacts like reclamation, human encroachment and influence
- Huge silt deposition, biodiversity loss and regeneration problems of obligate mangrove plants
- High salinity, low water table and acidity problem, loss of soil fertility, coastal erosion and a steep fall in fishery resources
- Conversion of mangrove tracts for aquaculture and agriculture
- Extension of other non-forestry land use into mangrove forest
- Increasing demand for timber and fuel wood for consumption

- Poaching of tiger, spotted deer, wild boar, marine turtles, horse shoe crab, etc.
- Uncontrolled collection of prawn seedlings
- Uncontrolled fishing in the water of Reserve Forests
- Continuous trampling of river/creek banks by fishermen and prawn seed collectors
- Organizational and infrastructure deficiencies
- Lack of public awareness

Conservation

Conservation of the Sundarban mangrove is supposed to have started with its declaration as a reserve forest, under the Indian Forest Act in 1878, after Schlich (1875) raised concern over its conservation (Presler, 1991). However soon after Independence, India declared Lothian Island (3,800 ha.) as a Wildlife Sanctuary and later, in 1960, another 35,240 ha. were brought under the Sajnakhali Wildlife Sanctuary. The hunting of tigers was banned completely in 1970, after the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) listed the Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) as an endangered species. Later, under Project Tiger, the Government of India established a Tiger Reserve in the Sundarban covering 2,585 km² in 1973. Another 241 km² area was demarcated as a subsidiary wilderness area. The core area of 1,330 km² was later designated as a National Park. Another wildlife sanctuary was established in 1976 on Haliday Island (595 ha.) to protect the spotted deer (*Axis axis*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*), which are dominant animals in a forest type consisting mainly of *Ceriops decandra*. The entire Indian Sundarban area south of the Dampier-Hodges line including 5,366 km² of reclaimed lands has also been designated as the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve. Sundarban Biosphere Reserve (SBR) has been classified into a core zone, manipulation zone and restoration zone that conform to the buffer zone and transition areas.

Core zone (1700 sq. km.) — This zone coincides with the Project Tiger Area. The core area is bounded by Matla River in the West, Haribhanga on the East and by Netidhopani and Gosaba rivers in the North. 1330 sq. km. of

this core area constitutes the Sundarbans National Park. Only the Core Zone is under strict conservation measures.

Manipulation zone — This zone consists of 2225 sq. km. of mangrove forest area where restoration of mangrove vegetation and silviculture activities are carried out along with research, education and training. This zone also comprises 5460 sq. km. of agriculture area where eco-development activities are carried out with local communities. Income generating activities such as the collection of seeds of black tiger prawn (*Penaeus monodon*), the culturing of oysters and crabs, mushroom cultivation and bee-keeping for honey production are allowed in the Manipulation Zone.

Restoration zone — Restoration zone consists of 245 sq. km., where mangrove conservation works are carried out. Efforts are being made, however, to also rehabilitate certain degraded areas through afforestation. Among faunal species, the estuarine crocodile and the Olive Ridley turtle are receiving some attention by way of captive breeding. To track the movement and nature of the Olive Ridley turtle a GPS transmitter has been attached on the bodies to 10 of them and released to Sundarban Matla Division forest river. This initiative has been taken under the Sundarban Tiger Project, which helps to gather information on their reproduction how they adapt to the environment.

In-situ Conservation and ex-situ conservation

There was aimless cut down of trees, hunting of wildlife, encroachment on their natural habitat and also disturbing the ecosystem for own interest. In the last part of twentieth century, human being realized the necessity or in true sense, the essentiality to conserve the ecosystem, its components like mangrove plants and animals and to mitigate, as far as possible, the damages already done to the nature. It also felt necessary to conserve the habitat which is an outcome of evolutionary processes and susceptible to random environmental, demographic and genetic events. Among these, impacts caused by human activities are also to be considered. By that time many plant and animal species had become extinct or on the way of extinction. National Parks, Sanctuaries and other Protected Areas had been established to conserve the bio-diversity of the locality and even re-introduction of species either directly or through ex-situ conservation

method. So many species had been declared as “Endangered” or “Rare”, and ameliorating measures are being taken for successful rehabilitation, though mangrove forest of Sundarban is very dynamic and potential ecosystem. Considering the importance and impact, Sundarban Tiger Reserve had been established for in-situ conservation of Royal Bengal Tiger and other indigenous species of that locality in the year 1973.

Then a Management Plan (MP) for that protected area is to be prepared which would cover all the aspects like boundary, topography, climate, etc., of that area as well as the revenue and budget for a determined period for planned management of the area including feeding, healthcare, protection, breeding, etc., of the conserved animal populations. According to the modern concept, not only the management of the demarcated area is good enough for conservation but the adjoining peripheral zone having human and domesticated animal population should also come under the zone of sanitization in order to keep the total system in proper place. The method of in-situ conservation should religiously observe and maintain all the above mentioned formalities with the restoration of natural habitat keeping the eventual goal of rehabilitation of the endangered species.

Hence, multi-faceted strategies had been adopted for reclamation, stabilization and improvement of the biological ecosystem of Sundarban giving judicious importance to the comprehensive development of the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-climatic conditions of the infringing human population of the buffer area in following manner:

a) Prevention of tiger straying to the forest-fringe villages to save the lives of human and cattle population in order to take the local sentiment into confidence to get their support. For that, regular patrolling by boat and other mode, immediate rushing to the spot after receiving the information of tiger straying and in extreme cases, shielding the most vulnerable areas through strong netting were taken up in the management programme of Sundarban Tiger Reserve.

b) Intensive patrolling inside the core as well as buffer areas in form of stationary and floating camps along the tributaries and rivers through motor-boat, speed-boat and other means to combat the possibilities of poaching at the root and apprehend the trespassers without compassion.

c) Making the process easy to avail the legitimate permits to the fishermen, NTFP collectors, etc., to earn their livelihood from the permissible areas but with strict vigil when they are inside so that no violation to the fragile ecosystem in that area can take place.

d) Pragmatic and feasible approach to grass root level people through joint forest management (JFM) system to minimize the man-animal conflict and to curb the hostility against the Forest Directorate and forest personnel by way of making roads in inaccessible areas, providing sweet water facilities, constructing community hall/school building/rescue centre for natural calamities, providing solar system for lighting/watching television which the Forest Department has been doing very successfully and almost 80% of the vulnerable areas have been covered with the formation of 24 nos. JFM (Joint Forest Management) Committees. Alternative source of livelihood are also being provided under various developmental schemes like MGNAREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)/ Forest Development Agency (FDA)/ Rural Integrated Development Fund (RIDF), etc., so that the pressure on the mangrove ecosystem is reduced to minimum level and optimum support of local population is achieved in the process of conservation.

e) Appropriate measures for increasing the density of prey base of tiger by way of conservation and even introduction of herbivore population in core and buffer areas so that the incidence of tiger straying at human locality in search of food is minimized.

Ex-situ conservation

Some of these include:

- Gene banks, e.g., seed banks, sperm and ova banks, field banks;
- In vitro plant tissue and microbial culture collections;
- Captive breeding of animals and artificial propagation of plants, with possible reintroduction into the wild; and
- Collecting living organisms for zoos, aquaria, and botanic gardens for research and public awareness.

In a State like West Bengal, where the natural ecosystem and wildlife are very scanty in comparison to the ever-increasing human population, these two tools, viz., in-situ and ex-situ conservation methods should be considered.

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Conservation of Manuscripts in the Vedic Museum of the School of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharati University

Juthika Biswas

Abstract

Museum collection of the School of Vedic Studies varies from anthropological to archaeological, geological, religious, terracotta, paper, etc. Museum developed from the objects donated by eminent persons from their personal collections of different field. The museum has a little but rich collection of manuscripts. Most of them are paper and palm leaf manuscripts. These manuscripts are almost written in Sanskrit language with medieval Bengali, devanāgarī and Oriya scripts. Main subjects of these manuscripts are kāvya, vyākaraṇa, veda, āyurveda, darśana, purāna, tantra, Mahābharata, mimāṃsa darśana, dharmasāstra, smṛti, ritual text, jyoti

sa, upanisada, stotra, epic, etc. These manuscripts are being conserved in the museum laboratory. Preventing and indigenous methods of conservation are being followed to preserve the manuscripts. This paper focuses on the collections of manuscripts, their material, storage and conservation works at the museum of the School of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharati University.

Keywords: Manuscripts, Object material, Conservation, Storage.

Introduction

The Vedic Museum of the School of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharati University is a pioneer museum of Vedic culture in the eastern region of India. This museum is solely dedicated to the Vedic culture and civilization. Main concept of the museum is to recreate and visualize the social and cultural life of Vedic

period depending on the available resources in archaeology, history and literature. After the inception of the School of Vedic Studies, eminent scholars of Sanskrit and Vedic literature from different corners of the country donated several rare and valuable manuscripts to the School which enriched the manuscript collection of the museum.

Brief history of the Museum

In the year 1980, the Department of Sanskrit, Rabindra Bharati University proposed that a School solely dedicated to the study of Vedas to be founded in this University. The proposal was supported and got emphasis at the seminar on 'Vedic Studies: Retrospect and Prospect' organised by the Department of Sanskrit, RBU, in 1983. As a result of these the School of Vedic Studies finally came into existence on 2nd March 1989. The School was formally inaugurated on July 10, 1990. Donations and gifts, viz., manuscripts, artefacts, religious objects were coming to the School from eminent scholars of different fields. As the consequence of these donations the School decided to establish a museum. In 2006 the Vedic Museum has been set up inside the School of Vedic Studies premises.

Collections of the Museum

The museum has developed from the donations and gifts of various fields. So, the collections are varying in different kind and context. Collections can be divided in several sections according to the objects collected:

- 1) **Manuscripts** are the most valuable collection of the museum. Most of them are dedicated to Vedic culture like literature, mantras, rituals, religious performances, etc.
- 2) **Books** are the largest collection in number. The collection includes rare books on āyurveda, published Vedic literature, dharma śāstra, purāna, Upaniśada, grammar and different subjects of Sanskrit and Vedic literature & culture.
- 3) **Archaeological** collection includes potteries, terracotta objects, bronze sculpture, etc.

- 4) **Anthropological** collection consists of some Palaeolithic objects like hand axe, scrapper, chopper, stone tools, etc., and also includes some ornaments and beads.
- 5) **Geological** section has some animal and marine fossils, fossil impression on stone, semiprecious stones, etc.
- 6) **Religious** collection has evolved from the donation of Mr. Dirghangi. The collection includes rare wooden utensils of Vedic culture which used in a religious sacrificial performance in the Somnath temple Gujrat.
- 7) **Audio cassettes, DVDs and CDs** containing Vedic mantras, ritual, text, etc.

Manuscript Collection

The Vedic Museum has a small but rich collection of manuscripts. Most of the manuscripts have been donated by Professor K T Pandurangi and Dr Brahmananda Gupta from their personal collections. The collection comprises both original and photocopied manuscripts. Till date around 550 manuscripts have been identified and documented from the bundles of manuscripts collected. Materials of the manuscripts are paper and palm leaf. All manuscripts are written in Sanskrit language using medieval Bengali, Devanāgarī and Oriyā scripts. Most of the manuscripts cover different subjects of Sanskrit literature, viz., Kāvya, Vyākaraṅga, Veda, Āyurveda, Darśana, Purāṅga, Tantra, Mahābhārata, Mimāṅsā Darśana, Dharma Śāstra, Smṛiti, Kocgrantha, Upanis

ada, Jyotisa, Prayogah Śāstram, etc.

Conservation of Manuscripts in the Vedic Museum

Manuscript conservation is not a recent practice. Conservation practices are found in ancient Sanskrit literature. In the Vedic Museum of the School of Vedic Studies, both the traditional and modern conservation techniques are being following for conserving the manuscript collection. Several texts are

found in different manuscripts explaining how to conserve manuscripts (as cited in Goswami, 2014, p. 48).

Sambhūṣyaṃ sadpatyavat parakarāt samrakṣyaṃ ca sukṣetravat;
 saṃśodhyaṃ vraṇitaṅgavat pratidinaṃ vīkṣyaṃ ca sanmitravat.
 vadhyaṃ vadhyavad aślathaṃ dṛḍhaguṇaiḥ smaryaṃ harenamavat;
 naivaṃ sīdati pustakaṃ khalu kadapyetad guruṇaṃ vacaḥ.

The śloka says that, “take care of manuscripts as offspring, protect it from others aggression like a fertile land. Clean them every day as dressing the wound; look after them like a good friend. Tie them up tightly with a cord and remember them always like remembering God or Hari. Thus keeping the manuscripts will never be damaged, scholars say that”.

The Vedic Museum has one small laboratory for manuscript conservation. Basically the preventive methods of conservation are being done here. Trained former students of the School of Vedic Studies are engaged in the conservation work. The laboratory has two fumigation chambers. All the collected manuscripts are being fumigated as the first step of conservation. Para-di-chloro-benzene and thymol are the chemicals used for fumigation. The manuscripts are documented in Manus data sheet according to the guidelines of the National Mission for Manuscripts. Until last year, documentation had been completed for around 88 manuscripts by entering the details in the Manus data sheet. The Vedic Museum also adopted the digitization technique for manuscripts conservation. Fragile and deteriorated manuscripts are digitized using Book-eye software.

It is considered that three strokes of a brush is the best way to clean a manuscript leaf. In the Vedic Museum laboratory, manuscripts leaves are cleaned with soft brush, preferably the squirrel tail brush. Chemical cleaning have not got preference for manuscripts. After dry cleaning, manuscripts leaves are arranged according to the page numbers and tied them up tightly with a cord. Then the manuscripts are wrapped with acid free handmade paper or with red cloth for storing. The wrapped up manuscripts are stored in glass

covered well maintained shelves. Naphthalene bars are kept inside the shelves as insect repellent. Indigenous materials like dried neem leaves, black cumin seeds, etc., are being using in the storage area for preventive conservation. Silica gel is also in use for humidity control in storage. The laboratory has two dehumidifiers for humidity control, but they are in not working condition at present due to power supply problem. The entire Vedic Museum premises have well air conditioning facility except the laboratory and manuscripts storage area. AC causes fluctuation of humidity and temperature if it does not operate for 24 hours a day. The fluctuation damages the manuscripts rapidly. So, the storage has been kept outside the AC facility.



Figure 1. Manuscript storage of the Vedic museum



Figure 2. Dry brush cleaning of the leaves

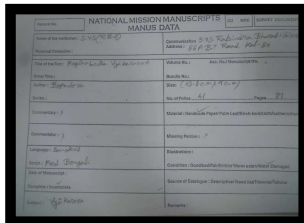


Figure 3. Manus data sheet for documentation



Figure 4. Sacrificial artefacts in the museum

Conclusion

Manuscripts are the written proof of our history, culture, traditions, rituals, etc. The Vedic Museum is not only focusing to conserve the manuscripts, they also encourage for preserving the scripts and texts written on the manuscripts. The School of Vedic studies organises several workshops and seminars on the scripts and care of manuscripts. One should first know the language, scripts and context or subject of the manuscripts to understand the value of the

manuscript. Different scripts, deciphering, reading, editing of manuscripts, etc., are taught here. Despite being a new museum, the Vedic Museum is trying to perform a meaningful role in conservation of manuscripts from its every angle.

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The Works of Muslim Authors in Pre-Independent Bengal: Need for Documentation and Preservation

Safique Ahamad

Abstract

Contribution of Muslim authors in India and more particularly in Bengal is an interesting area of research in present context of socio cultural environment. In this paper, quantitative analysis is done on the contribution of literary works of Bengali Muslim authors in pre independent Bengal. Effort is given to make systematically a comprehensive bibliography of Muslim authors with significant literary contribution on the given time frame and geographical area. Major contributions of Muslim authors published from Bengal during the specified period are discussed and tried to give a quantitative pictures on different parameters on literature published during that period. Areas of strength and weakness of contributions from different sphere of literature, viz., fiction, poetry, essay, novels, short story, etc., are highlighted. Suggestions are given regarding comprehensive bibliographical control on it. Recommendation is made on what kind of documentation and preservation are needed for the overall contribution.

Keywords: Muslim Authors, Pre-independent Bengal, Contributions, Publications, Quantitative Analysis, Documentation, Preservation, Literary Works, Heritage documents, Bibliographical Control,

Introduction

The development of Bengali literature, according to some literary historians, (Natarajan & Nelson) owes much to the patronage of Muslim kings of Bengal.

Since its very inception, Muslim poets and writers have been in the vanguard of Bengali literature but the stature of Kazi Nazrul Islam remains unsurpassed. His poetic talent came to a sudden flowering when lying in a trench in a 21-day ambush during the Second World War and he broke into revolutionary song. Nazrul stands next to Tagore in his appeal and artistic excellence and his poetry inspired millions of Bengali-speaking people of India and Bangladesh in their struggle for independence. In fact, Nazrul inspired poets of all the modern Indian languages and provided a model for Josh Mahilabadi in Urdu, Subramanian Bharati in Tamil, Vallathal in Malayalam and Dinkar in Hindi.

Bengali literature can boast of other Muslim writers and composers, among them the outstanding literary critic, Kazi Abdul Odud, Communist writer and intellectual Mujaffar Ahamad and of course, the innumerable Muslim singers and minstrel poets who roam the countryside and compose and sing poetry.

In Bengal there is significant contribution of Muslim writers since very early era. Contributions of Muslim writers cover diverse discipline from Religion to Science, Languages to Literature, Arts to Technology, Commerce to Sociology and so on. Again all these literary contributions did not confine to any particular languages. Huge numbers of literature published in Bengali, English, Hindi, Urdu and so many other languages. However, neither any comprehensive bibliographical control for these numerous kinds of literatures till date is available nor any quantitative analyses for those authors have been made.

The necessity of this kind of compilation is felt as there is no such known collection of this type in so many libraries or Publishing Houses. The main objective of the present work is to find out strength and weakness of the different spheres (field of works) of the literature by the Muslims in Pre independent Bengal. So I have done quantitative analysis and comparison between the literatures published during Pre-independent period in Bengal and tried to depict a clear picture for Muslim contributors in Bengal within the specified period of coverage.

Various kinds of literature survey have been conducted for this work. Among them Consultation and thorough review of different kind of bibliographies, handbooks and directories from the concerned subject field have been made. Among them, some important tools are various editions of Indian National Bibliography (INBs), Jatiya Granthapanji, Bangladesh, Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertation, International Dissertation Abstract, Bibliography of Indian Theses, Bibliography of Indian Literature (20th Century, Vol.1 of 5 volume set), Who's who of Indian Writers, Encyclopaedia of Indian Literatures, etc. Beside these, consultation of some relevant reports and popular journals and journal's article also carried out.

Publications after Independence are chiefly available from INB. It has been tried to cover whole INBs so far published. But INB is always incomplete in two senses, firstly National Library never received the whole or complete publications in a year through DB Act and again INB's publication since its inception in 1952 is irregular. So it is not possible for someone to get everything in his doorstep on his particular subject of interest. Best efforts have been given in every possible means to fill up both these lacunas of INBs.

Even reference tools like INB, etc., are not available before independence for this kind of work. So collection and compilation of data for those periods are more meaningful and challenging. Necessity here lies for further investigation like library catalogue search, visit to publishing house, meeting and interaction with the eminent personalities/experts on the field, etc.

Limitation of Scope

Scope of the study will confine to only those Muslim writers whose contributions have some significant literary and/or religious value. Literary period is limited to starting from the early 20th Century and before independence. I have considered only books as literary medium and again these are confined to those which were published from Bengal, i.e., before partition from the undivided Bengal. Languages covered are Bengali & English.

Majority of the Bengali Muslims found in East Pakistan, later, Bangladesh to be their home. Though, in general terms, literature of Bengali Muslims, whether East or West Bengal remains an integral part of the overall body of literary contributions.

Due to very short time span there are very limited parameters for the analysis section of this study. Again further survey and literature search may take place in order to exhaustive and complete documentation.

However, the study is not limited to those writers who after partition are confined to the west Bengal, but the authors of East Pakistan or Bangladesh whose literature published from West Bengal, is also included here.

Methodology

Effort has been made to focus on the contributions of Muslim writers of Pre-Independent Bengal through statistical analysis and in some sections both quantitative and qualitative analysis. At first a survey of the available published literature on that time period has been made. Literature survey is chiefly based on printed materials as well as electronic sources. Different type of literature consulted specifically mentioned under the heading 'Literature Survey'.

Personal visit of some important and relevant libraries and Publishing Houses has been carried out to collect relevant and pertinent data in Kolkata and its surroundings for this work. Some of the visited libraries are National Library & Central Reference Library, Library of the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission, British Council Library, Calcutta University Library, Jadavpur University Library, Rabindra Bharati University Library, Asiatic Society Library, Sahitya Parishat Library, State Central Library, Shibpur Public Library, etc. Among Publishing House there are some notable publishing houses in the concerned field, viz., Ananda Publishers, Deys Publishing House, Islamic Book Centre, Mallick Bros, Lekha Prakashani, Haraf Prakashan, etc.

However, Personal interaction, meeting, talk, interview, etc., has also conducted for obtaining necessary information with eminent writers and experts on this field. Very often personal visit from library to library and different publishing houses has frequently been made for constructing this work in a fruitful manner.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to be an exhaustive and complete solution for bibliographical control for numerous kinds of book published by Muslim contributors within the specified geographical and time frame. Again amount of contribution in different time period, their changing pattern, strength and weakness of contribution of various fields of literature and such other phenomena of writings by Muslim authors has been analysed and depicted here to give one a clear mandate of the concerned field.

In this way this work have several implications to society and may answers many research questions like:

- What are the major contributions of Muslim Authors published from Bengal during the specified period?
- What are the quantitative pictures of literature published during this period?
- What are the areas of strength of contributions from different sphere of literature? And in what areas it is weak?
- What kind of documentation and preservation is necessary for the overall contribution and preservation? Etc.

Short History of Publications by Muslims in India

Islam came to India in the 8th century and the first Muslims who arrived were the Arabs who landed in Kerala as traders and were warmly received by the Zomorin. Undoubtedly Indo-Arab relations go much further back than the advent of Islam. But the new religion brought by Prophet Mohammad emphasized mono-theism with great vigour and, as a corollary advocated

and to a great extent, practiced equality among men of different race, colour and social strata. This message of equality attracted a large number of converts and it soon spread to other parts of the land.

The second major contact developed in Sin—not as traders but as conquerors for here Mohammad Bin Qasim, an Arab lad of 14 years conquered a part of Sind in 712 AD as a reprisal to the looting of a ship of Arab pilgrims by Raja Dahir of Sind. This contact, though political had a cultural impact and it was to this that the Sindhi language and literature owe their origin. To this day, Sindhi is written in a modified Arabic script and bears a strong component of Arab and Islamic influence in the tone and tenor of its poetry.

And it was here that Abdul Latif Bhitai composed his songs of mystic devotion and human love. A new era had already begun – the era of cosmopolitan mystic vision.

Undoubtedly mysticism is no monopoly of Islam but in the centuries that followed, several groups of Muslim mystics so swarmed over parts of North India that mysticism began to acquire as a Muslim face. Till today, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti who came from Iraq in the 12th century to settle down in Ajmer as a lonely immigrant is held in high esteem both by Hindus and Muslims and the compositions of one of his disciples, Baba Farid, form part of the holy book of the Sikhs – the Guru Granth Sahib. Both of them emphasized the concept of the equality of man and sang of man's total submergence in the divine existence of God Almighty. The idea caught on and spread with speed and alacrity to practically all the dialects and languages of the land, and assumed different shapes and forms.

One of these was that of allegory and symbolism. Human existence was symbolized as a woman in love who has been unwittingly separated from her beloved and consequently sings the songs of separation from her divine love and thirsts for re-union. Hence, the poet or human existence was portrayed as a woman in love while God was taken to be the separated husband.

This also took the form of *Bara-masa*, (Twelve months) in which the damsel describes the charms of every season, month by month, and implores her beloved to take pity on her and to join her in enjoying the seasonal blessings. The first available *Bara-masa* was written by Addiman, who is believed to be a convert to Islam named Abdur Rahman. He belonged perhaps to the area between the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sind in the 12th century, according to Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and Vishwanath Tripathi, the first editor of the treatise, *Sandesh Rasak* and this happens to be the first literary work traceable in Awhat, the language deemed the precursor of the present Hindi and Urdu.

This marks the great beginning in practically all modern Indian languages. The mystic era had begun. The famous Indian historian Dr Tara Chand has traced the origin and development of the Bhakti movement in the south and it's spreading in the north to the impact of Islam and Muslim poets and saints played a very significant part therein.

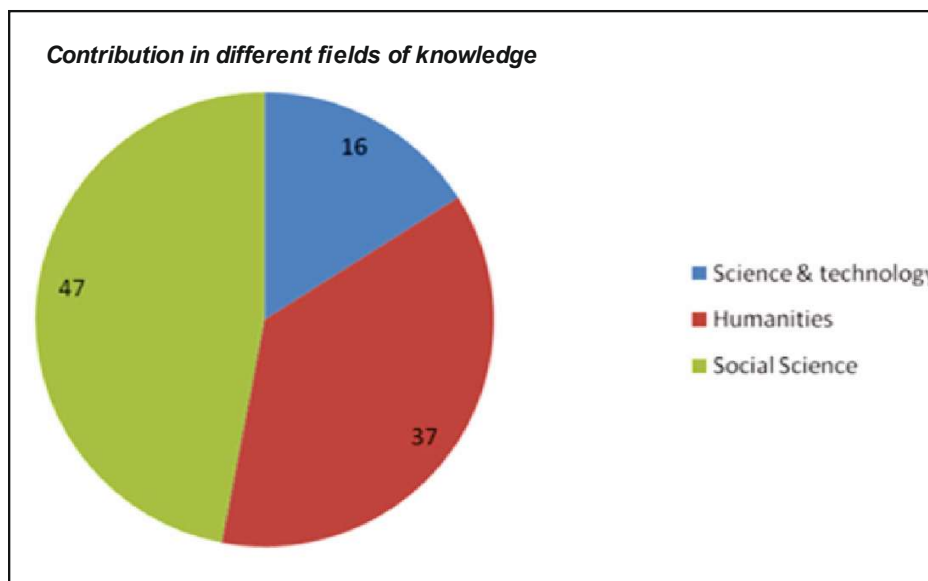
Indian, particularly Bengali Muslims have always been such an integral part of the nation, that it will be nearly impossible to identify their distinct role without considering the whole gamut of the cultural heritage. Practically in all modern Indian languages, their role has been quite significant for one cannot discuss Bengali without Nazrul Islam, or Punjabi without Waris Shah or Kashmiri without Habba Khatoon, or Awadhi without Jaisi or Brij Bhasha without Rahiman or Tamil without Abdur Rahman or Malayalam without K T Mohammad or, for that matter, Indian literature without Ghalib; the list is endless.

Analysis of Contributions

Data analysis of selected parameters though limited in numbers due to shortage of time span reveals the different interesting aspects of authors' contributions and other literary aspects from such Muslim community. This are discussed below and presented in a suitable manner, either tabular or graphical.

1. **Contribution in different fields of knowledge**

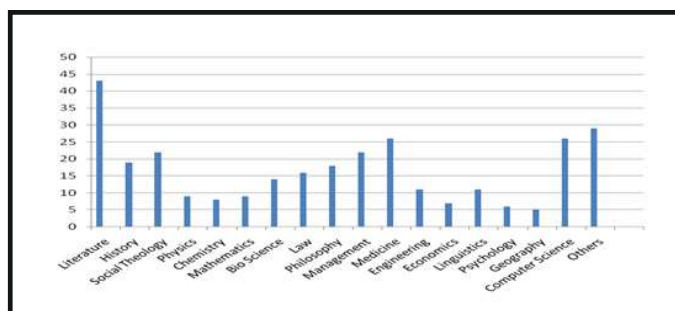
Statistical analysis of three main subject fields of knowledge shows that the contributions are much higher in social sciences and humanities than Science and Technology.



The result is due to lack of opportunities in higher studies in their socio economic conditions, lower participation in practical research based studies in Science & Technology due to their religion centric mind from such community.

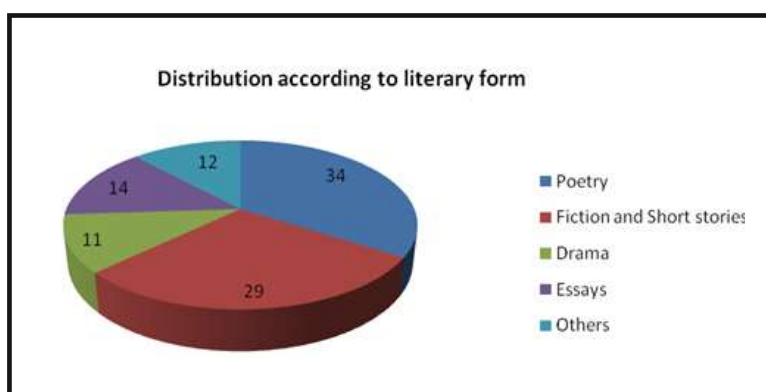
2. **Broad subject wise distribution of contribution**

Again when the contributions were depicted in some popular subject wise, it is found that majority of contributions occupies literature, history, and social theology or religions.



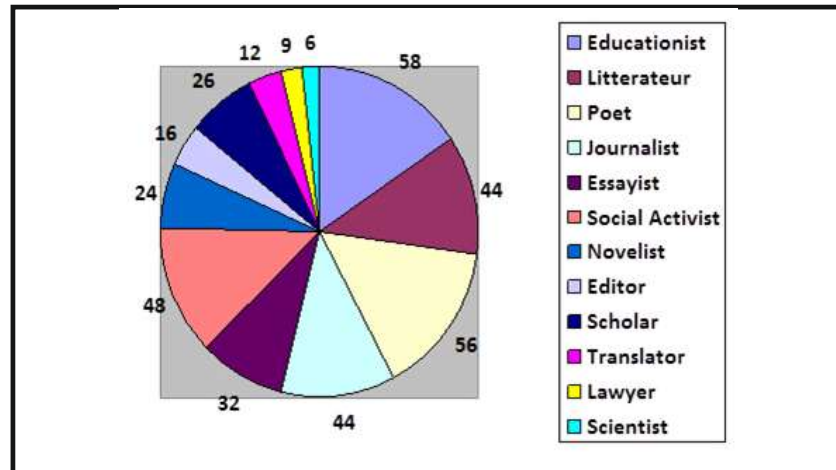
3. Distribution by Literary Form

Majority of contribution is poetry (34%) in literature. After poetry, fictions and short stories occupies 29% and then there are essays (14%) and drama (11%).



4. Distribution of Contributors as individual literary role or subject category

Educationist and intellectual (58) contributed most followed by poet (56), social activist (48), litterateur/writer (44), and journalist (44). Essayist (32) and novelist (24) also took a significant role in total contribution.



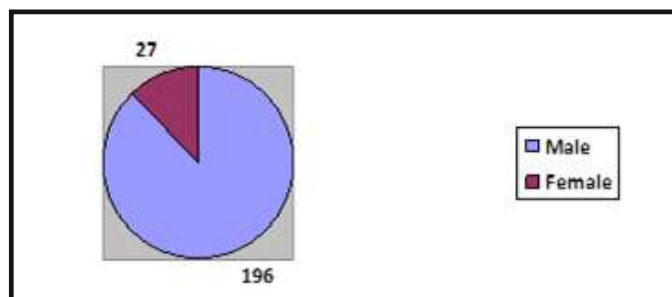
5. Language wise distribution of Contribution

Books on Bengali and English are considered in this present study. It was very much expected that majority of contribution are in Bengali (78%).



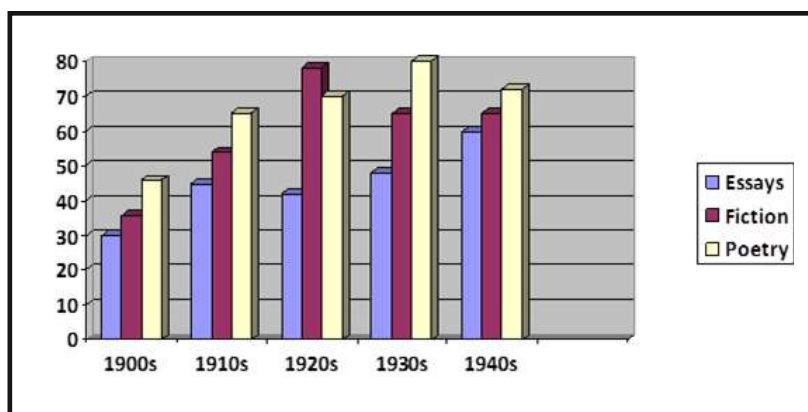
6. Contribution by gender

Literary contribution from male (196) is definitely higher than that of female contributors (27)



7. Publication of literature in a different timeframe

Before Independence a marked increase of literary contributions was observed in 1920s. During 1900s a decline of contribution observed because of political turbulence and British Government policy of divide and rule. After Bangabhanga movement the publishing rate was again accelerated. Again after 30s poem as a literary form flourished more.



On the basis of above statistical analysis, though limited in numbers it may be summarized that Bengali Muslims during the said timeframe contributed significantly in different sphere of subjects as well as different form of literature. However their contributions in literary history are not equally distributed all these periods. The main reason for lagging behind them from the majority is lies on

their socioeconomic background. They always come forward to take part on literary contribution whenever opportunity comes.

However, there are certain times, i.e., during 1900's and in the beginning of 1940s, it was observed that their literary contribution were slow or less. Recent data reveals that Bengali Muslims are coming rapidly in every sphere of literary and as well as scientific aspects by educating themselves properly.

Conclusion

Available bibliographies including INB have many gaps and incompleteness in many areas observed through this particular study. This work will fulfil those gaps and lacunas specifically for INBs on the given period. It will also serve as a supplement to INB for the periods on which it was not published in this particular topic concerned.

A clear picture has arisen through quantitative analysis which represents the strength and weakness of different spheres of literature during pre-independence era by Muslim authors. Again this work will serve as ready reference tool and guide for future research of similar kind. At the same time young authors from such community may be encouraged for more literary contributions.

Firstly, it must be appreciated that the word Muslim denotes a much wider cultural domain than Islam. Islam was a set of beliefs but Muslims of different countries, though adhering to these common beliefs, developed their own cultural identities in conjunction with their indigenous environments. Islam for instance, forbids, or at least discourages all arts, frowns on the practice of music, dance and sculpture and deprecates painting, yet in all these fields Bengali Muslims, and devout Muslims at that, earned distinction. It has often been the case that the artistic talent of Muslims in the forbidden arts found expression either in permitted media (for example, the expression of painting talent in calligraphy or of sculpture in the carving of Quranic verses on the Qutub Minar) or in the innovative transfer of these talents to other media. Hence the Muslim contribution to literature and poetry should be taken in this

context, which in some measure, explains the popularity enjoyed by poetry among Muslims in general so that couplets form part of ordinary everyday conversation.

The second important factor that should be noted is that this contribution was basically secular and cosmopolitan in character. Secular – because Muslim poets and men of letters could not identify themselves with Hindu religious or devotional poetry (barring instances where it had been raised to mystical or allegorical heights) and hence their writings, both in poetry and prose, opened the gates of secular and materialist subjects. What sustained this new poetic idiom was its cosmopolitanism.

Thirdly, it should also be borne in mind that Muslim contact was not primarily through administrators or rulers but mainly through traders (who purchased handicrafts and other manufactured goods and materials from the Indian towns or trade centres and sold them in Central Asian and West Asian courts and markets), Sufi saints, scholars and mercenary soldiers. Consequently, the adoption of these influences was the acceptance of world cultural norms and values of that period. The literary exchanges between Turco-Iranian traditions and modern Indian languages were therefore a part of this transaction, which can be compared to the impact of the English language and literature on various Indian languages today.

Though very close to Sanskrit, Old Persian had taken a different syntactical line of development. To discuss in detail the nature of the syntactical influences of the Turco-Persian traditions on the modern Indian languages is beyond the scope of this essay but the use of *izafat* (conjunctive lower apostrophe) alone gave much greater compactness and conciseness to expression.

The same holds good in the case of symbols-and non-religious and non-mythical symbols at that. The Bengali Muslim writers in many cases revolutionized the literary idiom by introducing new symbols or by communicating a different conceptual system through old and familiar images and symbols. Even Nazrul Islam, who is greatly influenced by Hindu mythological symbols,

introduced several new dimensions to them and introduced a series of symbols from the Turco-Iranian tradition.

While Muslim writers are among the prominent literary authors of various Indian languages, in many cases, a sense of alienation separates them from their fellow writers. Recurrent communal Hindu-Muslim riots breed extremists on both ends and create distrust and insecurity. Hence the psyche of the Indian Muslim writer, whether writing in Bengali or Urdu or Malayalam or Marathi, experiences an ordeal different from his compatriots.

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Social Taboos: An Insight into their Role in Natural Resource Management and Biological Conservation among the Traditional Communities of South Asia

Shreyashi Chaudhuri and Kuntal Narayan Chaudhuri

Abstract

Social taboos, one of the best examples of informal institutions, are self-imposed prohibitions based on cultural norms or social customs transmitted across the generations in traditional societies that do not depend on the government for their promulgation or enforcement. This paper briefly illustrates the diverse resource-related social taboos practised among the traditional communities of South Asia. This often neglected “invisible” system of natural resource management and biological conservation practices of these traditional societies is vital to the sustainability of their traditional livelihood as well as includes their stewardship for a more effective approach to biological conservation.

Keywords: Biological Conservation, Natural Resource Management, Social Taboos, South Asia, Traditional Communities.

Introduction

The term “taboo” is derived from the Polynesian word *tapu* which means a “prohibition,” “ban” or “exclusion.” Social taboos include any form of voluntary code of conduct or constraints in the form of proscriptions which are devised by society to regulate human behaviour, and conduct the daily activities and interactions among its members. Anthropologists have ascribed various social functions to these taboos (Colding & Folke, 1997; 2000; 2001). These ritual practices are often based on animistic beliefs. Their primary function is to distinguish between the “sacred” and the “profane” in a culture. Therefore, these are practices of social prohibitions connected with things that are believed to be ritually “pure” or “impure.” These taboos are self-enforced

through the idea of “automatic sanctions,” *i.e.*, the violator’s action carries its own penalty in the form of misfortune, often resulting from the wrath of nature or ancestral spirits for the individual or society (Colding & Folke, 2001). Social taboos can also guide human conduct towards the natural environment which is considered “sacred” and therefore treated with utmost care and respect by most traditional cultures (Posey, 2000). In fact, it may be difficult to distinguish among the social, religious or ecological origins and functions of these taboos. Furthermore, environmentalists across the world are increasingly emphasizing that the conventional approach to the conservation of our rapidly shrinking global biological diversity through “formal” governmental institutions, that are often highly centralised and bureaucratised, needs a “human face” to be more effective (Laird, 2002). In this context, the “informal” social institutions built upon local, community-based decision-making mechanisms, have an important role to play (Colding et al., 2003). The sustainable extraction of local resource pools by traditional communities is not only crucial for the conservation of their local ecological systems and biological diversity, but this also performs an important role in the long-term security of their customary livelihood (Sobrevila, 2008). The objective of this paper is to review the existing literature in order to synthesize information on the social taboos related to the use of local biological resources that are practiced among the plethora of traditional communities across South Asia and to explore their functions in the sustainable management of their local natural resource bases as well as the conservation of their local biological diversity.

Social Taboos as Informal Institutions

Presently, there are nearly 5,000 traditional societies in the world, each with its distinct language, culture and social structure (Furze et al., 1996). These traditional societies are now in focus because they inhabit almost every biome on the earth and are autochthonous to the global biodiversity “hotspots,” which are bio-geographic regions with significant reservoir of biodiversity that are often threatened with destruction (Howitt, 2001). The term “bio-cultural diversity” defines the diversity of life in all its manifestations: biological, cultural, and linguistic, which are interrelated (and possibly coevolved) within a complex

socio-ecological adaptive system (Maffi, 2007). This embraces local traditional knowledge and practices that can provide innovative models of coping with global problems. Social taboos exist in all traditional cultures throughout the world (Colding & Folke, 2001). These are one of the best examples of informal institutions (Colding & Folke, 2000). These taboos depend on informal socio-cultural norms and customs that are handed down the generations in traditional societies, rather than formal rules and laws promulgated and enforced by external political authorities or government agencies. Informal institutions such as these taboos have largely been neglected in conservation policies of the biodiversity-rich, developing countries (Harmon, 2002). Social taboos may be highly adaptive from an ecological perspective and can contribute to the conservation of the local biodiversity and therefore its bio-resources. This resource-related subset of social taboos is usually applied to the extraction of key natural resources that are particularly vulnerable to overexploitation. This paper briefly illustrates these resource-related social taboos practised among the traditional communities of South Asia under the following categories as previously outlined by Colding & Folke (2001): segment taboos (that regulate resource withdrawal by a social segment), temporal taboos (that restricts resource access during specific time periods), method taboos (that regulate the methods of resource withdrawal), life history taboos (that regulate extraction of vulnerable life history stages of species), specific-species taboos (that absolutely protects species) and habitat taboos (that restricts resource access in specific habitats).

Segment Taboos

These resource-related social taboos involve a cultural group banning the use of a particular species for a specific time period for human consumption by the individuals of a precise age, sex or social status (Colding & Folke, 2001). Thus, certain segments of a community are temporarily proscribed from the harvesting or consumption of the species. Anthropologists often refer to such taboos as specific food taboos (Rea, 1981). These taboos may serve as strategic responses to avoid game depletion due to overhunting in traditional societies, and they work in ways similar to a “quota system” or “bag limit.” This reduces hunting and harvesting pressures on wildlife and

plants, and conserves the local populations of wild species. Therefore, these taboos effectively regulate resource withdrawal. These taboos exist in a number of traditional societies across South Asia. Segment taboos frequently pertain to the most marginalized and weak segments of a society such as the children, menstruating females, pregnant women, and mothers of newborns. Cultural perceptions, customs and superstitious beliefs of human health risks are frequently associated with such taboos (Osemeobo, 1994). Therefore, these taboos are often related to emic beliefs reflecting cognitive and linguistic categories that are only meaningful to the natives of the culture practicing it (Posey, 1992). In Tamil Nadu (India), among the many coastal communities of fisher folks, pregnant and puerperal women avoid the consumption of cartilaginous fishes such as rays and sharks (Ferro-Luzzi, 1980a; 1980b). A quarter of the world's rays and sharks are threatened with extinction due to overfishing, with the ray species found to be at a higher risk than the sharks (Dulvy et al., 2014). This practice reduces harvesting pressures on the marine wildlife and conserves their local populations. In Uttarakhand (India), like in many other part of the country, women during pregnancy, menstruation and after child birth are not allowed to enter local sacred natural sites (Negi, 2010). There are similar reports from the tribal belts of Jharkhand (Roy, 1912), Maharashtra (Roy Burman, 1996) and West Bengal (Malhotra and Das, 1997). Sacred natural sites such as sacred groves often sustain local communities as bioresource pools (Chaudhuri & Chaudhuri, 2015). Since women are commonly involved in resource extraction from such sites such as collecting litter and firewood, this practice reduces human interference in these culturally protected natural habitats.

Temporal Taboos

The temporal taboos apply when a cultural group bans access to local resources during certain time periods, and are imposed sporadically, daily, or on a weekly to seasonal basis (Colding & Folke, 2001). Taboos imposed on a weekly to monthly basis are often referred to as a "closed season" in the literature. Closed seasons often coincide with spawning, mating, flowering or fruiting seasons of species. Traditional communities abstain from consuming fish, poultry and meat during the Hindu month of *Shravan* (July-

August) in North India and Nepal (Gadgil, 1987). This peak of the monsoons is the *mating season* for wild *animals*. Similarly, taboos on hunting certain animals during the rainy season from July to October exist in many Indian villages (Gadgil, 1987). For the *Oraons* of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha (India), their ritual hunting of wildlife (*Jeth Sikar*) is restricted to the tribal month of *Jeth* (June and July) in the pre-monsoon period (Miri, 1993). Similarly, the *Santals* of Purulia region in West Bengal (India) perform their presently infamous annual hunting festival (*Disum Sendra*) in the full moon night during the Hindu month of *Baisakh* (April-May). In Uttarkhand (India), hunting wildlife is a strict taboo on three proscribed days of the week (*viz.* Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays) throughout the year in some of the sacred forests (Negi, 2010). Tribal communities of Cachar region in Assam (India) do not hunt deer during March-May, when pregnant females are present in the herd (Gupta & Guha, 2002). In Bangladesh and West Bengal (India), it has traditionally been a taboo to catch *hilsa* (*Hilsa ilisha*), a local fish delicacy, from September to February when after breeding upstream at the end of the monsoons, the eggs hatch, and the hatchlings return to the sea. The local tribes in Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi regions of Uttarakhand (India), located in the Western Himalayas, exploit high-altitude medicinal and aromatic plants in their sacred groves only once a year, for a few weeks, after the monsoons (Negi, 2010). With plant harvesting banned for nearly a year, these plants have the opportunity to breed and grow without any anthropogenic disturbance. These temporal taboos function to reduce harvesting pressure on particular resources, especially during the breeding or growing seasons (Ntiamoa-Baidu, 1991). As Colding & Folke (2001) have pointed out, these taboos are not only directly beneficial for the subsistence species, but also indirectly help other species in the food chains as well. They have also compared the principles of this group of taboos with that of the traditional fallow rotation systems in settled agriculture.

Method Taboos

The method taboos apply when a cultural group bans the use of certain methods and techniques for the withdrawal or exploitation of the species (Colding & Folke, 2001). Certain gear types and extraction methods are

banned by taboos, especially those that can easily deplete or drastically reduce the stock of a resource and therefore make them vulnerable to overharvesting (Johannes, 1978). Method taboos are commonly related to fishing in the literature (Colding & Folke, 2001). Traditional poison fishing using naturally-extracted toxins is usually restricted. The toxins are placed in the water to kill or stupefy fish. However, these toxins are known to damage the aquatic environment and have long-term negative effects on fisheries. These taboos may originate from past negative experiences of overexploitation of resources. Gadgil (1987) reported that poison fishing is banned among the tribal communities in the Jainpur tract of the Tehri-Garhwal region of Uttarakhand (India). In the same state, there are also precise regulation detailing the trimming of the major fodder species, *banj* (*Quercus leucotrichophora*), and the collection of its litter mass from the sacred forests (Negi, 2010). Method taboos may also serve the institutional function of providing equal access to a resource among the members of a community, especially the elderly. The use of metal tools is banned among the tribal communities of the Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan (India) for hunting and harvesting (Brara, 1987). Therefore, these restrictions in the choice of equipment for harvesting serve the dual community objectives of employment and equity (Colding & Folke, 2001).

Life History Taboos

The following category of taboos applies when a cultural group bans the use of certain vulnerable stages of the life history of a species based on its age, size, sex and social or reproductive status (Colding & Folke, 2001). Such taboos are often imposed to protect key members in the social structure of wildlife who can ensure their safety or their younger ones or reproducing stages which are vulnerable to hunting. In Assam (India), the tribal hunters of Cachar observe the taboo on killing the alpha doe of a deer herd or the alpha sow of a sounder of wild boars (Gupta & Guha, 2002). These matriarchs play a familiar role in ensuring the *safety* of their flocks. The *Phase Pardhi* of Ahmadnagar region in Maharashtra (India), a hunting tribe, traditionally let loose ensnared deer calves and pregnant does (Gadgil, 1987). In Uttarakhand (India), similar taboos restrict deer hunting to male and older animals (Negi,

2010). In South India, hunting of fruit bats at daytime roosts on village trees is a taboo. However, fruit bats may be hunted when away foraging (Berkes et al., 1995). Bats are known to roost in large colonies, and therefore they are regularly overharvested by hunters in such a vulnerable situation (Macdonald, 1984). Such a taboo is evidently linked to conservation. Bats play key environmental roles as some plants depend partly or wholly on bats for the pollination of their flowers or dispersing their seeds, while other bats also help control pests by eating insects. Similarly breeding colonies of sea birds are protected in villages close to the heronry. In the Kokrebellur village (literally “village of storks”) of Mandya region in Karnataka (India), India, painted storks and grey pelicans breed on trees in this village. During their breeding season, the locals chase off hunters and even photographers disturbing the birds. Their guano is collected by the locals for use as fertilizer for their agricultural fields (Gadgil, 1987). In the Bhandara region of Maharashtra (India), catching spawning fish is a taboo among the traditional fishing communities (Gadgil, 1987). Therefore, these taboos ensure the sustained availability of these wildlife resources by protecting the crucial or defenceless stages among their populations in the wild.

Specific-Species Taboos

The following category of taboos applies when a cultural group totally bans the killing and detrimental use of specific species in both time and space (Colding & Folke, 2001). Anthropologists often refer to such taboos as general or permanent food taboos, because they apply to all members in a community and often concern foodstuff (Rea, 1981). Food avoidance was far more common for animals than for plants in most traditional societies (Ferro-Luzzi, 1980a). However, ethnographers have stressed that these are not restricted to dietary reasons alone (Colding & Folke, 1997). These range from species being perceived as toxic (Begossi, 1992), serving as totems or religious symbols (Sinha, 1995), representing reincarnated humans (Negi, 2010), to even those avoided due to their behavioural and physical appearance. Such reasons constitute strong sentiments behind self-enforcement of these taboos (Begossi, 1992). These taboos often involve threatened and endemic species

that are confined to a very small geographical range (Colding & Folke, 1997). The Mahili-Mundas of Jharkhand and West Bengal (India) regard the pig as their totem, and eating pork is a taboo (Risley, 1891). Similarly, eating the totemic *shol* (*Channa striata*) fish is a taboo among the Sol-Mundas (Deb & Malhotra, 1997). In the Beas valley of Uttarakhand (India), the hunting of the totemic *fiya* or *Himalayan marmot* (*Marmot bobak*) is a taboo (Negi, 2010). Dendrolatry is still a widespread ancient practice across India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In Uttarakhand (India), taboos protect *deodar* (*Cedrus deodara*), *ratpa* (*Rhododendron campanulatum*) and *bil* (*Juniperus communis*) trees which are considered as sacred (Negi, 2010). These keystone species provide refuge as well as breeding space for two of the most endangered animal species, viz. musk deer (*Moschus chrysogaster*) and monal pheasant (*Lophophorus impejanus*). Certain other plant species are considered sacred and are associated with taboos such as *khejri* (*Prosopis cineraria*) in the Thar Desert (India), and *pipal* or sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*) and *bargad* or banyan (*F. benghalensis*) throughout the plains of India. In Rajasthan (India), the *khejri* tree is a keystone species of the desert ecosystem which provides food and shelter to the near-threatened blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*) as well as birds, livestock and even humans. Both the *khejri* and the blackbuck are sacred to the local Bishnois. Even trimming the twigs of the tree is a taboo (Terborgh, 1986). There are similar taboos associated with the different species of figs (*Ficus* spp.) that are important for maintaining the tropical biological diversity (Gilbert, 1980). In India, *Ficus* spp. supports large populations of frugivorous birds (Gadgil, 1987a). The wild figs are critical to birds, bats, squirrels and monkeys during the season when flowers and fruits are low in abundance. Consequently, fig-feeding species disperse seeds, help regenerate barren places and renewal of ecosystems (Pereira & Seabrock, 1990). In Uttarakhand (India), a taboo forbids the hunting of the deer species with a white mark on its forehead as it is believed to be the reincarnated spirit of a dead village elder (Negi, 2010). Therefore, these taboos are not only important for conserving biodiversity at the species level, but at the ecosystem level as well.

Habitat Taboos

The following category of taboos applies when a cultural group regulates both access to and use of resources from particular habitats in space and time (Colding & Folke, 2001). Relics of virgin, natural habitats such as forest patches, coastal stretches, rivers, lakes or ponds which are considered sacred to the local communities are protected from human interference by religious taboos. In the smaller sacred spaces all human activities are prohibited, while in the larger ones limited biomass extraction such as hunting, fishing, grazing, felling and harvesting is permitted, especially during religious festivals and ceremonies (Chaudhuri & Chaudhuri, 2014). These culturally-protected ecosystems are known to provide numerous ecological services on which a local community may depend. These include maintenance of biodiversity, prevention of soil erosion, pollination of crops, preservation of locally adapted crop varieties and serving as a wind and fire breaks (Gadgil & Chandran, 1992). The sacred groves and other sacred landscapes of South Asia are the best examples of these taboos. They play a key role in biological conservation (Chaudhuri & Chaudhuri, 2015). In Rajasthan (India), it is well-known that the sacred groves (*Orans*) invariably containing the sacred *khejri* trees of the Bishnois, a keystone species of this habitat, and the near-threatened blackbucks of this sacred habitat are all protected by taboos. The Mahabali sacred grove, Imphal, Manipur (India), harbours the sacred *heibong* trees, another keystone species supporting frugivorous birds, bats, squirrels and monkeys (Khumbongmayum *et al.*, 2006). The Mawphlang sacred grove of the East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya (India), is a safe haven for several rare rhododendrons and orchids (Mishra & Jeeva, 2012). Raza Khan (1980) reported that the Bayazid Bostami sacred pond in Chittagong, Bangladesh, harbours the only known population of the Bostami turtle (*Nilssonina nigricans*). Similarly, the marsh crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*) of the Sundarbans is protected by taboos in the Khan Jahan Ali sacred tank in Bagerhat, Bangladesh (Gadgil, 1987). Therefore, habitat taboos play a key role as an informal institution in the protection of the vegetation and wildlife.

Conclusion

This review of the social taboos practised by traditional communities across South Asia thus constitute an “invisible” system of natural resource management and biological conservation by controlling the access and extraction of local natural resource, something which is vital to the sustainability of their traditional livelihood. The institutions of sacred natural sites and sacred plants and animals, along with the firm taboos associated with them, are invariably linked to the sustainable resource management practices of traditional communities in this part of the world, as well as beyond (Colding & Folke, 1997; 2001). Thus, this wide range of taboos plays a key role in the sustainable use and conservation of local wild species and cultivated crop varieties. Taboos reduce pressure on economically-important, threatened and endemic species directly by limiting or preventing their harvest, sale or consumption, as well as indirectly by protecting their habitats. Most importantly, where the potential to enforce external conservation rules is limited in these biodiversity-rich remote interiors, these informal institutions still provide the only effective means of regulation as they have been practised since the times immemorial. Furthermore, these informal institutions involve local communities as steward in effective conservation of local biological resources without encumbering their traditional livelihoods that have traditionally protected the local biological diversity. This informal institution may also offer advantages in the partnership designs of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management by involving cooperation between the global network of conservationists and the local communities. Therefore, informal institutions such as social taboos should receive greater attention from conservation biologists and policy makers alike so that role of the local people in habitat and biodiversity conservation can be fairly acknowledged and potential synergies with conservation objectives can be realized.

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Symbiotic Conservation of Intangible Heritages in Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabu Museum, Kolkata

Manash Bagchi, Nataraj Dasgupta and Shrikant P Pathak

Abstract

Like tangible heritage, an intangible heritage is 'culture'. And like the natural heritage, it is 'live'. Thus by 'conserving intangible heritage' we understand a task to sustain the whole system of endangered living tradition by supporting conditions necessary for cultural reproductions. This should be an effort to accord value to the 'carriers' and 'transmitters' of the tradition as well as to their habitus and habitat. In this paper presentation the authors will demonstrate how symbiotically a traditional value of one community was represented in the Sri Chaitanya Museum, Kolkata, by using the traditions of another community. This, in turn, helped the weaker community to get a livelihood opportunity by furthering their traditions. This symbiotic dynamics goes beyond the normal collecting practices of a traditional museum because interpretation holds the central role here. The authors will argue that the practice is in congruence with the 'post-museum' movement that beyond the uniform collective and didactic framework also thrives upon the satisfaction of the educational and cultural needs of audiences.

Keywords: Intangible Heritage, Symbiotic Conservation, Post-Museum, Community Value, Community of Practice, Thinking Together

Introduction

When nature unfolds its rhythms it does not care even wee bit whether someone is recording its expressions. But collective emotions of a community get captured in twofold traditions. When transcending over the personal

comprehension, the community attaches special values to certain practices, it forms the seed of culture. That precipitates through the ages and are handed down to following generations. These are visible in the core values of a community.

On the other hand art – in its visual, literal, musical or theatrical forms – waits to capture, freeze and interpret community emotions. This is perhaps even truer for folk art forms that keep a vigil on all that is happening around and collect expressions of the community. We know, behaviours of man or any other creature with transient mind-states do not fossilize, but their emotions do, spontaneously; in art forms – be it primitive or the modern. In it, in this natural human trait of collecting moments, there is the inherent mechanism of conservation – we conserve what we consider loving and worth conserving.

Beyond Personal Knowledge

We cite two examples of such conservations in this context. Here are two paintings of two events close to the hearts of the Vaishnavites. The death of Haridas Thakur by Kshitindranath Majumder (Image 1) and Nagar Sangkirtan by Gaganendranath Thakur (Image 2).



Image 1



Image 2: Courtesy Victoria Memorial Hall

The line and tone blended images of supple yet sharp figures hold in them certain community values – the value of being simple, compassionate, loving, self-less, vibrantly emotional, unabashedly expressive and transcending over the caste or faith obstacles. Historians say that death of Haridasa Thakura is one of the most important incidents which deserve mention when dealing with the last few years of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's life. He was 35 years older than Sri Chaitanya and Haridas Thakur was one of the devotees who willingly took to Vaishnavism despite being raised by a Muslim family. It is believed that Haridas Thakur was buried on the ocean shore by Caitanya himself. This trans-religious confluence in Vaishnavism was also apparent in the event of Nagar Sangkirtan. In the ecstatic dance of the whole 'community of value' – who cared to form a group because of their sharing these common core values – one thing is clear in their love for the God and the fellow member of the community and above all Sri Chaitanya, they allowed their personal spaces to merge and amalgamate as if the bodies became all one, one community.

These visual narratives are created by two master artists with their own comprehension. Yet, there is perhaps a hint of similarity of forms. They are masterpieces as artworks and visualization of moments but do not carry a sequential narrative of conservation style. For that we need to look beyond the personal comprehension – it is there among the 'Communities of Practice' (CoP).

Communities of Practice – Bengal Patuas

Put simply, CoPs refer to groups of people who genuinely care about the same real-life problems or hot topics, and who on that basis interact regularly to learn together and from each other (Wenger et al., 2002). This thinking together is conceptually based on Polanyi's (1962a) idea of indwelling: when peoples' indwelling is interlocked on the same cue, they can guide each other through their understanding of a mutually recognized real-life problem, and in this way they indirectly 'share' tacit knowledge. Thus, thinking together allows for developing and sustaining an invigorating social practice over time. The existing

literature constructs an argument that CoPs come to life from peoples' trans-personal processes of thinking together (Igor Pyrko et al., 2016). Following this definition we find an exact match in the Bengal Patuas. In them the collaborative learning process brings the Community of Practice in life and not the other way around. We show that endowed with this quality, they not only conserve the work culture of their own but also the culture of another community.

History of traditional Bengal scroll patachitra is older than 200 years. Even though its traditional subjects of interest were events or episodes of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata or the stories of



Image 3

Manasa-Mangala or Chandi-Mangala, the modern *chittrakars* are more of social story-tellers and so much so that even some politicians are willing to engage their story-telling, singing abilities (Image 3).

The Jahrikhanda Lila and an Interpretation Problem

While designing for a circular hall in the Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabu Museum in Kolkata we faced a museology interpretation and display problem. On His journey from Jagannatha Puri to Vrindavana Caitanya Mahaprabhu travelled through the dense forest of the then Jharikhanda. We read in the description of

the *Caitanya-caritamrita* describing the amazing pastimes of Sri Chaitanya in that jungle:

“When the Lord passed through the jungle in great ecstasy, pack of tigers, elephants, rhinoceros and boars came, and the Lord passed right through them. Balabhadra Bhattacharya was very much afraid to see them, but by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s influence, all the animals stood to one side. One day a tiger was lying on the path, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, walking along the path in ecstatic love, touched the tiger with His feet. The Lord said, ‘Chant the holy name of Krishna!’ The tiger immediately got up and began to dance and chant, ‘Krishna! Krishna!’ Another day, while Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was bathing in a river, a herd of maddened elephants came there to drink water. While the Lord was bathing and murmuring the Gayatri mantra, the elephants came before Him. The Lord immediately splashed some water on the elephants and asked them to chant the name of Krishna. The elephants whose bodies were touched by the water splashed by the Lord began to chant, ‘Krishna! Krishna!’ and dance and sing in ecstasy.” (Madhya-Lila, Chapter 17, verse 26 to 32)

The exact location of this pastime is not known from the *Caitanya-caritamrita*. It limits itself only to saying that the Lord kept the city of Kataka on His right as He entered the forest (Verse 24). In some biographies of Lord Caitanya (all written much later than his death), it is mentioned that He performed sankirtana at a place named Kunja Nagari on the banks of the *Chautama River*, and that all the wild animals took part by chanting and dancing in ecstasy. The myth says, the Earth became so ecstatic upon hearing the sweet kirtan of the Lord that she melted in some places, which resulted in imprints of the footprints of Mahaprabhu and the animals around Him.

Popular visualization of the event is somewhat depicted in this folk imagery. Passing over more than four centuries and being influenced by several modern socialistic trends some intend to interpret this as an actual event to be shown in a museum with realistic embodiment.

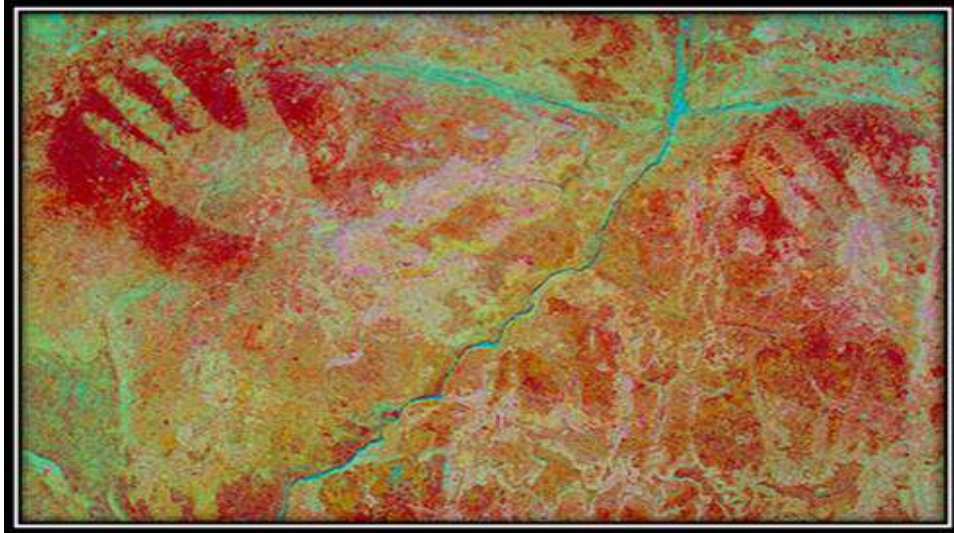


Image 4

Coming from the science museum fraternity, we respect the culture of community, but; at the same time we are keener to suggest an alternative narrative that was apparent even in the hand prints of the ancient cave dwellers (Image 4) – the urge to communicate personal emotions to the recipients of another age.

Perhaps the urge to communicate to the posterity is universally human. It is dark and surprisingly heart-warming in a cave in western Spain that hides our most intimate connection to the prehistoric past – hand silhouettes painted tens of thousands of years ago, 57 of them. Why are the stencils made here? We do not know. But the famous scientist and polymath Jacob Bronowski has a personal take on it. Probably it was a place where standing in the all-encompassing darkness, our ancestors wanted to feel the seclusion of death. May be they wanted, at that moment, to tell us that they came here. Did they think that someday some of their progenies would come and feel the touch they left? No doubt it is a guess. But an erudite guess for sure.

We wanted to draw an educated simile here. The Vaishnavite community which created the value based culture of simplicity, compassion, love,

'selflessness', vibrant power of emotional expressions and transcending over the caste or faith obstacles, wanted to perpetuate the story with the idea that their future generations will revere their Lord with the sense that here was a man whose practice of selfless ecstatic love could even take the aggression out of the most fearsome, violent animals and could make them cohabit with the lesser animals at peace. It was a metaphor worth conceiving, an idea worth propagating much beyond their existence, they thought.

An Unacceptable Reality – An Allegorical Solution

Presenting this idea in the museum in personal and physical embodiment could be an injustice to their noble thoughts. Thus we were looking for an allegorical art-form to represent the impression that it is indeed the depiction of an idea and not verbatim portrayal of a reality. We decided the Patachitra form to present this story for the following reasons:



Image 5

The Patachitra are narrative in style – we decided to use the visual narrative laid out in horizontal timeline rather than the traditional vertical scroll used in Patachitra. This helped in laying out the story in three parts, as if in three episodes (Image 5).

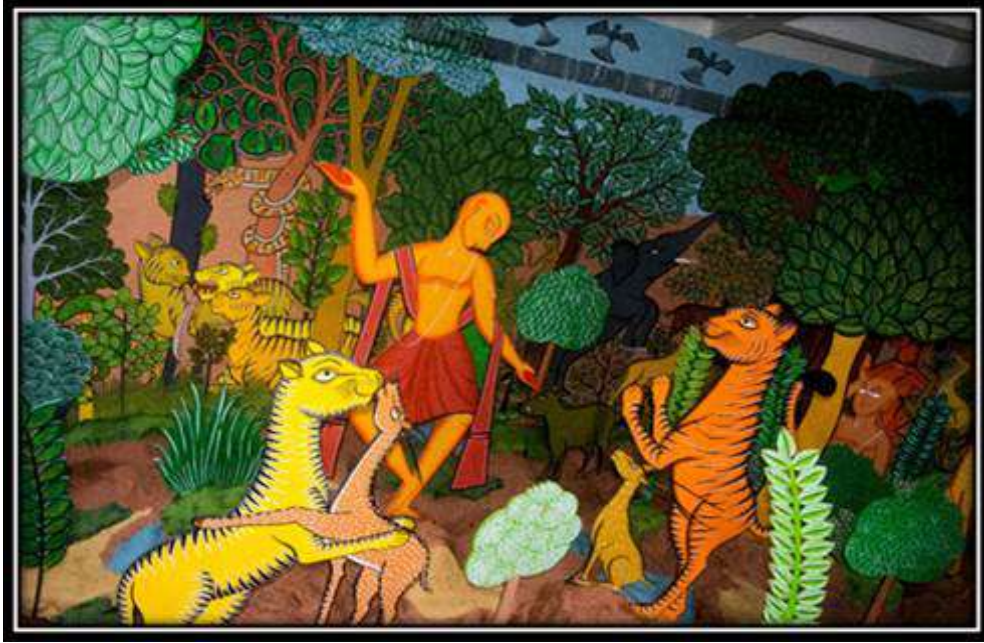


Image 6

The human figures in Patachitra are drawn with very strong facial expression so that the situation can be easily understood by the emotion. Embedding emotional expressions in the faces of other animals personify these characters in bold emotions as well (Image 6). Use of contrasting colours helps the audience to view it quite clearly. The main characters are placed at the centre of the Patachitra and the emphases are given on principle figures. All these combined allowed us to interpret the centrality of Sri Chaitanya while highlighting the ambience in the complete display.

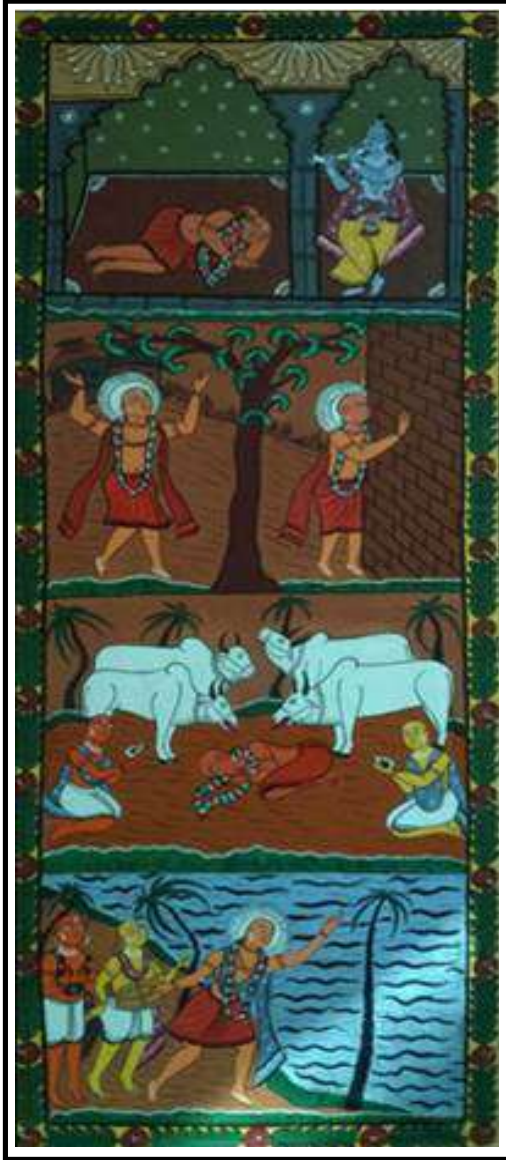
Artists uses different colour in respect of the characters, objects and suitable rendition of the themes so that it can be catchy and easily understandable to all kinds of peoples (Image 7). Except borders organic shapes are painted in Patachitra – The paintings are two dimensional without shadings. This was a perfect solution for the architecture of the display space where the visitor can be little off-centrally placed and immersed inside the

complete ambience of cylindrical symmetry created at the wall based two-dimensional display. Even though the pats are painted on one plane, we used cut-outs so that even maintaining the flattish nature of the display a depth perception for the jungle environment can be created. Beyond the physical depictions, sans the usual performative component, here they have become demonstrative depiction of an allegorical form of a philosophical theme.



Image 7

Indian art history bears a rich storage of traditional painting and folk narrative from pre-history to present time. Patachitra of Bengal and its adjoining states of Odhisa, Bihar and Jharkhand are known to have been struggling to maintain its relevance. In course of searching for the appropriate community of practice suitable for converting the case in point to art-form, the Curators made some field study and felt that among the communities of patuas, the characteristic panache of groups from the Bengal have long adopted to documentation of local and oral history as a survival strategy (Image 8). Prominent examples of such events are death sentence of various revolutionaries under British India, a famous case from Calcutta High Court of a scandal involving the murder of a head priest of Tarakeshwar pilgrim centre, etc. Different socio-



cultural and religious incidents of social significance from around the locality, e.g., various accidents, flood and famine at various parts of West Bengal. Over the last few decades, especially after the independence of India in 1947, few more specific themes have been added. These include different historical incidents of national and international significance e.g. the bicentenary celebrations of the French Revolution, horrors of the nuclear war, global war against terrorism, etc. (Bajpai). Study of these artworks and their creator groups in collaboration with the *Banglanatak.com*, an NGO who are also working on themes like 'Art for Livelihood' since long, helped identifying the group of Pingla as the group of choice for this representation.

Image 8: West Midnapore patchitra on Chaitanya's life

Symbiotic Conservation

The success of this display, gathered from the limited number of pre-inauguration visitors who viewed it so far, encourages us to push the limit a little further – to impose a narration actuated illumination control for suggesting a better linearity in the storyline. Two organisations collaborated with us in this project to make it successful. While *Banglanatak.com* collaborated with us (Central Research and Training Laboratory, National Council of Science Museums, Ministry of Culture, govt. of India) in the visual scheme preparation and connected us to the original painters, *Chitrataru* is the association of *patua* painters who actually executed the work adapting the ideas we wished to present. This, in turn, not only helped them in finding new avenues to apply their art forms, they have also gathered the new-found confidence in venturing into untraded arenas. The Durga Puja Celebration of 2017 has seen Bengal Patachitras created by Chitrataru in some of the distinguished *Puja Pandals*.

People are carriers of cultural heritage. Yet, people's conservation development is rarely planned using cultural resources. Here the experiment was done to show the symbiotic nature of the conservation of cultural values through use of cultural resources. While conservation of culture of a community depends upon whether the values of the community are equally cherished by the superset of people forming bigger communities, the preservation of folk art depends on striking a balance between adapting means to remain relevant and therefore getting economically viable to a given culture still preserving a connection to its historical roots. Culture does not exist within a bubble and as circumstances change, people change as well. Yet rural folk artists are finding themselves trapped by the idea that their art must represent tradition. Even museums today are to struggle for finding new values. Under such situations the application of Patachitra, in its many forms, proves that the best hope for folk art is preservation through mutual complementary adaptations. On the face of globalization, urbanization and aggression of the language of utility, communities are losing their intangible cultural heritage very fast. At the same time, museums are struggling to find ways to make their collections more

meaningful and popular for the people. This experiment shows that the 'post-museum' techniques of making collections popular by audio-visual supplements and collaboration of museums and community groups can be a good recipe to promote and preserve intangible cultural heritage.

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Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage – Strengthening Identities, Fostering Inclusion

Ananya Bhattacharya

Abstract

Museums today have the opportunity to play a key role in inclusive development of its community. Museums can organise public awareness and education programs which facilitate interaction between tradition bearers and larger community especially children and youth. Cultural exchange programs can further strengthen pluralism and support innovation. The paper shares examples of community folk art centres from West Bengal which have emerged as living museums. The communities have revitalized traditional learning systems and revived dying traditions. The folk art centres have become destinations for heritage education and cultural exchange. They embody community identity and pride.

Keywords: Culture and Development, Community Museum, Safeguarding Intangible Heritage

Introduction

Cultural heritage is not only about historical monuments, sites and artifacts but also rituals and festivals, social practices, performing arts, craft techniques and oral traditions, and knowledge of nature and universe transmitted through generations and embedded in community life. The International Council of

Museums (ICOM) defines museum as ‘a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.’¹ Museums are no longer engaged only in conservation and exhibition but are deemed to play a greater role by engaging with community and shifting focus from objects per se to both tangible and intangible aspects. This paper shares examples on how museums can engage with local community for safeguarding intangible heritage and also contribute to community empowerment and development.

Culture and Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) adopted by the United Nations recognises the importance of cultural heritage for sustainable development. SDG targets explicitly refer to culture, heritage and cultural tourism. For example, SDG 4 on inclusive education and lifelong learning opportunities identifies a target for ‘promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.’ SDG 8 aiming at inclusive economic growth and decent work for all mentions need for ‘policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.’ SDG 11 on building inclusive and sustainable settlements has a target defined as ‘Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.’²

The UNESCO Conventions on culture are also now addressing the sustainable development agenda. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972 focuses on preservation of historic sites and conservation of nature. The UNESCO 2003 Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

¹ <https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

(ICH) is about living heritage manifested in practices, presentations, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as objects, artifacts and spaces associated therewith and recognized by communities, groups and individuals as their cultural heritage. The two conventions differ in their approach of defining examples of outstanding universal value and heritage of humanity. Cultural heritage categories defined by the 1972 convention include monuments, groups of buildings and sites including the archaeological ones. Authenticity and integrity are important considerations while defining the universal value and often restricts change. The 2003 Convention recognizes that intangible cultural heritage is living and changes over time. The 2015 Policy Document³ adopted by the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the Operational Directives of the 2003 Convention adopted in 2016 highlight the interdependence between cultural heritage and sustainable development.⁴ The UNESCO 2005 Convention of Promotion of Cultural Diversity is about the diversity of cultural expressions and formally recognizes both cultural and economic aspects of contemporary cultural expressions produced by artists and cultural professionals. The Convention aims to enable policies and measures supporting growth of creative economy. The periodic reporting framework on the progress towards achieving the goals of the convention examines measures to integrate culture into international development cooperation programmes and national development plans.⁵

Rural Craft and Cultural Hubs of West Bengal

Banglanatak dot com is a social enterprise headquartered at Kolkata and working across India since 2000 for fostering inclusive and sustainable development using culture-based approaches. The flagship initiative of banglanatak dot com is Art for Life (AFL) which safeguards intangible cultural

³ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment>

⁴ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/directives>

⁵ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention>

heritage and promotes creative enterprise and cultural industries based on ICH. Safeguarding starts with inventorying and documentation with community participation. Other actions include revitalizing the skill transmission process, capacity building for developing creative enterprises and supporting new innovations, awareness generation and promotion through events, digital media and multicultural exchange and collaboration. Art for Life started in 2005 with 3200 performing folk artists and six folk traditions. The early years between 2005 and 2008 were supported by the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Funding support connecting the artist communities to global audience was received from the European Union between 2009 and 2011. In 2013, the Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises under the West Bengal State Government adopted the model and forged partnership with UNESCO. At present, more than 25,000 traditional practitioners in the state are covered under the Rural Craft and Cultural Hubs initiative. Additionally, the model had also been replicated in the state of Bihar, involving approximately 1500 artists. The model has also been awarded as a good practice by the World Bank-supported Bihar Innovation Forum-II. The Art for Life model integrates art, community and habitat. Local traditional skills in performing and oral traditions, weaving and traditional crafts are revitalised through strengthening learning systems and awareness creation. The villages are promoted as destinations for heritage education and cultural tourism.

A key strategy of developing the Rural Craft and Cultural Hubs has been establishing Folk Art Centres at the village level. Some of these centres were set up with the support of the European Union in villages of Chau dancers, Patachitra painters and Bauls in 2010-2011. These centres were like living museums. They offered the community much needed space for performance and practices. The centres started embodying community identity and pride. Since 2010, banglanatak.com started annual village festivals in these centres, celebrating the local traditions of storytelling, scroll

painting, folk song and dance. The festivals created awareness and recognition for the art forms and the villages started emerging as cultural destinations. In 2014-2015, West Bengal Khadi and Village Development Board established Folk Art Centres in the villages of wooden doll makers, Dokra makers, Sitalpati weavers, and wooden mask makers also. Each of the centres was built on land donated by the community. Artists' collectives own, operate and manage the centres. The folk art centres showcase local culture, support practice and promotion of the art forms, and offer places to stay for visitors. Each has a community museum showcasing works of award winning artists and information on the craft-making process. They promote and support year-round tourism in the village too. There are now 15 annual village festivals in different art and craft villages of West Bengal. Visitors include students and researchers, photographers, designers and art lovers from India and abroad. Footfall has grown from nil to 1000 per month in places like Patua village Naya in Pashchim Medinipur district or Dokra village Bikna in Bankura district. Young people in some of the villages are now trained in memory mapping and documenting their living traditions. Mapping is not merely recording history. The process strengthens skills, revitalises lost knowledge, techniques and knowhow, and creates tools for promotion of those skills. Participation of living exponents results in developing viable plans for revitalization and addresses pitfalls like commoditization of culture to cater to the market. The following are some of the examples of revival of lost traditions.

- **Revival of Bangla Qawwali:** Baul-Fakiri music of Bengal has many variants including Bangla Qawwali, a genre heavily influenced by Sufism. It was nearly lost by the end of 20th century. Our team started documenting Baul and Fakiri songs in 2005-2006 with the leading Bauls. Revival of Bangla Qawwali was an outcome of this process. Another was revival of the traditional Akhras where Bauls and Fakirs came together for music sessions and master artists taught and

groomed young talents in classical Guru-Shishya Parampara (master-disciple method of learning). This was a significant development because the Fakirs, in the past, were forced to abandon the Akhra system because of stiff opposition from the orthodox section of their society. Today, Baul-Fakiri music is enjoying much acclaim, especially among young people, and several artists regularly perform in international events.

- **Revival of Patachitra:** Patachitra of Bengal is an ancient craft of scroll painting where the artists double up as singers to narrate the stories painted on scrolls. However, when we started documentation in 2005, there were less than 10 Patachitra artists and they had stopped using natural colours made from extracts of flowers, leaves and stones. Only two of them could sing the songs called Pater Gaan, a central element of traditional Patachitra. The intervention revived the use of natural colours and the songs. It also expanded the repertoire of stories, which was essentially mythological in nature, and turned Patachitra into a social communication tool by including subjects like gender violence, child marriage, wellbeing and conservation of environment. Currently, the village Naya in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur has become a cultural destination. It has also inspired other Patua villages to work for safeguarding of their traditions.

Overall Impact

Art for Life has transformed the life of individual artists as well as the larger communities. The recognition and respect as artist, and the opportunities for travelling and cultural exchange have engaged the interest of the young people. They are now learning their traditions from the masters and art is emerging as a livelihood. The skill base is thus strengthened. Income has increased 5 to 10 times for most of the communities. Since the majority

(around 60%) of the artists are women, Art for Life has resulted in women's empowerment with women enjoying a better say in family and community, economic empowerment and mobility. Strengthened networks have resulted in multicultural collaboration with academics, festival organisers and other artists. More than 300 artists from rural interiors have travelled to countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America in the past five years. Recognition has also led to social inclusion and greater interest in the development process, resulting in non-monetised outcomes like the artist families investing more in education of children, health and sanitation and in improving their living environment and quality of life. The deprived hamlets are thus emerging as vibrant cultural destinations.

Conclusion

Museums can play a key role in revitalization of intangible heritage of local communities through engagement of youth in learning about their heritage, organizing awareness building and promotional activities, facilitating processes for memory mapping and inventorying, creating opportunities for learning from living heritages, etc. Collaborative workshops may be organised between different tradition bearers as well as contemporary artists. Experiencing and working with other cultures and art forms empower tradition-bearers with new skills and networks. It creates new avenues for intangible cultural heritage to flourish. Art residencies and workshops show how art empowers to transcend barriers of language, and collaborations support new innovations. Facilitation of creative interactions between folk artists, crafts persons, contemporary musicians, theatre directors, choreographers and designers helps in understanding the dynamics of culture, place, and society in different environments. The creative minds also gain confidence and grow an increased ability to understand their own cultural context and ways to innovate. The digital age provides further opportunities for outreach and networking across the globe.

More information

<http://banglanatak.com/art-for-life/>

<http://www.toutheast.in>

<http://www.ruralcrafthub.com>

<http://www.rcchbengal.com>

<http://www.toutheast.in>

<http://www.bncmusical.co.in>

<http://www.naturallybengal.com>

New Challenges of Conservation Approaches of Gandhian Heritage in the Gandhi Memorial Museum

Pratik Ghosh

Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi, the '*Father of the Nation*' upheld the values and spirit of India's cultural heritage throughout his life. His life and activities were based on the age old tradition and culture of India. After the death of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, the then National Leaders, both in the Government and the Constructive work-field decided to form the '*Gandhi National Memorial Trust*' for preserving the values of Gandhian Heritage throughout the country. In consonance with Mahatma's idea to reach everybody, the Trust decided to establish several Gandhi Museums in different parts of India. Thus the Gandhi Memorial Museum for the Eastern Region came up at Barrackpore in the year 1961 and the objects of this museum are to collect, preserve and display materials connected with the memory of the Mahatma, disseminate his life, thoughts, activities and programmes for public benefit through different museum-processes and depict also his relations with the Eastern Regional Provinces. In times of moral degradation and absence of moral values in public life the proper preservation of all the materials related to Gandhian Heritage through this museum should necessary for our future generation. As the documentary heritage of Gandhi Memorial Museum is the cream of the social, political, economic and cultural heritage of our country, proper up keeping and conservation of these documents are the needs of the hour. The present write-up focuses on the challenging approaches presently pursued by the Gandhi Memorial Museum, Barrackpore, for proper preserving such valuable documentary heritage.

Keywords: Conservation approaches, Gandhian Heritage, Gandhi Memorial Museum

Introduction

Heritage is that which is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. The term also denotes manifold meanings, such as inheritance, birthright, legacy, tradition, culture, history and past. Ancient monuments, objects of art and craft, oral tradition, written literature as also natural phenomenon, all these form part of heritage.

Mahatma Gandhi, the 'Father of the Nation', upheld the values and spirit of India's cultural heritage throughout his life. His life and activities were based on the age old tradition and culture of India. He imbibed the finer features of Indian culture and practised them in his life. He was an advocate of Indian cultural heritage.

After the death of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, the then National Leaders, both in the Government and the Constructive work-field decided to form the 'Gandhi National Memorial Trust' for preserving the values of Gandhian Heritage throughout the country. The Trust functioned at the national level to collect, preserve and display materials connected with the memory of the Mahatma and in 1949 the first Gandhi Memorial Museum was inaugurated in New Delhi. Later on, in consonance with Mahatma's idea to reach everybody, it was decided to establish Regional Museums Boards and under it four regional Gandhi Memorial Museums came up in different parts of India.

The Gandhi Memorial Museum for the Eastern Region came up at Barrackpore in the year 1961 and after initial endeavours was thrown open to the public on May 7, 1966. The objects are the same, as in the case of the first Gandhi Memorial Museum, i.e., to collect, preserve and display materials connected with the memory of the Mahatma, disseminate his life, thoughts, activities and programmes for public benefit through different museum-processes and depict also his relations with the Eastern Regional Provinces.

Gandhi Memorial Museum, Barrackpore, set up on Mahatma Gandhi at the behest of Gandhi Memorial Trust way back are unique institutions in the

sense that nowhere else so many museums have come up on a single personality and appropriately further since the person these commemorate wanted to reach everyone however remote one may situate, with his message of Love, Truth, Non-violence and regulated living to ensure a just, humane growth and existence for all. The Museum at Barrackpore, may claim to be further distinct because of its offerings and programmes and its integrated approach as a museum proper utilising all the present day museological media and having developed a range of galleries depicting facets of Gandhiji's Life and Philosophy along with different phases of India's Freedom Movement.

The variety of collections at this Museum provide interesting and highly informative direct research materials regarding the personality, thinking and the programmes of the Mahatma or about events in his life. The museum's search for an alternative ideology, in place of those that are pursued still by Governments and countries without being able to bring about real welfare of the people, through various intellectual exercises and its research activities, perhaps a first by a purely biographical museum and beyond its collected

In today's situation the Biographical Museum on Mahatma Gandhi has a distinct role to develop the right attitude and approach to life, living and relations apart from the inspiration. The distinct potentiality that marks out this museum is the capability to work for the upliftment of the fellow beings, both in developing their human character and broadening their education and culture. In times of moral degradation and absence of moral values in public life the proper preservation of all the materials related to Gandhian Heritage through this museum should necessary for our future generation. So being a museum on noble people of our country, it has a great responsibility to preserve the Gandhian Heritage. The present write-up focuses on the challenging approaches presently pursued by the Gandhi Memorial Museum, Barrackpore, for proper preserving such valuable documentary heritage.

Collections of Gandhi Memorial Museum

The documentary heritage here includes huge numbers of photographs concerning Gandhiji's life and activities and our Freedom Movement, a number of things of his personal use, some originally used articles of Mahatma, rare negatives, some original letters, plaster-cast replica of his used articles, photocopy of his huge correspondence, his notes and hand writing in different languages, sculptures, models, oil paintings, life size portrait of the Mahatma, a continuous panel of coloured sketches depicting the life and philosophy of Gandhiji and different phases of our freedom struggle, specimens of tribal handicrafts, and a very rare and interesting collection of specimen of hand-spun threads by many of our National Leaders including Gandhiji and Kasturba Gandhi.

Tape-Records containing reminiscences of many illustrious persons who came in contact with Gandhiji, disc-records containing patriotic and devotional songs and some documentary films on Gandhiji and Independence movement are another interesting collection of this museum.

The collections are thus variable and necessary as to highlight upon the life and the philosophy of the Mahatma Gandhi.

Present Condition of some of the Museum Objects

I. Original Objects:

- **Wooden Desk (Plate 1)**, used by Gandhiji for taking meal at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan in 1946. Condition: Good.
- **Wooden Spoon (Plate 2)**, used by Gandhiji at Noakhali (Bangladesh) during 1946-47. Condition: Good.

- **Palm Leaf Bolpur Topi (Plate 3):** A hat made up of palm leaf, used by Gandhiji. Cane strips, jute and rope are used as binding materials. Palm leaves are loose in position in several places and cane strips are broken in few places.



Plate 1

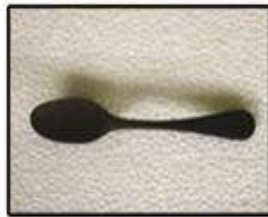


Plate 2



Plate 3

- **Bed Cover (Plate 4):** Gandhiji used it at Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das' residence in 1925; made up of hand spun cotton; tagged on a white khadi cover by stitching with khadi cotton threads. The original khadi cloth is torn at several places and degraded.

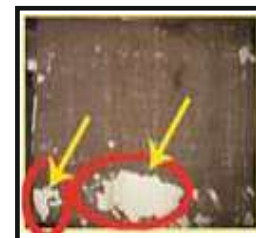


Plate 4

- **Lantern (Plate 5):** ditz Lantern, made in New York, USA; used by Gandhiji in Noakhali in 1946-47. Presently in good working condition. Some marks are prominent on the glass portion. Discoloration has occurred due to metallic corrosion.



Plate 5

II. Hand-spun threads (Plate 6):

A very rare and interesting collection of this museum is the hand-spun threads, spun by many of our National Leaders. Each thread is covered by a paper in which the name of the particular Leader, written in ink for identification. Due to the deterioration of the covering papers and accumulation of dust and dirt on the threads these specimens are gradually deteriorating.



By Gandhiji



By Kasturba Gandhi



By Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru



By Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Plate 6

III. Original Bengali hand writing of Gandhiji (Plate 7):

This was written during his stay at Noakhali. It is kept in the Reserve collection with proper recording. It is laminated and in good condition.



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9

IV. Paintings:

- **Life-size Portrait of the Mahatma:** restored by INTACH in 2006.
- **Mural Painting (Plate 8):** on the life, work and philosophy of the Mahatma. A big spot has been identified on a panel, may be due to moisture accumulation or biodeterioration. The old wall of the building is not properly damp proofed.

- **Portraits of 36 National Leaders (Plate 9):** Almost all are in good condition, but the supporting background of some are damaged affecting paint layers.
- **Water-colour paintings (Plates 10a & 10b)** by Durgesh Chandra Das, painted in the 1920s. The paintings were restored by INTACH in 2008. Now in good condition.



Plate 10a: Before Treatment



Plate 10b: After Treatment

V. Original Letters (Plates 11a & 11b):

There are 11 original letters of Mahatma Gandhi in his own hand writing. These are strengthened by Hand Lamination.



Plate 11a



Plate 11b

VI. Photographs (Plates 12a & 12b):

This museum has a huge collection of photographs on Gandhiji's life, activities and the Freedom Movement. Photographs displayed in the gallery are damaged due to acidification and iron pins and screws. Now digital prints are gradually replacing the old ones.



Plate 12a: Previous Condition



Plate 12b: Present Condition



VII. Glass Negatives (Plate 13):

Some very rare and original glass negatives are stored in the Reserve, covered by envelop containing necessary information. Recently some spots are noticed on few negatives. Some of them are broken during collection and are joined through cello-tape.



Plate 13

VIII. Disc Records:

Disc-records containing voices of Gandhiji, Rabindranath, Netaji and Pandit Nehru and also Swadeshi songs and music. The audio quality of some of these voice-records is not clear. By using of some audio-editing software, efforts are being made to clear the sounds to maintain the original quality as much as possible.

Conservation Approaches

Care and management of the collection of this museum must be a continuous process and part of daily activities. Proper care and management of museum

collections are the most effective preventive measures to control any kind of deterioration and it includes following points:

- Documentation
- Evaluation to identify deficiencies.
- Establishing a preventive conservation programme.
- Assessing the condition and preservation needs of the housing of the museum objects.
- Conservation survey of the museum collection by the professionals.
- Identifying emergency threats to the museum collection for incorporating appropriate emergency planning.

This museum is trying to create, implement and review a series of policies and plans which govern its collection care activities. This policy and plan structure is often referred to as the 'collections management framework'. In a planning cycle policies and plans are reviewed to measure performance and re-assess goals. The collections care plan of the museum covers the following broad areas of activity:

❖ **Preventive Conservation:**

- Maintenance and improvements to the building
- Environmental monitoring and control
- Housekeeping and pest management
- Handling and moving objects
- Storage and display materials and methods
- Risk assessment

❖ **Remedial Conservation:**

- Object or collection condition assessments
- Planned programmes of treatment for objects

● **The process of collections care planning:**

Planning effectively for collections care activity involves the following steps:

1. Set up a planning team and a timetable
2. Review the current situation and the context for the plan
3. Review the current practice and objectives

4. Establish priorities

5. Set achievable and measurable targets for improvement and reducing risk

1. **Set up a planning team and a timetable** – The museum has included the relevant people in this planning activity to ensure that they have an involvement in the success of such plan and the museum has allowed and planned for adequate time for such people to contribute to this plan.
2. **Review the current situation and the context for the plan** – Through this step the museum gets a chance to reflect on current strengths and weaknesses in the context of the policy on collections care and any wider strategic plans and policies for the museum. As the museum is updating or rolling forward an existing collections care plan, it takes more times to examine the success, or failure, of the objectives in the previous plan. At this stage in the process the museum can also identify any existing budget or potential sources of funding in future.
3. **Review the current practice and objectives** – This step helps the museum to have a clear overview of the current situation and understand the context and it is often helpful to use existing published standards or examples of good practice to help identify areas of need. In the detailed review of current practice the museum consider the following broad areas:
 - Collections condition checking
 - Environmental monitoring
 - Environmental control
 - Suitable building – adaptation and maintenance
 - Housekeeping
 - Remedial conservation programmes

The museum also identifies the areas in need of work or improvement through this step. Having carried out a detailed review under different collections care headings, it will end up with a set of areas in which the museum can improve its collections care activities. These areas will be shaped into specific objectives in step 4.

4. Establish priorities – Through this step it has been considered all sources of information available with the museum and a list of objectives have been created, which the museum needs to assess the objectives in the context of the strategic plans. Some objectives are long term projects that extend beyond the life of the plan and others are single tasks. As this museum has not the resources to achieve the list of objectives, so it will need to prioritise. There are many pressures on budgets and staff time and so it is important to consider collections care planning within the wider strategic priorities for the museum. The possible sources of information which help the museum to establish the priorities are:

- **Carrying out a Collection Care assessment** – this allows to measure the progress in Basic, Good and Best levels of performance.
- **Collection condition reports** – these are carried out on groups of individual objects or can assess the storage and overall condition of groups of stored items. The reports highlight the need for improvements in storage or for remedial conservation on individual items.
- **Exhibition plans** – planned exhibitions have identified objects that require conservation before they can go on display.
- **Risk assessments** – risk assessment is carried out regularly to provide detailed information on risks to the collection and suggestions for mitigating risk. This is a crucial source of information for planning improvement as the museum wants to tackle areas of high risk before lower risks.
- **Budget and sources of external funding** – the museum is trying to prepare a budget for its conservation activities and also trying to find out the sources of external funding through the preparation of a project proposal.

- **Staff time** – during regular working activity schedule of the staff the museum is trying to allocate some times for expert staff for involving with the activities of collection care management system.

5. Set achievable and measurable targets for improvement and reducing risk - when museum has prepared a prioritised list of objectives, it is needed to work out the detail and forecast how the museum is going to achieve the list within the constraints of its resources. After completion of this detailed planning stage the museum will examine whether the objectives are achievable within the time and resources available. At the end of this process this museum will be ready to write up its plan into a coherent document.

These are some new challenges of Gandhi Memorial Museum, Barrackpore, for taking into consideration to initiate some approaches for proper preservation of Gandhian Heritage, which are maintaining by this museum since a long time back.

Conclusion

This Biographical museum depicting Mahatmaji's life and philosophy in totality is perhaps most organized in this part of the country and has been in limelight since long time. Due to its importance to the present society all the collections need to be maintained with proper care and responsibility. As the documentary heritage of Gandhi Memorial Museum is the cream of the social, political, economic and cultural heritage of our country, proper upkeep and conservation of these documents are the need of the hour. Efforts are being made to identify the damages and factors for deterioration on various objects of the Museum. Contacts have been made with some professional conservators for treatment of the original and rare collections; and to protect the already treated objects from further damage. Digital documentation of all the acquired objects is under progress. The authorities of Gandhi Memorial Museum are determined to maintain the objects in a professional manner

Awareness on Conservation of Built Heritage

Basudeb Malik

There were two aspects in the topic of the seminar **Conservation of Heritage: Heritage of Conservation**. The first one deals with the measures of conservation of heritage which normally means the modern techniques of conservation followed in the Western countries, quite advance in restoration, conservation and preservation of heritage structures. By the term conservation of heritage my indication is towards built heritage which comprises of temple, mosque, church, chapel, *stupa*, palace, mansion, etc. The second part of the topic deals with the heritage of conservation that is the various methods including the indigenous practices for conservation and preservation of built heritage. In other words it means the various traditional practices of repair and restoration of important old buildings.

While dealing with the methods of age old system of conservation it is to be understood that in ancient time the builders of various iconic edifices constructed them for serving their purposes as per the then requirement. So, the need for conservation of those wonderful edifices was not a matter of concern in the past. The idea for conservation actually evolved when it was realised among the later generation that the monuments which were inherited as legacy from their forefathers were pieces of art and should be preserved. It was realised that these magnificent buildings created by their ancestors should not be left for decay and destruction through natural process or by human vandalism.

In India the first instance of conservation with natural environment could be traced back with Emperor Ashoka who ordered to conserve wildlife in the 3rd century BCE. In the Ashokan rock edicts instruction for prohibition of hunting of animals for royal game was served. However, the first concept of preservation of built heritage came in the 14th century CE, when the Delhi Sultanate Emperor Firuz Shah Tughlaq ordered to protect ancient buildings. He took initiative in building several important edifices in Delhi region and for preservation of ancient buildings. Afterwards during the British Rule, the "Bengal Regulation (XIX)" was passed in 1810, and the "Madras Regulation

(VII)" was passed in 1817. These regulations empowered the government with the laws to intervene when ever the public buildings were under threat for misuse.

Then in 1863, Act XX was passed which authorised the government to "prevent injury to and preserve buildings remarkable for their antiquity or for their historical or architectural value". However, many historically important structures were destroyed by the British government before Independence itself in Delhi and its neighbourhood for their interest though the measures of protection of important architecture were introduced by them. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1861 to initiate legal provision to protect the historical structures all over India. The "Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (VII)" was passed in 1904 which provided effective preservation and authority over the monuments, and in 1905 for the first time, 20 historic structures in Delhi were ordered to be protected. At the time of independence, 151 buildings and complexes in Delhi were protected by the ASI. The State Department of Archaeology was set up in 1978 in Delhi, but it was less effective to acquire or protect heritage buildings, and merely looks after some monuments de-notified by ASI. In 1984, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) was founded to create awareness for conservation of cultural heritage among the people.

The modern concept of conservation of built heritage is relatively new phenomenon in the world. The artists, architects, masons, craftsmen, kings and queens have contributed in various ways to create innumerable number of built heritage which may be considered as creation of art-architecture all over the world. There is no dearth of such cultural heritage in our land also. But serious thought for preservation of our built heritage was lagging in most of the places in our country. It occurred in the minds of a group of intellectuals about seventy to eighty years back when the world witnessed the havoc destruction of monuments after the World War II.

Conservation and restoration of heritage buildings and sites got further momentum as an international movement with the formulation of guidelines for conservation and restoration of built heritage through a series of Charters, viz., the Athens Charter 1933, Venice Charter 1964, UNESCO Charter 1972,

subsequently, the Florence and Burn Charter in 1981 to modify the Venice Charter.

In Kolkata the subject came much later in the 80s with the destruction and wrong urban management policy towards a few iconic buildings and areas. Most important was the Senate Hall with magnificent Doric column of the Calcutta University, which was demolished for the present high rise construction at College Street. The construction of the high rise Telephone Bhavan that obstructs the view from the Writers' Building across the Lal Dighi to the Raj Bhawan, the Car Park of Lal Dighi that disturbs the pleasant view of the Lal Dighi and the General Post Office are the few examples of improper urban planning.

After this wrong urban policy, serious thought for conservation and heritage management of the city began. Though the idea for conservation and preservation of heritage structures got initiated but it was confined within a few intellectuals. For lack of awareness many people think that the shabby looking ill maintained old buildings loose value and should be replaced with so called modern constructions.

This attitude of people and the rapid growth of real estate business created huge chances for loses of our built heritage. If a heritage building is demolished not only the history and the cultural heritage associated with the building is lost, also there will be huge effect on the surrounding natural environment by debasement of the edifice. There is urgent need for preparation of authentic list of heritage buildings for safeguarding them. The West Bengal Heritage Commission framed vide the West Bengal Heritage Commission Act 2001 in the State Assembly, is the only such Commission in the country, empowered for enlistment of those heritage buildings within the state which are not under the purview of ASI or State Archaeology. The enlistment of heritage buildings is an ongoing process. So far the list contains 195 buildings and sites as heritage. And the Kolkata Municipal Corporation has declared about 900 buildings in their heritage list which is confined within the Kolkata Corporation area. The significance of heritage listing is once declared, the building cannot be debased for new construction. However, for sustainability of heritage structure the building can be brought under adaptable reuse with certain modification as laid down in the international guideline.

Secondly, there should be another list of buildings which require immediate intervention for conservation. It is important to take stock that how many such buildings still exist which may collapse soon due to the effect of monsoon, storm, etc. Immediate effort should be made for conservation of those heritage buildings with an objective of reuse.

Once a building is declared heritage automatically the responsibility comes for its restoration and preservation. But what is heritage restoration? Majority of people have little knowledge about restoration of heritage building.

Restoration and conservation means ensuring stability and durability of the building. The aim is to arrest further deterioration and extend longevity of the building. It is not rebuilding or reconstruction.

It should be ensured that in heritage restoration application of same materials those were used at the time of construction of the building should be brought in use as far as possible. Only in very special situation different material may be used in a way so that it can be reversed without damaging the original structure.

Intervention for replication or replacement if demanded during conservation should be distinguishable so that any viewer would be able to understand between the original and the subsequent restoration work. It has been observed in the Western world that heritage buildings can be modified with extension of construction for its adaptable reuse. But the material of extension on the heritage building should be clearly identifiable. Louvre museum, British Museum, Natural History Museum, etc., are examples for modification brought in heritage structures.

Use of concrete mortar should be avoided in conservation of heritage buildings which are generally made of lime *surki* mortar.

In Indian sub continent the use of traditional materials in building construction as mortar are – mud, earth, clay, lime, *surki* (brick dust), etc. The other ingredients used traditionally for preparation of mortar are molasses, *batasha*, *urat dal*, egg white, *malai*, *tamangoosheera*, *belgiri*, *methi*, tamarind, etc. These ingredients are mixed with lime-*surki* as adhesive to bind the mortar and also it is believed that the building will be saved from various

other diseases like attack from termite, fungus, damp, etc. This traditional practice of construction of building has been followed generation after generation. In fact the traditional system of masonry work has not been codified but the technical skill of construction had passed on hereditarily from grandfather to father and then to grandson. There are a few skilled masons and craftsmen available in Mushidabad and Malda districts still today who can carry out the work of heritage conservation under proper guidance of a qualified restorer or consultant.

It is important that the international guidelines for heritage conservation and urban management mentioned in various international charters mentioned before should be passed on to the CPWD, PWD, KMC, Municipalities and other engineering agencies for awareness who are entrusted for executing conservation and restoration works at different sites.

A conservator should have awareness about the following guidelines:

1. When conservation is carried out, no effort should be spared to save, as many original building parts as possible in a heritage building.
2. Broken or half-decayed original work is of more value than the smartest and most perfect new work.
3. There are numerous types of structures that require suitable measures for conservation.
4. Public should take interest and generate resources to preserve them for posterity.
5. When a public initiative is launched, the principles should be simple: Maintain the original character of the heritage structures.

Respect the idea of the original builder. Have faith and belief that the materials used in the ancient times and methods adopted were of superior quality.

One should be aware that to start restoration of a building the work should be carried out through the following stages:

1. Condition Assessment report of the building should be consulted to understand the extent of damage before start of restoration.

2. Removal of plants and dilapidated parts of the building with proper scaffolding and propping so that the building is secured and flakes do not fall off.
3. It should be thoroughly inspected how far the building parts can be preserved. Even if there are some half damaged parts in the buildings efforts should be made for its preservation as far as possible. Then it should be seen that if there is absolute need for removal and change of some parts like the *Kori barga*, wooden joist, etc., then only it may be introduced.
4. If required matching brick construction for raising wall or stone masonry work is carried out with lime mortar and lime grouting.
5. Lime terracing at the roof be taken up next.
6. Finally plinth protection, gardening and landscaping should be taken up.
7. After restoration of the building maintenance should be carried out by regularly cleaning, painting every three/four years, applying termite treatment every five years, etc. .

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Figure 1. Danish Governor House, Serampore – a restoration project of WBHC



Figure 2. Danish Tavern, Serampore – recently restored heritage building

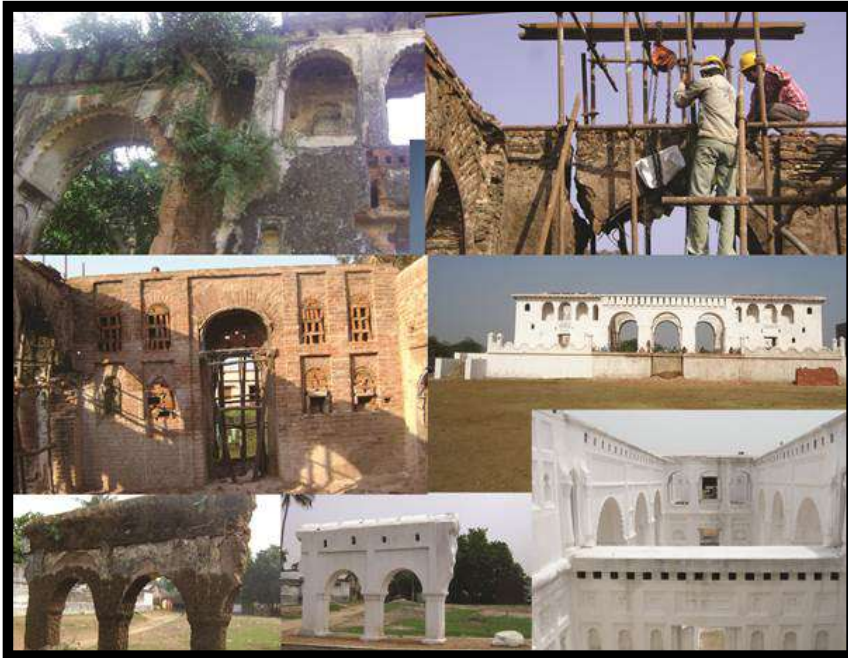


Figure 3. Imambara & Toran, Rajnagar, Birbhum (Before & after) restoration

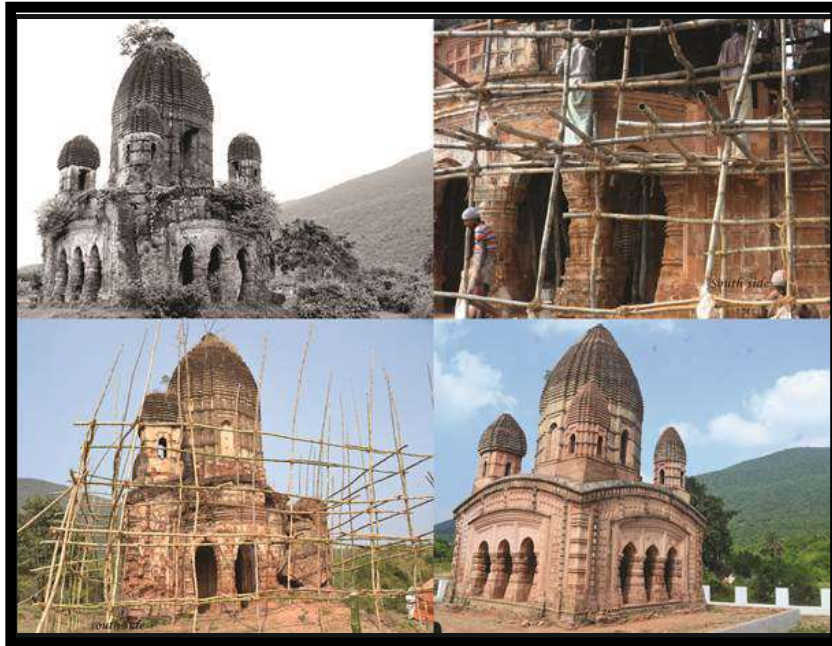


Figure 4. Pancharatna Temple, Garh Panchkot, Purulia (Before and after restoration)

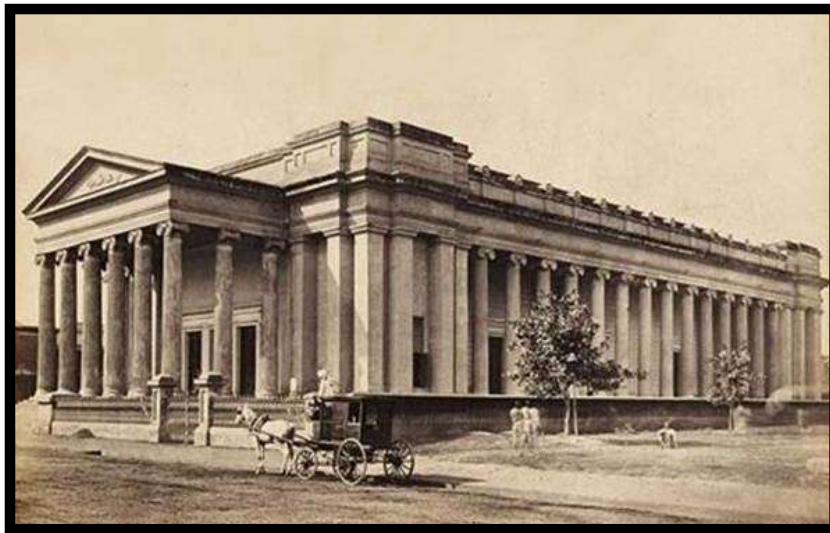


Figure 5. The Senate House Calcutta University once existing had been debased



Figure 6. Use of lime mortar during restoration of heritage building

Relevance of Traditional Management Practices on Conservation of Medicinal Plants

Anindita Kundu Saha

Abstract

India has marked themselves, prominently, in the global map for being floristically well-endowed and for contributing with its plant resources for medicinal purposes. There is now a boosted rate of extraction of medicinal plants in India for exporting and for domestic use. Due to heavy extraction of medicinal plants, there is a developing scarcity of these plants and thus, proper means of conservation is required to curb the effects and to save them from extinction. Traditional management practices play a significant role in the conservation process.

Keywords: Medicinal Plants, Traditional Management Practice, Sustainable Use, Conservation, Sacredness of Tree

India is floristically very rich. Its ranking is 10th among the plant resources rich nations of the world and 4th among the countries of Asia. It is recognized as the twelve mega biodiversity centers of the world. Roughly 25000 species of higher plants have been used medicinally in the world. Out of 18000 flowering plants in India 4635 species are being used by the Ethnic Communities, 2000 species in Unani, Tibetan, Siddha, etc., 1800 species in Ayurvedic system, 500 in Homoeopathy, 4700 by the Folk.

The medicinal properties of various plants and their extracts have been documented since the 5th century BC. Atharvaveda, the oldest Sanskrit scriptures of Hinduism, contains 114 hymns related to formulations for the treatment of different diseases in human beings. Two schools were evolved over centuries – the school of physicians called “Dhanvantri Sampradaya” and the school of surgeons as “Atreya Sampradaya”, and these two schools had their respective representative compilations namely “Charaka Samhita”

and “Sushruta Samhita” for medicine and surgery, respectively. The Charaka Samhita deals with different aspects of medicine and around 600 drugs of plants, animals and mineral origins have been mentioned in this treatise.

According to Charaka “any substance is a medicine, if we find a suitable medicinal use for it.” Further, Ashtanga Hridaya, an ancient Indian ayurvedic text book reads as “there is nothing in the universe which is non-medicinal.” In recent times, plants have received considerable attention, especially in south based on the ethnomedicinal traditional knowledge, utilization and conservation of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Plants form the main ingredients of medicines in traditional systems of healing and have been the source of inspiration of several major pharmaceutical drugs. Traditional medicines have widely been used in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 80% of the populations of developing countries depend on traditional medicines (primarily plant drugs) for their primary healthcare needs. Demand for wild resources has increased by 8-15% per year in Europe, North America, and Asia in recent decades. In India large numbers of medicinal plants are extracted from the forests to meet the increasing demand for raw materials required for domestic consumption and for export. Nowadays, the usage of traditional medicine also becoming more popular in developed countries, due to lack of side effects and lower drug prices.

The factors that pose threat to many medicinal plants are – degradation of habitat due to expanding human activities, destructive collection of plant species, forest decline, invasion of exotic species that compete with native species, increased spread of diseases, industrialization, over exploitation, etc. The heavy dependency on medicinal plants renders them vulnerable to overexploitation, triggering increased scarcity and even loss of certain species. So, the urgent need of the hour is to call for immediate and proactive conservation measures.

Conservation of plants is the process of biosphere management in order to obtain greatest benefit for the present generation and maintaining the potential for future. Plant conservation is a broad group of activities which

aim to prevent plants from becoming extinct. Conservation of plant resources is a global concern and the methods of conservation vary with many biological and environmental factors.

Traditional management practices have a huge potential in enhancing conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources, including medicinal plants. These traditional practices are mostly based on cultural norms and religious beliefs.

Traditional herbalists used some traditional measures for collecting plant parts for medicinal uses. These methods were very effective for conservation of plants of medicinal values. Besides, other traditional practices which have been adopted for conserving wild plants by local communities of different regions of India are – domestication of some plant species; beliefs in sacredness of trees; beliefs in sacred forest; respect of cultural forests; secrecy; collection of deadwood for firewood, etc.

Traditional Healer had practiced following traditional methods for of collecting parts of plants of medicinal values:

Collection of bark – There was traditional belief that for medicinal purposes bark from a tree should only be collected from the east and west facing parts of the trunk. Bark taken from the north and south faces was believed to be ineffective for curative purposes. This method ensured sustainable use of the plant resources for future generation.

Collection of roots – It was traditionally believed that instead of all only certain numbers of roots should be collected for medicinal use. The reason behind this traditional belief was that if plant perished due to collection of part of a plant medicinal, the patient being treated using that medicine would also die. This kind of indigenous belief is very effective for survival of that particular plant.

Refrain from use of plants which have already been collected by other – It was believed that when one traditional healer used a plant to treat a patient, the patient's disease was transferred into that plant. When another traditional healer subsequently used the same plant to treat another patient, the disease of the previous patient would be transferred to the new patient.

This belief refrained to collect bark, roots branches, etc., from a plant that showed signs of having been collected by another traditional healer.

Use of annuals – During collection of annuals for medicinal use traditional healer had to leave behind some individuals of the species at the collection site. It was believed that if a species was completely destroyed in a particular area, the patient to whom the medicine from the species was administered would also die. This belief helped to protect localised rare species from extinction.

Use of seeds – Seeds were rarely used for medicinal purposes. As a lucky charm seeds were often placed in a pocket or hung around the neck. This limited use of seeds allowed the perpetuation of plant species through seeding.

Following traditional practices have been adopted by the local communities for conserving wild plants:

Domestication – Though wild-harvested resources of medicinal plants are widely considered more efficacious than those that are cultivated, domestic cultivation is a widely used and generally accepted practice for conservation of medicinal plants. Domestication of plants is the practice of retaining plant species of forest origin on the farms during the process of opening up land for cultivation and/ or bringing forest plants to the farms or homesteads. The main objective of domestication is either to reduce the exploitation pressure of wild stocks or to protect threatened plants that have enhanced conservation.

Deadwood collection – Collection of dead trees for firewood was also widely practiced mainly by the villagers bordering the forest reserves. The practice was environment-friendly and hence had a positive conservation effect.

Secrecy – Secrecy is a tendency to retain anonymity by a few traditional healers in order to control or regulate access to such resources. This feature is an alternative traditional method for conserving medicinal plants.

Sacred plants – The roots of worshipping plant have been started in ancient times and continuation of this tradition is also being evident in modern India. In the scriptures, we have found two terms *Kalpavriksha* and *Chaityavriksha* that indicates the worship of the plants is indeed an ancient Indian practice.

Sacred plants were important for ritual purposes including worshipping; ceremonies such as marriage, childbirth, sacrifice, and circumcision; meeting places, etc.



Kalpavriksha, Baobab tree (*Adansonia* sp.)

Following traditional beliefs have been identified behind the sacredness of certain plant species that also have medicinal values:

- Some Indian community belief in close association of some plants with a deity. For example – Bilva tree (Indian bael, *Aegle marmelos*) with Lord Shiva, Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) with Mariamman (South Indian mother goddess) and Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) with Lord Krishna.
- Sometimes any object of worship like a deity, a fetish or a weapon was sheltered under the trees that have traditionally been considered sacred. For example – *Sthalavrikshas* are actually the trees that first sheltered an open-air shrine, which was later replaced by a temple or shelter for the deity. The sacred tree became secondary and was worshipped along with other nature gods.
- It was traditionally believed that some plants had originated from bodies or limbs of Gods and hence, the sanctity. For example, the Flame of the forest (*Butea monosperma*) is believed to have originated from the body of Lord Brahma and the Rudraksha tree (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) rose from the tears of Lord Shiva.
- Some plants become sacred as some enlightening incidence had been occurred in their proximity. For example, the Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment, is considered sacred by the Buddhists



Indian bael (*Aegle marmelos*)



Neem (Margosa) (*Azadirachta indica*)



Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*)



Rudraksha tree (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*)



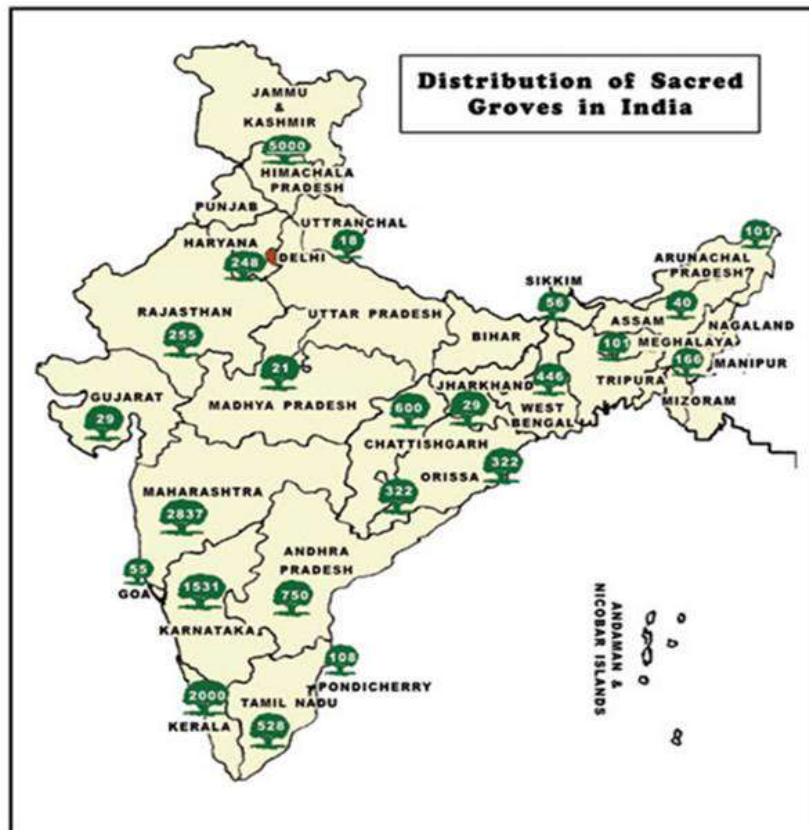
Chaityavriksha, Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*)

Besides, plants that have a major role in the local ecology or have an important social or economic significance are also considered sacred. For example, the veneration of the *Khejri* tree (*Prosopis spicigera*) by the *Bishnois* of Rajasthan is related to the crucial role the tree plays in the desert ecology. It provides the community with food, fodder and building material.

Sacred groves – Sacred groves are traditionally protected area, comprising patches of forests or natural vegetation. These sacred forests are usually dedicated to local folk deities (Example – Ayyanar and Amman) or tree spirits (Vanadevatais). Local communities are responsible for protection of these forests as their religious beliefs and traditional rituals run through several generations in these spaces.

The degree of sanctity of the sacred forests varies from one grove to another. In some forests even touching of the dry foliage and fallen fruits are prohibited. Local communities reside beside the sacred forest believe that any kind of disturbance will offend the local deity, causing diseases, natural calamities or failure of crops. For example, the Garo and the Khasi tribes of north-eastern India completely prohibit any human interference in the sacred groves. In other groves, deadwood or dried leaves may be picked up, but the live tree or its branches are never cut. For example, the Gonds of central India prohibit the cutting of a tree but they use fallen parts of the plants of sacred groves.

Sacred groves are found all over the country in India. Abundance of sacred groves is noticed along the Western Ghats in the states of Kerala and Karnataka. According to the experts estimation, the total number of sacred groves in India could be in the range of 100,000 – 150,000



Cultural forests – The traditionally protected forests both sacred and cultural forests seem to harbour a high number of plants and species and most of them have medicinal values. These places command high respect in many societies due to the cultural and spiritual role they play as centres of worship, initiation rites, and burial sites for clan heads. These areas are protected through taboos and beliefs. Usually visits to these areas are often prohibited except with permission from the ritual priests. Furthermore, resource exploitation is not allowed in these traditionally protected forests and any removal of plant parts for medicinal purposes requires ritual performance. There is ample literature that acknowledges the role of traditionally protected forests as safe grounds for preserving threatened species including medicinal plants.

Local communities attached to traditional management practices play an important role on conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants. Knowledge and the practice resulting from traditional management systems by local communities conform well to the philosophy of co-management, which advocates for sharing of power, responsibilities, rights, and duties between the state and local resource users. So, the government and its agencies can implement the co-management approach to conserve the medicinal plants.

The traditional management practices have a significant role in the conservation of biodiversity as well as plants of medicinal values. Although the objective of traditional management practices may not necessarily be conservation of medicinal plants, the fact that most of these plants have medicinal value makes them automatically conserved. As most of the traditional management practices occur outside the government-protected areas, in such places as farms, around homesteads, and in sacred and cultural forests, these areas can be considered as alternative and ideal places for *in situ* conservation of biodiversity. Besides, cultural forests and other forests around homesteads can be equated to a refugee camp for plants threatened in their natural habitats.

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Imperceptible Heritage: Steps towards Conservation

Sudeshna Das

Abstract

“When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground” – an ancient African proverb, holds very deep significance when it comes to the topic intangible heritage, it is the reminder of a very important aspect of our heritage, i.e., the neglected areas of the intangible heritage of our communities, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature, and traditional craftsmanship knowledge and techniques. There is no denial in concerning the interdependence between the tangible and intangible part of the cultural heritage. And to create and promote sustainable development, it needs to acknowledge the role of intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as a source of cultural diversity. In the race of development and modernization in today’s world certain elements of ICH are always at a risk of die out or disappear. Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage requires continuance by transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning, from generation to generation, which is the main aspect of conservation. While intangible cultural heritage remains an integral part of the communities, economic decline of rural settlements and urban way of living is causing distress to the natural transmission process from generation to generation. Like the other parts of the world Bengal also harbours a wide range of intangible cultural heritage that now days that are struggling for survival and need awareness for its sustenance. Many of which are recognized by UNESCO. Uninterrupted evolution and interpretation of intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations requires safeguarding measures by consolidation and reinforcing the diverse and varied circumstances of culture.

Keywords: Tangible & Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Heritage of Bengal, Migration Reflection, Community Awareness

We often discuss about the importance of cultural heritage, but what is cultural heritage? We understand the word “Heritage” as mainly a property or assets that is inherited and passed down from one generation to other. But when it comes to the “cultural heritage,” this heritage doesn’t consist of wealth or physical artefacts that are inherited, but it is the inheritance of culture, values, traditions and practices, it is the legacy of physical artefacts which we refer as cultural property and intangible attributes of a group or society that they inherited from their past generation (UNESCO). We can express Cultural Heritage as human creation intended to inform (John, 2006). It is a concept which offers a bridge between the past and the future with the application of particular approaches in the present. Due to its attached values for these groups or societies, cultural heritage is maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (CEU, 2018). In other words Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural Heritage is often articulated as either Tangible or Intangible Heritage (ICOMOS, 2002). Cultural Heritage can be broadly categorized in to following

- Natural Environment (Rural landscapes, Coasts and shorelines, Agricultural heritage)
- Built Environment (Archaeological remains, Buildings, Townscapes, etc.,)
- Artefacts (Books & Documents, Objects, Pictures)+

There was a time cultural heritage referred exclusively to the monumental remains of cultures, but the concept has gradually evolved and included new categories. Now heritage is not only expressed through tangible forms such as artefacts, buildings or landscapes but also through intangible



Vedic chanting

forms such as paintings, drawings, prints, mosaics, sculptures, voices, values, traditions, oral history. Popularly this is perceived through cuisine, clothing, forms of housing, traditional skills and technologies, religious ceremonies, performing arts, storytelling. It has gradually grown to include all evidence of human creativity and expression: photographs, documents, books and manuscripts, and instruments, etc., either as individual objects or as collections. And thus we consider the tangible heritage intimately connected with the intangible heritage. The concept of the cultural

and natural heritage is based on historically changing value systems. These values are recognized by different groups of people. The ideas developed and accepted by these different groups create various categories of cultural and natural heritage. Cultural heritage is not only limited to physical artefacts that we can see and touch. It also consists of elements such as traditions, social practices, rituals concerning nature and the universe, oral history, performing arts, skills involved in producing traditional crafts, knowledge and skills transmitted from one generation to the next within a community. Intangible heritage therefore includes a collection of traditions, music, dances, holy processions, carnivals, and hunting rituals. The Azerbaijani carpet and its weaving traditions, Chinese shadow puppetry, the Mediterranean diet, Vedic Chanting, Chhau Naach, technique of drawing Patachitra are few examples, even Coffee House culture (Adda) is one of the example of intangible cultural heritage.

There are many intangible cultural practices that have been recognized by UNESCO, since 2008 throughout the world consisting 470 elements corresponding to 117 countries. Here are some of the mentions of such rich cultural past of India that has been recognized by international body UNESCO (2003).

- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Sankirtana – Ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
- Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh – Recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- Chhau dance
- Mudi yettu – Ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- Ramman – Religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas
- Ramlila – The traditional performance of the life of Lord Rama in the North India
- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Kutiyattam – Sanskrit theatre

Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab was included in 2014 on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity for traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making from copper, brass and certain alloys. The process of manufacturing is transmitted verbally from father to son. Metalwork is not simply a form of livelihood for Thatheras, but it defines their family and kinship structure, work ethic and status within the social hierarchy of the town.



Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making of Punjab

In 2013 The Sankirtana of Manipur was included in this list, which is a vibrant practice promoting an organic relationship with people. The whole society is involved



in its safeguarding, with the specific knowledge and skills traditionally transmitted from mentor to disciple. Sankirtana performs in harmony with the natural world, whose presence is acknowledged through its many rituals.

In 2012 Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh made its mark in the UNESCO list. In the monasteries and villages of the Ladakh region, Buddhist lamas (priests) chant sacred texts representing the spirit, philosophy and teachings of the Buddha.

In 2010 Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan has made its place on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity. Songs and dances on khanjari percussion instrument and the poongi, a woodwind instrument traditionally played to capture snakes are an expression of the Kalbelia community's traditional way of life. Once professional snake handlers, Kalbelia today evoke their former occupation in music and dance that is evolving in new and creative ways. Another notable mention is Chhau dance, traditional enactments of episodes from epics including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes. Its three distinct styles are from the regions of Seraikella, Purulia and Mayurbhanj, the first two making its notable usage of masks. Its origin is traceable to indigenous forms of dance and martial practices.



vocabulary of movement includes mock combat techniques, stylized gaits of birds and animals, movements modelled on the chores of village housewives. Chhau is taught to male dancers from families of traditional artists or from local communities. Chhau is an integral part of the culture of these communities. It binds people

from different social strata and ethnic background with diverse social practices, beliefs, professions and languages. However, increasing industrialization, economic pressures and new media are leading to a decrease in collective participation with communities becoming disconnected from their roots.

Sanskrit theatre, Kutiyattam, which is practised in the province of Kerala, is one of India's oldest living theatrical traditions. Originating more than 2,000 years ago, Kutiyattam represents a synthesis of Sanskrit classicism and reflects the local traditions of Kerala. With the collapse of patronage along with the feudal order in the nineteenth century, the families who held the secrets to the acting techniques endured serious weathering. After a revival in the early twentieth century, Kutiyattam is once again facing a lack of funding, leading to a severe crisis in the profession. In the face of this situation, the different bodies responsible for handing down the tradition have come together to join efforts in order to ensure the continuity of this Sanskrit theatre. Originally proclaimed in 2001, Kutiyattam included in UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.



Bengal has its own cultural legacy in form of folklores, Patachitra, Chhau dance; skill of producing the traditional Sitalpati (cool mats), etc., Patachitra is a traditional performing form of art from eastern India. In Indian states of Odisha, West Bengal and parts of Bihar and Jharkhand, Patachitra is a predominant part of traditional media expressed in different ways and methods. In Bengal, it is evolved down the course of history to represent and reflect oral traditions, folktales and mythological stories. Chhau dance is a semi classical Indian dance with martial, tribal and folk origins from eastern Indian states of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The dance ranges from celebrating martial arts, acrobatics and athletics performed in festive themes of a folk dance, to a structured dance with religious themes.



Sitalpati or cool mat from Cooch Behar district has also been recognized as an “intangible cultural heritage” by the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). These mats are used for sitting or to hang on doors or windows during summer. The mats are made of weaved green cane slips of murta (*Schumannianthus dichotomus*) plants, which are indigenous to the region. There are several threats and risks to ICH due to various types of unfortunate activities, such as loss of variation, creation of recognized versions and consequent loss of opportunities for creativity and change, which makes one cultural element to become de-contextualized and subsequently its sense gets altered or simplified, and its function and meaning for the communities concerned becomes lost. This can cause manipulation of ICH or unjust advantage inappropriately obtained in the eyes of communities concerned by individual members of the community, the State tour operators, researchers or other outside persons, and leads to overall exploitation of natural resources, unsustainable tourism or the over-commercialization of intangible cultural heritage.

Below is the list of some of the factors affecting ICH, based on the framework of the revision of the questionnaire of the Periodic Reporting exercise (Section II) in 2008, the World Heritage Committee adopted a standard list of factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties (UNESCO 2008):



Sitalpati or Cool Mats

- Buildings and Development
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Utilities or Service Infrastructure
- Pollution
- Biological resource use/modification
- Physical resource extraction

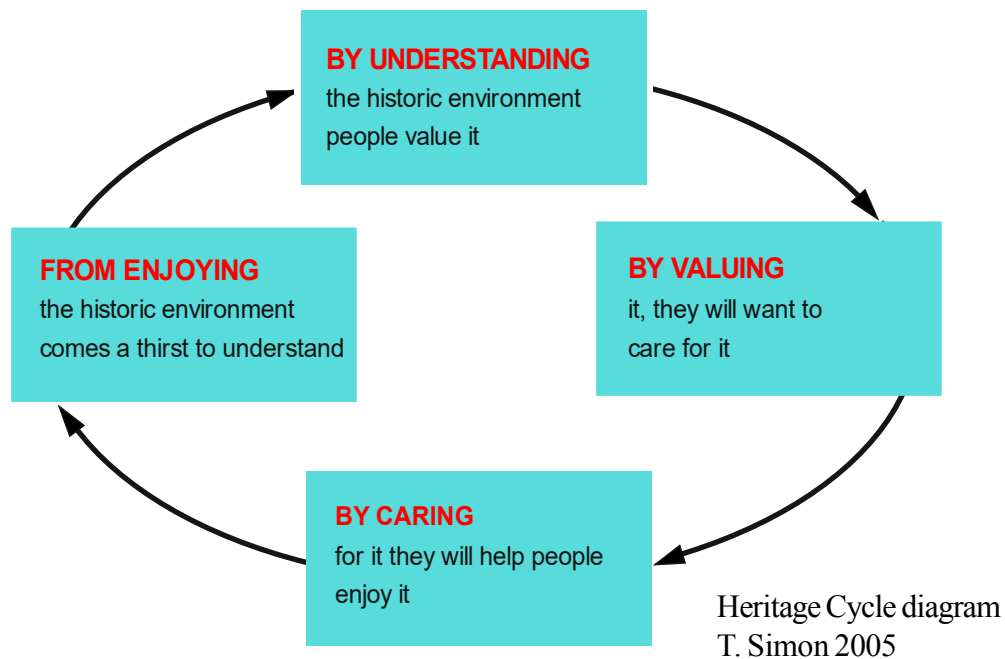
- Local conditions affecting physical fabric
- Social/ cultural uses of heritage
- Rural-Urban Migration
- Climate change and severe weather events
- Sudden ecological or geological events
- Invasive/ alien species or hyper-abundant species
- Management and institutional factors

In the fast changing world, natural environment & economic, political & cultural changes being experienced, this is one of the most important factors contributing to disintegration of families and communities with the increased rate of rural-urban migration. This very much poses threat to the extinction of Indigenous knowledge system. Displacement and relocation of communities & individual, who hold the knowledge has huge effect in loss of ICH. In the context of characteristic of our contemporary world, the cultural standards and interests of dominant societies, to the prejudice of minority cultures, leading to cultural domination and uniformity at the local, regional, national and international level. Such a process will eventually lead to the manifestation of uniform and stereotyped cultural models and to the contextual degradation of the value of cultural diversity.

Safeguarding the ICH cannot only be achieved by collecting samples like we do for botanical or zoological specimens. Rather it has to be analysed and treated as special spiritual link between the heritage in question and the identity of the communities who create and transmit it from generation to generation. Safeguarding ICH means preserving its link with living cultures and its role in the identity of its holders, as well as allowing the transmission of its different aspects to future generations. Efforts to preserve ICH within a community face many challenges. There is a need to collect, document and archive cultural information. But it also needs to be balanced by the ability of those tradition bearers, groups and communities to share. Below are some preventive measures or recommendations to preserve ICH:

- Preservation of threatened **languages & oral tradition** needs to maintain a viable language community, by organizing programs such as endangered-language programs; mother-tongue or bilingual education programs; recording of elderly speakers; etc.
- Retaining existing **religious beliefs and practices** needs to ensure survival of indigenous groups, by ensuring adequate social & economic support and cultural continuity along with the continued access to religious sites; maintenance of ceremonial objects in the community or their return from outside the community where necessary; legal protection of religious property; legal guarantees of access to sites; legal guarantees of freedom of religious practice (provided not contrary to human rights); preservation of craft skills for ritual objects.
- Continuity and survival of **handicraft traditions** need to convert into source of income ensure supply of raw materials (species of woods, cane, etc., in threatened areas); development of markets; training programs; legal protection; encouragement of sponsorship, museum activities such as collecting programs; artists-in-residence programs; handicraft fairs.
- Survival of **traditional forms of music & dance** needs training by support of instrument-making, workshops; encouragement and income support for performers; documentation; establishing or maintaining of legal right (to recompense for use by persons outside the community). Support for specialist schools; cultural program; festivals; appreciation in education programs; encouragement of quality cultural tourism.
- Disseminating knowledge of **good ecological practice & traditional knowledge** needs preservation of ecologically viable units; such as preservation of traditional seed stocks and animal species with help of national protected areas for continuance of traditional lifestyles; education in the value of ecologically based lifestyles.

- The above can be achieved by understanding our heritage, valuing it and caring for it. The Heritage Cycle diagram gives us an idea how we can make the past part of our future (Simon, 2005).



elderly holds a very significant part of that transmission. In a society tradition becomes less respected where youth is elevated as equally or more important. Then the transmission of ICH becomes interrupted. In the same way with the growing acceptance gender equality might interfere with the traditional attribution of roles and skills of ICH in certain context of the ICH transmission. These changes may consequently increase the difficulty level to safeguarding folklore and its traditional processes from society-wide practices that involve many value judgments about empowerment of local communities. The revolution created by global television and world wide web provides powerful tools that pledge inherited tradition in many societies, but they are mainly driven by commercial

motive not for the preservation of the ICH of the particular society. Some of these problems can be dealt with program, which shows social approbation, including at the international level, of supreme exponents of traditional cultural skills, where museums can join hands with organizations such as UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to create a society wide awareness, intellectual property law provide appropriate protection to the expressions of folklore or traditional knowledge.

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Architectural Heritage Conservation in West Bengal with special reference to Kolkata

Puspa Das

Abstract

Architecture is a very important part of any society. Here we are emphasizing on architectural heritage conservation of West Bengal with special reference to Kolkata. West Bengal is one of the important Indian states WHO carry our heritage years after year. Kolkata is the capital of West Bengal; earlier it was also the capital of British Raj until 1911. Kolkata was then known as Calcutta. British Government set up their administrative work to rule over India. They built houses for living as well as administrative purposes. In that period, Kolkata's own *Jamindari* system was also evolved, WHO built their houses too. Gradually Calcutta emerged out to be a colonial structure and various colonial architectures were erected. Colonial architectural buildings are heritage sites in their stylistic view, structural formation, etc. It is our pride that we have lived here. But in today's perspective conservation of these architectural heritage buildings is very much essential for our future generation. The researcher wants to explore how we conserve our architectural heritage building and what are the steps one need to take for architectural heritage buildings. Conservation of these architectural heritage buildings is our duties.

Keywords: Architecture, Heritage, Conservation, Kolkata

Introduction

In the last two decades, Conservation has become a powerful force in environmental programmes in countries which have witnessed the voluntary process of preservation and conservation of buildings as also areas of special landscaped values.

West Bengal is one of the Indian states richly endowed with a diversify of natural and cultural heritage but there has been little systematic and sustained effort to identify this heritage for the purpose of protection and conservation by various agencies. In this context, the researcher has discussed Kolkata's heritage architecture building which have been most important and their historic values.

History of Kolkata begins with East India Company establishing its business set up in Kolkata in 17th century. Before the British came to Kolkata it was just a village. During that time the capital city of Bengal was Murshidabad, far away from Calcutta. Then in 1690, Job Charnok, an agent of East India Company settled in Calcutta. After 1698, East India Company purchased three villages named Sutanati, Kolikata and Gobindapur from local landlord Sabarna Roychaudhuri. A few years later, in 1717, The Mughal emperor Farrukh Siar granted the East India company right of trade in return for a yearly payment of 3000 rupees. After 10 years, in 1727, as per the order of King George I, a civil court was set up. The city Corporation was established and Hallwell become the first Mayor of the City Kolkata. On 1756, Siraj-Ud-Daula attacked Calcutta and conquered it and he changed the name of the city to Alinagar. One year later in 1757, British People under the leadership of Lord Clive defeated Siraj-Ud-Daaula at Palassy. In 1772, the city was declared the capital of British India when the first Governor General Warren Hastings transferred all important offices to the city from Murshidabad. After 1772, Calcutta was subsequently recaptured by British East India Company. Lord Wellesley, the Governor General took special interest in the development of city. Overall after 1850's Calcutta's growth increased rapidly. In that time, a well-known socio-cultural reform known as Bengal Renaissance led to general uplifting of people. During that time, Kolkata became transferred into the new colonial architecture which had been valued as historical as well as architectural importance.

Justification of the present study

It is clearly evident that architectural heritage is of immense importance in ensuring national integrity, diversified socio-cultural identity of the various corner of the Kolkata. The present study is much more relevant because it

has made attempt to remind us of our heritage. It has also explored how to conserve our architectural heritage, what steps should be taken and which process we have applied. Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act was amended to add to protect Heritage Conservation in 1997. Heritage Conservation Act was introduced West Bengal in 2001.

Why should we protect our Architectural Heritage?

Our architectural heritage is a unique resources an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversities of our past. The built heritage consist not only a great artistic achievements but also of the everyday works of craftsmen. In a changing world these structure have a cultural significance which we may recognize for the first time only when individual structure are lost or threatened. In that moment, the conservation minded approach entails changing assumptions about existing buildings and thinking carefully about how they can be used or redeveloped. So as to Conserve and highlight their qualities structure can be read as historic evidence just like written documents and can aid the understanding of past condition and how society changes. Cultural tourism is increasing and playing a significant past in the tourist economy. The conservation of our built environment contributes to the attractiveness of our Kolkata as a place that we can enjoy and invite others to visit. Many people are employed in the heritage sector in Kolkata. The promotion of local history for tourism purposes is a significant part of the economy and should be clearly bound up with a Government appreciation of the historic environment that is the back drop for all visitors, material and foreign visitors.

Significance of Heritage Buildings

Kolkata's Heritage buildings are part of the city's unique feature as distinct to its landscape as one's own fingertips. Kolkata's historic homes reflect a rich architectural heritage where European styles are blended with mixed colonial and Indian influence. The heritage buildings could be defined the buildings important in the history of the city and buildings with architectural and socio-cultural significance. They represented the social cultural and historical aspect of the city that period it was grown up. These buildings represent the values of heritage. These architectural heritage buildings help to promote tourism and encourage investment in the city.

Tourism needs Conservation for Architectural heritage buildings

The tourism industry worldwide has begun to appreciate that for 'Sustainable growth' the scenic and historical heritage in destination areas needs protection and in many cases significant investment for its long term enhancement. In Kolkata, there is now growing realization that the protection of prime tourist attractions can be viewed as a worthwhile investment in view of the economic potentials of tourism to reinforce symbiotic relation between tourism and conservation. Tourism provides not only incentive but the economic means to undertake conservation. The historic building needs restoration and efforts to attract visitors to provide means of livelihood to local residents. Tourism industry has to address themselves to three audiences like:

- ❖ Government
- ❖ Municipal and local planning opportunity
- ❖ The public at large and recommendation bodies which cover broadly the following areas -
 - I. Legislation relating to conservation
 - II. Fiscal incentives
 - III. Educational efforts
 - IV. Organizational changes

Issues of Heritage Building Conservation

There are several issues which have shorted in this context. A number of issues are open, such as,

- a. Owners of heritage buildings often take no interest for renovations of the buildings unless the income generated from that is more than the spending.
- b. Premises Tenancy Act is not favourable to heritage properties.
- c. Fragmentation of the property due to family partition is also a major area for concerns.
- d. Owners are sceptic about the marketability of their property.

- e. Present socio-economic conditions are inclined to give priority to infrastructure development.
- f. Heritage issues are not integrated with the development.
- g. Lack of incentives to the owners of the heritage buildings.
- h. Lack of integration within different developments of Kolkata Municipal Corporation on heritage conservation.

Suggestion

Here the researcher thinks that few suggestions may be essential, such as-

- Assigning responsibilities to owners of heritage buildings for maintenance and conservation.
- Power of Kolkata Municipal Corporation to declare a building as a heritage building and classify them into multiple categories.
- Setting up a proper heritage conservation committee with adequate powers and responsibilities.
- Defining ownership and transfer of right of heritage buildings.
- The heritage building owners may occasionally be allowed to change the use of building from residential to more profitable use like commercial hotels, etc.

Conclusion

In earlier days, the protection of heritage buildings did not receive due attention of the implementing authorities. Although, Kolkata Municipal Corporation and other heritage committees have made a begging in this huge task, the recommendation of the expert committee could not be implemented. To ensure proper conservation of heritage building, the authorities should develop:

- a) A separate heritage wing occupied with technical staff and supporting infrastructure.
- b) Heritage manual and guidelines for mandatory regulation.

- c) Conservation of heritage buildings including management of corpus fund.
- d) Final list of buildings after proper review, documentation and gradation processes implied before conservation.
- e) Appropriate modification or amendment to the Act and procedures of declaration.
- f) Scheme for income tax and other tax benefit, fiscal belief to contributors and owners.
- g) Caretakers must be appointed for heritage building protection.
- h) A comprehensive information management system to generate greater public awareness and facilitate development of heritage.

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Sola-Pith Work: A New Paradigm of Art Heritage

Falguni Pal

Abstract

Folk art originated in the remote-past of our civilization. Bengal is the place where different types of folk arts are surviving simultaneously. These folk arts are bearing traditional and cultural values generation after generation from our ancestors. Nowadays from the artistic and aesthetic view point folk art deserves the equal place among other art and craft. *Sola*-pith art is a folk art. It is also representing our traditional and cultural art heritage. This aquatic plant has earned a respectable place among the folk artists for its artistic and aesthetic values. Here in this paper a new paradigm of *sola*-pith work is revealed and process of preserving *sola*-pith objects in the museum for the future generation to keep our art heritage safe is also highlighted.

Keywords: *Sola*-pith, Art heritage, Folk art, New paradigm, Preservation.

Introduction

Living heritage can be found in classical art forms and as well as in folk traditions of Bengal. Since ancient times the natural and cultural landscapes of Bengal closely associated with the traditional way of life, have retained an active social role in contemporary society. Actually, folk arts and crafts are an integral part of our daily life. Folk art, characterised by native style, encompasses art produced from an indigenous culture. In West Bengal different types of folk arts and crafts are surviving simultaneously. Handicrafts that originated in the villages of Bengal include – *sola*-pith, artistic leather craft, pottery, mat-making, *Dhokra* metal casting, cane and basket making, *pata-chitra*, clay idols making, horn work, ivory work, conch shell work, etc.,

are mentionable. In West Bengal major part of production of these handicrafts is the main cause of forming many little cottage industries. Those crafts are back-bone of rural economy of the State.

Art Heritage

In broader aspect heritage is the legacy of artefacts and impalpable attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and conferred for the benefit of future generations. It may be two of types:

1. Tangible heritage and
2. Intangible heritage

Here the main focus is on art heritage, i.e., traditional art and craft which is under tangible heritage and skill of these arts and crafts is under intangible heritage. *Sola* pith is a tangible object; its tangible form is discussed here. There was a feeling in human being that tangible heritage can be reconstructed or rebuilt. But in view of twentieth century's principle that such old things can never be reconstructed with the same feeling that the original craftsman poured into them. Folk art plays a potential role to the development of rural people by making them economically susceptible.

***Sola*-Pith Art and its Problem**

Folk art is for the folk, of the folk and by the folk. *Sola*-pith is also a folk art and craft. It is our indigenous folk legacy. Nowadays our folk legacy is in danger due to some unavoidable circumstances. Mainly it faces economic instability due to the less interest among the young generation. Because, to them it is a very hard job but they cannot earn sufficient money from it. Moreover, it is a seasonal business and off season is a very tough period to earn money from this business to run family properly. For this reason number of young people is leaving this job for their better future. Another main problem with this craft is artificial products like thermocol taking place of *sola*-pith in the market. Thirdly, this art work is very hard and time consuming. But

according to job there is no sufficient money on it. Besides, skilful person is needed for this job and inadequate raw material also is a big problem in the way of advancement of the *sola*-pith craft (Pal, 2014, pp. 110-113). The Table below shows the general idea of time and profit of some randomly used *sola*-pith items:

Table – 1
Time and Prices of *Sola*-pith Products

Serial No.	Product	Price	Takes Time
1.	<i>Mukut/ Topor</i>	Rs. 50-1000/- per piece	3-6 Days
2.	<i>Manasa Med</i>	Rs. 1000-1200/- per piece	7-8 Days
3.	Flower	Rs. 5-7/- per piece	7-8 Minutes
4.	Doll	Rs. 10-20/- per piece	20 Minutes
5.	<i>Saitol Bishahari Set(Bishahari Goddess+ Snake+ Pata)</i>	Rs. 150-200/- per piece	2 days
6.	<i>Bhopla set / Kadam Phul (4 pieces)</i>	Rs. 10/-	30-40 Minutes
7.	<i>Daini Putul</i>	Rs. 200-400/- per piece (as per order)	2 hours

Inspiration of *Sola*-Pith work

According to Zetland:

... the crafts of a people should not be dissociated from their art or from his contention that if craftsmanship is to flourish as a creative activity instead of as a mere reproductive process—even if the designs reproduced are those of earlier epochs of artistic achievement—it is essential that the patronage of the wealthy... (Haldar, 1952, pp. ii).

The *malakars* and craftsmen take inspiration from tangible subject for the creations in *sola*. Mythological, religious and ceremonial aspects are seen in their creation. The chariot and the swan inspired boat, which is extremely intricately done up with *sola* where every detail is looked into. *Sola*-pith creations also include various Hindu gods and goddesses. Sometimes either the entire body or only the face of god and goddesses and ornaments, attire and the other symbolic aspects are entirely done in *sola*. However, decoration of wedding hall and *puja*-pandal designs are inspired from the card game like diamond and heart etc. Strips and creeper resembling the *saree* border design. The *mukut* worn by the bride in Bengali weddings is inspired by a part of the peacock and its wings. Besides, nature also plays an important role to create the *sola*-pith design. Such as, rose and *kadam* flower have been perfectly replicated in *sola*. Lotus bud, night queen, creeper, banana tree and lot of animals like the camel and cow, elephant, horse, monkey, birds and others have also been carved perfectly in *sola*.

If we study scrutinizingly the multifarious motifs used in these designs, and compare them with that of our highly developed art, we can trace the historical development and also the evolution of sensitive human soul in its spontaneous invention of such symbolic representations (Haldar, 1952, pp.57).

New paradigms of *sola* pith

The universal word said by Emerson is, "Every individual nature has its own beauty" (as cited in Haldar, 1952, pp.1). Mainly, artist can be traced by his own creation, expression and his distinct art work. Artists of *sola*-pith are also famous for their own creativity. Not only craftsman but also the fashions, life style and accessories designers' also take initiative to prepare different types of decorative and daily use items. In India; West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, South India are also famous for their *sola*-pith craft. Besides, *sola* pith craft item is now in demand in many countries of the world. Moreover, peoples of London, Germany, America, Australia, Thailand, France, etc., and such countries are appreciating *sola*-pith items as their daily use material. Nowadays this craft involved understanding the traditional, historical, religious and social aspects associated with *sola*-pith craft and are getting practical demonstrations of handling the material and the techniques involved in the craft to make the traditional products. A few material manipulations with *sola* is in an attempt to contemporize the traditional designs to add a new dimension to this craft so that this dying craft can be revived with more users in the market. Some initiatives are taken by the designers of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) and other renowned organizations, like

1. *Sola*-pith Ornaments

Due to its property of being extremely light and its ivory like look, more and more head, hair and ear ornaments can be designed. Nowadays using *sola*-pith beads are became a trend in the fashion world. Many fashionable ornaments like earrings, wristlet, necklace etc., are created through these beads (Fig. 1 & 2).

2. Window pane or Divider

The technique of placing the decorated *sola-pata* between glass or acrylic glass fibre which can be used as sleek table tops, large window panes or as dividers in office set up, hotels and restaurants. Glass protects the *sola*-pith from becoming discoloured. So, this concept can be very much appreciable to the modern people (Fig. 3).

3. Lamp-shade

Application of embossing and weaving technique on *sola*-pith gives a textured look that could be applied in making lamp shades. *Sola-pata* is also used to decorate lamp according to its shape and size (Fig. 4).

4. Wind-chime

Kadam Phul is used to serve the ritualistic purpose. But nowadays in modern society interior designers are modifying *Kadam Phul*, decorative balls, and other *sola*-pith flowers with wind-chime due to the demand of art loving modern people (Fig. 5).

5. Wall clock

Its fragility is a big problem to make utility products solely out of *sola*, unless it is combined with materials such as wood and cane which can apply to do as a part of intervening of this craft. Wall clock made of wood and *sola*-pith is an attempt to avoid that disadvantage of *sola*-pith (Fig.6).

6. Appliqué work

Appliqué work and boutique both are now a new trend in fashion designing. Different types of flower, leaf, creeper and border of *sola*-pith can be used as appliqué on cloth and which can be stitched with the colourful thread by the designer (Fig.7).

7. Gandhi-Topi inspired Topi

Gandhi topi inspired *topi* also can be made of by *sola*-pith. *Sola*-pith is bad conductor of heat. So, it will maintain the fashion as well as protect head from the scorching sun rays (Fig. 8).

8. Decorative ball

Balls made of plastic or any other material also decorated with *sola*-pith is now in demand in many countries of the world.

9. Cabbage ball

Plastic ball decorated like original cabbage with *sola-pata* without removing brown its skin. It is also a highly demanding decorative product of *sola*-pith.

Preservation of *Sola*-Pith object in Museum

Sola-pith objects are fragile in nature and deteriorate easily for environmental effects. After a time gap ivory white pith object turns into brownish or yellowish colour due to unavoidable climatic changes. Though, it is an organic object so biological deterioration is also a big problem. So, special care should be taken to protect the *sola*-pith objects. Because, Preservation is adoption of appropriate prophylactic and prospective measures to maintain the specimen in as good a condition as possible and to prolong its life to a certain extent. Some basic preservation followed methods are as follows:

- Proper handling
- Proper showcasing
- Regular checking
- Use of shellac ($C_{30}H_{50}O_{11}$) coating on *sola*-pith object. Shellac is a bio-adhesive polymer and it is soluble in alkaline. So, it can protect the object from the UV rays and others external effect of the climate.
- Thymol ($C_{10}H_{14}O$) vapour can be used. Thymol is a natural monoterpene phenol. It has pleasant aromatic odour and strong antiseptic properties. It can be used as fungicide to fumigate the infected *sola*-pith objects.
- Use of silica gel (SiO_2) in the showcase. Silica gel is an amorphous and porous form of silicon-dioxide. It absorbs moisture inside the showcase.

Preservation measures can help to stabilize or at least to slow down the rate of deterioration.

Conclusion

From the above narration it may be said that, *sola*-pith is our traditional art heritage. *Sola*-pith is an eco-friendly herbaceous plant which serves our social, religious and aesthetic purposes. It has historical and cultural value. This ivory like object has great prospects but proper utilization and care must be needed.

Both traditional and modern combined technology can open up a new paradigm for this art heritage. In every initiative that has taken for this art heritage is successfully granted among the art loving people. Not only that but also this art work is in the same queue in the society of art with other popular art heritage. In the market of the society it has the ability to compete amongst the other art and craft. Now in the age of globalization, in view of that, there is no doubt to express that; *sola*-pith is worldwide accepted art heritage.

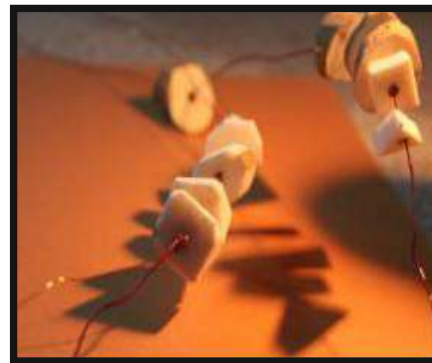


Fig. 1 & 2: *Sola*-pith earring, necklace and wristlet



Fig. 3: Window Pane or Divider



Fig.4 Lamp Shade made of Cane and *Sola*-pith



Fig. 5: Wind-Chime prepared by Sola-pith



Fig. 6: Wall clock prepared by wood and Sola-pith



Fig. 7: Stitched Sola-pith chip appliqué on cloth



Fig. 8: Gandhi-Topi inspired Topi by Sola-pith

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Photo Courtesy A. Dutta, NIFT, Bengaluru and Google.

Indigenous to Commercial *Tangail*: Continuing as a Heritage

Debarati Ghosh

Abstract

Tangail saree is the most beautiful indigenous unique type of cotton based handloom saree of West Bengal with some specific design. The name of the saree is derived from its origin – in the Tangail district of Bangladesh and it was very popular there since the time before partition. During the British period the skilled craftsman who usually wove *Daccai Muslin* gradually faded away and the coarser cotton came into existence. Thus the birth of traditional *Tangail* saree took place. Even now some of the weavers used silk as a material to weave *Tangail* saree in Bangladesh. *Tangail* saree was also called *Begum Bahar* or *Nilambari*. Before partition it was a hand woven, fine-count, cotton saree with lots of *butis* and a rich border. After partition the *Tangail* weavers had to migrate to India with their looms, where lack of original material gave birth to a new type of saree which was named new *Tangail* or *Tangail Jamdani*. The process of amalgamation with *Jamdani* and *Dhaniyakhali* started since then and this indigenous, popular, traditional *Tangail* saree gradually took a shape of commercialized version. Resultantly, nowadays some of the so called *Tangail* weavers do not know the real identification of *Tangail* saree.

Keywords: Saree, Tangail, Traditional, Weaver, Handloom, Cotton.

Introduction

The Indian handloom fabrics have been known since time immemorial for their beauty, excellence in design, texture and durability. Bengal is famous for manufacturing cotton saree since long and the weavers of Bengal have been also famous for making muslin and silk sarees besides *Jamdani* sarees for many centuries. Bengal handloom industry contributes a sustainable share in

glorious Indian handloom craft floor. It was mainly woven in East Bengal which is now known as Bangladesh and exported to Middle East, different countries of Europe and other markets through silk route. The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentioned about Maslin of India (Lynton, 2002). Arab and Greek merchants used to trade cotton textile between India and Egypt and Ethiopia in the second century CE.

It had been said that the weavers of undivided Bengal was genius about the knowledge of cotton and its usage. There was a time when the people of India were self-sufficient with regard of their own requirement of cloths; even they traded those cloths with other countries (Law, 1964).

It is stated that overwhelming influence of the *Dhakai Jamdani* has given birth to what is referred to as the *Tangail* saree in west Bengal (Chishti, 1995). *Tangail* saree is basically a cotton based saree with extra weft and warp¹. The name of the *Tangail* saree is derived from a place called Tangail, because these types of sarees were mainly woven by the skilled weavers of Tangail district of undivided Bengal. But still the exact origin of the traditional *Tangail* sarees is in obscure, because of insufficient evidences. This type of saree came in India during the partition of Bengal. On that time mainly the people of Hindu Basak community who used to weave *Tangail* saree in their native place, came here and settled in different districts of West Bengal. In this way practice of making indigenous *Tangail* saree initiated in West Bengal.

Indigenous *Tangail* saree is famous across the world for its quality, softness of cotton, design and the technique of weaving. The modern day *Tangail* is the most familiar sari even outside Bengal, and the market, both within the State and outside, has grown enormously since the fifties of the last century. It has enabled the weavers to earn wages in proportion to the degree of ornamentation. But to sustain in the present market according to the demand of the modern users in many cases the traditional look and style of the *Tangail* saree are modified by the weavers at a great extent. Some of the *Tangail* weavers are using silk instead of cotton, because it is easy to weave and less

¹ Warp and weft are terms for the two basic components used in weaving to turn thread or yarn into fabric. The lengthwise or longitudinal warp yarns are held stationary in tension on a frame or loom while the transverse weft is drawn through and inserted over-and-under the warp

laborious. Technique of making this indigenous *Tangail* sarees and those beautiful motifs are now faded away to meet the popular demand.

Tangail weavers came to India into two phases, first during the partition in 1947 and the second was during the Bangladesh War around 1971. After lots of difficulties they established some *Samabaya Samity*s. These *Samity*s are still preserving the techniques and motifs of *Tangail* sarees by making it in its original and traditional way. But according to them they mainly weave this type of indigenous saree for foreign markets because they do not get their proper wages. Besides practicing *Tangail* technique and motifs they are also using some new style of motifs according to the contemporary demand. In fact they are trying to preserve this art form through other dress materials. There are some other weavers except members of the *Samity*, who once weaved *Tangail* traditionally are now weave other types of *tant* sarees using the same motifs and the motifs of the *Tangail* are thus preserving in the new context.

About the *Tangail* saree

Traditional *Tangail* saree was basically soft, comfortable, cotton based, hand woven saree with unbleached body, emphasized by extra-warp patterned border and it was durable too. Once, the narrow border on the cotton base was one of the main features of the saree. At some places it is a simplistic imitation of the *Jamdani*, with extra-weft patterning perhaps divided from *Tangail* and *Santipuri*. Originally *Tangail* was probably on extra warp bordered, medium count range that had a distinctive *lata-pata*, vine and flower pattern that appeared only after the advent of the dobby² in West Bengal' (Chishti, 1995). Common people of Bengal used this saree as their daily wear for the long-lasting feature. This type of saree was traditionally woven in Tangail district of the Undivided



Red and white Tangail saree with blue temple motif, collected from Samabaya Samity, Fulia.

¹ It is a woven fabric produced on the bobby loom, characterized by small geometric patterns and extra texture in the cloth.

Bengal (now in Bangladesh). Few people believe that weavers of the *Tangail* saree came from Sindhu basin through Murshidabad in West Bengal and moved to the Rajshahi region of the Bangladesh (Chishti, 1995). A special type of yarns or threads are used by the weavers of Tangail district because of the locally availability of yarns in the typical climatic condition of Bengal. According to the evidence, Muslims were popular to weave the famous *muslin* sarees and the *Tangail* sarees were woven by the Hindu Basak community mainly. This type of saree had some different motifs like *chataipaar*, *aansh par*, *poddo*, *nimkeen*, etc. The body of the *Tangail* fabrics was manufactured by equally distributed unpaired yarns. The process of making *Tangail* saree is itself a heritage, it is very difficult and time consuming too.

There are two types of *Tangail* sarees in West Bengal, one is *Dhakai-Tangail* and the other is *New-Tangail*. The name '*Dhakai-Tangail*' is derived from a particular type of saree known as *Dhakai-Jamdani* because this saree is the combination of the extra-weft loom embroidery on the alternate pick and possibly a simplification of the Dhaka (*Jamdani*) technique. This patterned border and the final on-loom finish, give it a paper like surface, were in the turn, familiar *Tangail* practices. So it's called *Dhakai Tangail* (Chishti, 1995).

***Tangail* saree in Mughal period**

During the Mughal period *muslin* was world famous with the skilled weavers of the Eastern India. The fineness of muslin is recorded in ancient hand written and printed documents like *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abul Fazal. In Mughal period, besides *Jamdani Muslins*, the weavers were also made very fine, transparent, light weight cotton saree. Those were very dark in colour and the Empresses used this type of saree as their night dress. Though these were called *Begambahar* and *Nilambari* but they are similar to the *Tangail* saree. Even this type of saree was used by the bride during their marriage in Mughal period. Many people believed that this kind of textile is nothing but the indigenous handloom *Tangail* saree, which acquired its name in later period. In *Ain-i-*

Akbari, Abul Fazal mentioned Sonargaon in Bangladesh as a place where this finest cotton was produced (Bhatnagar, 2009).

***Tangail* saree in British period:**

In the British period the scenario of manufacturing the indigenous *Tangail* saree had begun to fade. In the eighteenth century during the period of British Industrial Revolution this indigenous saree faced a great challenge and almost ceased and the British force destroyed the renowned cotton industry in Bengal and its trading across the world. British Army also cut the thumbs of the weavers not to make the fine yarn (Chishti, 1995). Weavers had no Right of spinning and weaving of their won textile. Some weavers using the same technique started making saree and other dress materials using the available coarser cotton. Later, this type of sarees became well known as the so called *Tangail* saree and the tradition is still continuing by their descendants both in Bangladesh and present day West Bengal. The extraordinary skilled weaver who use to weave finest, light weight cotton saree, now they had to weave this type of saree with coarser cotton due to lack of raw materials. This was the scenario before partition. After partition the downfall of the pride of Bengal was further expedited.

***Tangail* saree after partition**

Things changed again after 1945, partition of Bengal. All this developments are the outcome of an almost 100 years old process which started from the first division of Bengal, followed by the mid-century partition of the country into East Pakistan and India and finally the turning of East Pakistan into Bangladesh. The Hindu weaver of *Tangail* saree, who used to live in Tangail district of Bangladesh, had to come in India during this period. They were mainly Hindu Basak family, who came in West Bengal with their family and looms and settled in different place of West Bengal like Dhatigram, Fulia, Santipur, Samudragarh, etc. (Chishti, 1995). After settled down they find out that the material of the yarn is not like that in which they were used to weave *Tangail* in their native place. The yarn of the *Tangail* saree was very fine and soft. But due to the climatic condition in West Bengal that type of cotton does not grow here. Local cotton

was coarser then, in which other local saree like *Dhaniyakhali*, *Santipuri* was woven. They had to borrow money from the lenders to buy yarn, walking miles to the nearest *haats* or from door to door selling their saris, *lungis* and *gamchhas* (Chishti, 1995). The odds were certainly against the Basak's. Consequently some of the weavers migrated from their previous occupation and went hither and thither in search of any kinds of jobs. Others are still competing to prove their existence as weavers. The process of making another type of saree initiate after that. Basically two types of *Tangail* sarees have been started to weave since then. One is *Tangail Jamdani* and another type of *Tangail* called *New Tangail*. Weavers among them, who used to weave *Jamdani* in their native land, they started to weave that type of saree with cotton yarn and other started making new type of saree, which is similar to local *Dhaniyakhali* and *Santipuri* style.

Commercialization of this indigenous textile: The Challenges

There are so many reasons for commercialisation of Indigenous or the beautiful traditional *Tangail* saree. "Somewhere down the line, patterns being to merge, mingle and lose their identity until they are indistinguishable" (Chishti, 1995). The process of being commercialisation starts after partition of Bengal.

Weavers of *Tangail* district in Bangladesh were famous for making *Tangail* saree for centuries, and this type of sarees were very famous in local market for their durability, softness and those sarees were very comfortable too. But this demands decreased with the emergence of some coarser cotton. The antique quality of *Tangail* saree slowly faded away along with the skilled craftsman.

After partition when the Hindu Basak community people came to India, they found that there is no such raw material which they used in their native place to weave *Tangail* saree as before. Then they started weaving new type of saree with locally available



Tangail motifs on scarf, these are flower motifs and small butis with extra warp and weft. Google image.

materials. Commercializing started since then. Though some weavers tried to maintain and conserve the technique of making *Tangail* saree in their traditional way, it was not possible for all the migrated *Tangail* weavers and some of them started manufacturing in a new way. The second thing which bothered them was the preference of wearing of bordered saree by the women of Bengal on that period. Indigenous *Tangail* sarees had narrow borders but the local demand during partition

was for broad-bordered saree. To fulfil the demand of local market Basak's started weaving *Tangail* saree with broad borders.

Another cause of commercialization lies on the price of *Tangail* saree. The process of making the yarn for the traditional *Tangail* saree was difficult and time consuming. It took long time to make one saree than the other local cotton sarees like *dhaniyakhali*, *Santipuri*, etc. So some of the *Tangail* weavers of different *Samabaya Samity*s are now making *Tangail* saree for foreign countries, so that they can get proper wages of their creation. Beside all this they are now making different dress materials as *kurtas*, *dupattas* or scarfs with the same motifs followed by the traditional motifs. This type of dress is quite popular now.

Conservation of Indigenous *Tangail* saree

Tangail saree is a traditional indigenous popular handloom saree with extra-weft loom embroidery of the original on the alternate pick. The making process of the *Tangail* saree is also very difficult and extra ordinary. This indigenous *Tangail* saree is our heritage. Some people rather some weavers are involved in the process of preservation of this age-old art form knowingly or unknowingly. I think all museums should come forward to preserve this age-old heritage.

- **Conservation by the traditional weavers:**

Traditional *Tangail* saree weavers are basically not aware of all these things. They are just doing their job as always. After they arrive in different districts in West Bengal, they started weaving with the local yarn. But the problem is the demand of those sarees. They have to weave wide border instead of narrow border, after that they started weaving with some low

priced materials like rayon, polyester instead of cotton or art silk as per the market price. So like this way commercialization deprive the originality or authenticity of *Tangail* saree. What it left, it's only the motifs. For some of the weavers, the knowledge of weaving motifs is their ancestral property. The knowledge they gain by their birth, but now due to the commercialization and socio-economic condition they are trying to go for power loom, because it is less laborious and more profitable too.

- **Conservation by the *Tangail* Cooperative Societies:**

Some *Samabaya Samitys* or cooperative societies now exist in West Bengal where different practices of making *Tangail* fabric are preserved. In fact the cooperative societies have a major role in the movement of revival and development of *Tangail* Industry in West Bengal. They are making *Tangail* saree with and without the original motifs. Not only that,



House wives are involved in making *Tangail* saree in *Samabaya Samity* in Fulia, Nadia



Member of a *Tangail Samabaya Samity* busy with making motifs of *Tangail* saree

they are making dress materials using the technique of *Tangail*. Apart from that, they are also using original motifs of *Tangail* in different dress materials. Modern artistic thinking keeping the antique touched in design and layout which are being highly appreciated with love by aged ladies to young girls of good taste. There are lots of people involving in those *Samitys*, because they teach the local housewives how to make those sarees. This way they are conserving the form of art from being disappeared.

- **Conservation in Museums:**

This art of heritage should be preserved in museums for the inquisitive people and for the future generation like these two museums – Government Industrial and Commercial Museum and Indian Museum did. Not only that, the process of making the *Tangail* saree is unique and the motifs are also very distinctive. In fact *Tangail* saree is sometimes known by their motifs too. So the proper documentation of techniques and motifs are also needed. Because there are few weavers of this art form still existing who know the proper traditional technique and name of the motifs. Even if it is not possible to display a traditional saree in museum gallery, only photo documentation is also a way to preserve the *Tangail* saree with some indigenous motifs. Museum can document the process of making *Tangail* saree for some fascinated people.



Tangail saree preserved by Government Industrial and Commercial museum, Kolkata

Continuity of *Tangail* heritage

West Bengal has experienced encouraging growth in fine cottons if not in silk, despite deterioration in fabric structure and subtlety of pattern which always seem to accompany increased production, as seen to elsewhere in the country (Chishti, 1995). Motifs of indigenous *Tangail* saree are as unique as the saree. These are now used in other cotton sarees like *dhaniyakhali*, *santipuri*, etc. In this way traditional motifs of *Tangail* saree like *chatai paar*, *aassh paar*, etc.,

are continuing in other form of saree. In *Tangail Samabaya Samity*s, which established by some migrated Hindu Basak community weavers, are still practicing the indigenous technique of *Tangail* saree even though their main targets are foreigners. The cause of deteriorating the demand of *Tangail* saree is, it is more expensive than the other local cotton saree like *dhaniyakhali*, *santipuri*, etc., in West Bengal, so the *Samity*s started weaving other dress materials like *dupatta*, *Punjabi*, etc., instead of saree following the same technique and with the same motifs for the Indian market. Not only that, some weavers using silk to weave *Tangail* saree with the same motifs to save time and labour. There are also some incidents which confound us. In Burdwan there are some villages, who were generally engaged in agriculture, because by occupation they are now farmers. During the rainy season due of flood they can't go for farming, they involve themselves in making *Tangail* saree (Chishti, 1995). Weaving is their ancestral occupation, may be they are still weaving *Tangail* because they don't have other option. But *Tangail* saree is still alive within them. So the age old technique and motifs of indigenous *Tangail* saree are still continuing in this modern period in some other forms in West Bengal.



Chatai Paar on Santipuri saree, collected from Biswa Bangla shop, Kolkata

Conclusion

Many changes of perspectives and understandings are required in order to grasp the reality of what fine cottons of Bengal were and what they have become today due to the commercialization. Nowadays maximum numbers of women in big cities do not use saree as their regular wear but they often wear in special occasions. But in rural area women folk still wear *Tangail* saree which are available within budget price. Some specially-made *Tangail* sarees, which are expensive, are sold in small numbers in cities and exported to different countries. Another cause of commercialization of this traditional saree is reliance upon the process of making of *Tangail* saree. A weaver needs lots of effort to prepare the yarn for this indigenous saree. That is why new weavers are losing interest on *Tangail* saree. In fact nowadays few weavers still exist who know the proper techniques and traditional motifs of the *Tangail* saree. Though it's true that new motifs replace the old one as per the choice of modern women, but cooperative societies like various *Tangail Samabaya Samity*s are still trying to preserve the age-old tradition and heritage beside the modern version of *Tangail* saree struggling against the local market price. The artisans are facing lots of problems now. The present weaving wage is so low that weavers are not being able to maintain their livelihood and as a result a large number of handloom workers are going outside the state in search of other jobs or opt for power looms. According to the weavers the commercial banks are also less interested to give financial support to the weavers. A large number of handloom goods are woven openly in powerloom now. So our Government as well as the well-wishers and the handloom lovers should try to protect our weaving heritage and save the indigenous *Tangail* weaver artisans, who are extremely poor and almost extinct in numbers. They need economical and social support because this form of art is our traditional heritage and without any support this traditional art along with the artisans will be lost completely once and for all.

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Conservation of *Thakurdalans* of Kolkata as built and Architectural Heritage

Sangita Kar

Abstract

The *Thakurdalans* of Kolkata were constructed during middle of the 18th century and it continued till 19th century. This architectural pattern represents a time when the city Calcutta was emerging just from a village to the capital of British India. This was not made only for religious purpose, but it played an important role to establish the “new elite” as a powerful section in the then society. After the independence, and the subsequent abolishing of the zamindari system, these magnificent structures slowly fell into misuse or no use. Some of the *Thakurdalans* were rented out, some were completely abolished. The owners of the few surviving structures can no longer maintain the structures and thus have started selling them or using them other commercial purpose. This paper focuses on the different aspects of the conservation of the *Thakurdalans* of Kolkata. There is an urgent need of proper planning and coordinated effort by the owner with experts’ opinion from professional body like the Heritage Commission of West Bengal, etc. The study also focuses on the nature of building materials, the technique involved, and the causes for deterioration of the *Thakurdalans*.

Keywords: Built and Architectural Heritage, *Thakurdalans*, Conservation.

Introduction

During some years Heritage is a largely discussed phenomenon. Heritage is that what we inherit from our predecessors. Idea of Heritage or the notion of Heritage is changed according to time. Once it was confined only to the immovable property but by now all tangible and intangible evidences of “human and its environment” are included into it. After 1950s its notion is changed gradually. Scholars, thinkers, experts have explored new ways

(Desvallees & Mairesse, 2010). All the things which have Historic Significance, Cultural Integrity and Social Context, and which always need to be protected are identified as Heritage.

Architectural evidences which are mainly made by human are considered as “Built Heritage”. Area of built heritage also has expanded its size. Previously it was only confined into historic buildings and ancient monuments, religious constructions, palaces but by last twenty years – bridges, light houses, cemetery, railways, etc., have been included in this area gradually (Nguyen & Jeronimo, 2008), because these evidences depict the socio-cultural-economic-political condition and consciousness of particular area of particular time period.

What is *Thakurdalan* and why it should be seen separately

Generally *Thakurdalan* is known as a religious construction. It is a rectangular, flat roofed worshipping place with a courtyard and it was seen always to be constructed in the front position or outer part of ‘new elite’ house in 18th-19th century’s Calcutta (Plate 1). Though *Thakurdalan* was an adjacent part of the whole house but it was separated by its use. *Thakurdalan* premise was made for mainly religious purpose but it had a political role too, because it was used as a place of social gatherings of *Sahibs* and natives both. This premise actually was used for the gatherings of those who were generally not allowed to the inner part or *Andarmahal* of the house.

It is evident that Durga puja was organized by some rich families previously in this region, but there was no *Thakurdalan* before Nabakrishna built it in his house. According to records Raja Nabakrishna Deb made *Thakurdalan* in his house after the battle of *Plassey* in 1757 (Lahiri Choudhury, 2005). It is also known that before the battle Nabakrishna was not a wealthy person. Being awarded by the Company for his faithful contribution in the battle of *Plassey*, he got money and within some years he held important designations at the Company. Nabakrishna Deb bought this house from Shobharam Basak, which is now known as *Shobhabazar Rajbati*. He not only renovated the house but added some portions too (Bandyopadhyay & Mitra, 2013). It is said that in the same year he organized Durga Puja in his *Thakurdalan* to celebrate the victory of *Plassey* (Lahiri Choudhury, 2005). He wanted to establish himself as a ‘new elite’ or powerful person. It must be

mentioned that in the then society there was no media, so he might have used his *Thakurdalan* as a media or tool through which he could show his power because Nabakrishna knew that arranging these kind of festivals were the parameter of elitism in the society. Following Nabakrishna Deb so many people, who were generally considered as 'new elite' made this structure in their houses. Within some years it became a trend. Records said that the Company officials were not only invited in these festivals but they used to attend these festivals too (Ghosh, 2013).

This trend was introduced in the mid-18th century and continued all over the 19th century. But gradually it changed its character or cultural and political role according to time and its owners' mentality. In the early days of *Thakurdalans* various folk performances like *Kathakata*, *Kabir Iorai*, *Jatra* were organized in these premises centring the religious festivals. But afterwards it was used as platform of urban cultural and political activities like theatres, gathering of social movements, etc. As examples we can mention the *Thakurdalan* premise of Mullick's House of *Chitpur* (now at *Rabindra Sarani*), where the drama like *Nildarpan*, *Sadhabar Ekadashi* and *Lilaboti* were enacted and the *Thakurdalan* premise of *Bagbazar Basubati* which witnessed the gathering of *Swadeshi* movement (Bandyopadhyay & Mitra, 2013). It is now established that the architecture is an effective medium of self-representation. When 'new elites' made their houses general people could see it from outside but they might want to show something more than that.

1. Wealth – The 'new elites' knew very well that they did not have any glorious pedigree and they did not belong to previous 'elite' class. Organizing gorgeous *Puja* inside the house was a very expensive. And the *Thakurdalan* premise is the place where they could exhibit their economic power by showing off the expensive ornaments of deity, by offering foods to the deity, by using grandiose utensils and organizing various cultural programs during the festivals. From the period of its making, it was used as a stage which was not made for 'purely religious purpose' but to show off their wealth. This trend became more prominent according to time and gradually increased. *Hutom* also supports this statement (Nag, 2013).

2. Political power — This *Thakurdalan* premise was used as a place for making relationship with rulers outside of an official atmosphere. ‘New elites’ invited the *sahibs* in their festivals and *sahibs* attended too. In one hand ‘new elites’ got the opportunity to establish a better relationship with the Company officials and on the other hand they exhibited their relationship with rulers to the natives. It helped them to establish their political power among natives.
3. Their wish of belongings — Though ‘new elites’ were very rich and powerful but simultaneously they did not want to leave their traditional faith or social security. They became powerful but where it would be applied? They practiced their power over the people of existing native society. So if they projected themselves as politically powerful and at the same time faithful to religious tradition, they needed a platform where they could perform these two roles together.

Why it is different from the whole house?

This place was made for social gatherings of people who were not allowed to the *Andarmahal*. So here is a strong distinction between the whole house and the *Thakurdalan* premise. They needed this space and for that reason the houses of ‘new elites’ which had been constructed during 18th–19th century, small or big, *Thakurdalan* was present in almost every one. Sizes and designs of *Thakurdalan* were changed following the evolution of cultural taste and economic condition of the founders gradually. But the basic layout of *Thakurdalan* premise remained same over the centuries.

Architectural features

Apart from *Thakurdalan*’s cultural significance, its architectural features bear the signs of assimilation of Indian and Western architectural patterns. Though it started to be constructed from the mid-18th century and continued all over the 19th century, it contained the features of cultural assimilation and transformation of ages.

It is now established that *Thakurdalan* of Raja Nabakrishna Deb was the first one in Calcutta. In this *Thakurdalan* the features of Indian or Mughal architectural pattern can be found (Plate 2). Designs of pillars, motifs, and

arches all follow the Mughal style (Lahiri Choudhury, 2005). It is said that Raja Nabakrishna Deb constructed this structure following the Diwan-i-Amm of Delhi. And the masons who built it were brought from outside of Calcutta. But afterwards in other *Thakurdalans*' designs of pillars and motifs were changed. Corinthian and Doric Pillars replaced the traditional Indian pillars. Not only designs, building materials also changed. During late 18th and 19th century, East India Company constructed buildings, which are representatives of colonial architecture, by using various new materials like concrete, wrought and cast iron, glass, etc. The 'new elites' also were influenced by the rulers' trend and they used these materials in their houses and *Thakurdalans* too. Festoon, fanlights, wrought iron fencing were used for embellishments, which typically represented European style (Plates 3, 4, 5, 6).

So *Thakurdalan* is such a structure which is inevitable to understand the pulse of 18th–19th century Calcutta, when a new city was emerging. That is why this paper proposes to see *Thakurdalan* with a special attention, separately from the whole building or house and stands for its conservation as an important requirement.

Conservation

In previous segment it is stated why *Thakurdalan* should be conserved. Before entering into this segment we have to know something about the deterioration process. It is known to all that decaying is a natural process of any heritage. By conserving people can only expand its longevity. Conservation is the process of taking care of a place to retain its historical value and significance. It tries to protect heritage from further decaying. In the decaying process of any heritage two factors are responsible. These are:

- Natural Factors
- Social Factors

Natural Factors

Natural factors like Humidity, Temperature, Air Pollutants, Sunlight, and following these natural factors some Biological Factors like mosses, fungus, algae hamper the Heritage Buildings. *Thakurdalan* is mainly constructed with brick, wood and iron. So mosses, fungi and various insects hamper the building

materials. Solar radiation, water seepage, air pollutants are the causes of chemical and structural changes of the Heritage Buildings' components (Central Public Works Department, 2013). As for an example *Thakurdalan* of Baghbazar Basubati is massively decayed by many of these factors.

Social factors

Among various social factors like fire, urban development, vandalism, ignorance, etc., two are considerably alarming for this kind of Heritage. One is Urban Development or Developing Urbanity and the other is Ignorance (Central Public Works Department, 2013). Increasing urban development is the cause of space shortage and decreasing consciousness about the past & Heritage encourages the demolition of old buildings.

Urban development and developing urbanity are two different things. Urban development is the process by which new constructions like buildings, flyovers, shopping malls, roads, etc., emerge. But developing urbanity is a psychological change which is a by-product of urban development. This development encourages a disconnection from existing surroundings and our history. Here sense of culture gets confined into some rituals but the sense of legacy behind the rituals becomes almost ruined. The transformation of big families into nuclear families has taken place according to the requirement of time. It cannot be ignored. These kinds of social factors, though they are interconnected, play very important role behind the demolition of old buildings as well as *Thakurdalans*.

Ignorance of house owners, masses and sometimes government leads to destruction of this structure. This ignorance is always not intentional. House owners' economic incapability and shortage of man power to regularly maintain this large structure sometimes play the vital role.

Now we can enter into the conservation segment. It is known that conservation is a necessary process to protect any heritage. Guideline of Conservation of Heritage has been defined time to time by various international Charters, like Athens Charter (1930), Venice Charter (1965). Apart from that so many Charters were made during recent 30 years which updated the field of Conservation (Dikshit, 2008). Archaeological Survey of India is a nationwide organization which takes care of the monuments which

contain national importance. In Kolkata region the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) is the authority to take care of Heritage which are present in this area. From 1990s a wave of conservation has come and as a result Heritage Conservation Cell within KMC was formed and this authority is the heritage managing authority in Kolkata (Nguyen & Jeronimo, 2008). *Thakurdalan* is not often recognized as a Heritage separately from the whole house. So this paper proposes to see this structure separately from the whole building and stands for its conservation as an important Heritage. Let's have a look at the whole conservation process. This is divided into some parts. These parts should be performed sometimes gradually, sometimes simultaneously. These are –

- Documentation
- Regular Monitoring
- Restoration
- Reconstruction
- Building Awareness

Documentation

Documentation is an essential step for conservation. A scholar said that “Before taking any conservation measures, it is absolutely essential to document the site by drawings and photography with detailed notes on architectural aspects...” (Joshi, 2008, p. 60). Collecting written accounts and photographs, interviewing the house owners and experts can be the various modes of documentation. During this research work the researcher has visited some houses where once upon a time there were *Thakurdalans* but in present days they do not exist at all. Their only existence can be touched through old photographs, writings and memory. As for an example *Thakurdalan* of *Chitpur Mullicks* House (now at Rabindra Sarani) can be mentioned.

Regular Monitoring

Regular Monitoring is another very important part of the conservation process. Monitoring by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and house owners is very much necessary to protect this Heritage. Actually regular monitoring will help them to feel requirement of the next steps like restoration and reconstruction.

Restoration

Restoration should be done with the opinion of heritage conservation experts, because restoration is a process to maintain a legacy but not to build a new construction. It should be remembered that, “the fundamental approach here is that a conservator or restorer does not create a new cultural object” (Bisht, 2003, p. 140).

Reconstruction

Reconstruction of dilapidated parts of this structure can be done if it is required. *Thakurdalan* can be reconstructed by keeping parity with the existing architectural remains of the structure according to the opinion of the conservation experts. In this process those materials should be used, which the building made off previously and the conservator or restorer should know how far she or he should go and where to stop (Bisht, 2003). And these steps of restoration and reconstruction must be documented.

Building Awareness

Last but very important step to conserve this heritage is building awareness. Systematic awareness campaign should be done. Since some years West Bengal Government has taken initiative to make the general people aware about our Heritage by organizing some heritage tour during Durga Puja festival. But in those tours the festival Durga Puja is the centre of attraction but this structure is not. It is interpreted just as a religious/ worshiping structure. Building awareness about this structure, its history, its importance and its significance among mass and building owners only can save this structure. Organizing various events like cultural programmes, exhibitions, edutainment tours, etc., centring *Thakurdalan* premises can build up consciousness about this Heritage.

Challenges

Though *Thakurdalan* is an important heritage of Kolkata and almost inevitable part of cultural history of the 18th–19th century Calcutta, but it is not specifically documented how many *Thakurdalans* exist in Kolkata. It cannot be possible to think about their conservation until all *Thakurdalans* are properly documented.

It is true that there are so many structures in Kolkata which may claim the need of conservation as heritage. For the Government it is quite difficult to provide financial and infrastructural assistance to conserve so many *Thakurdalans*. Though the Government organizes some heritage tour during Durga Puja every year but it is a primary initiative. Without being dependent entirely on the government there should be a search for other possibilities too.

Most of the *Thakurdalans* of Kolkata are private properties; hence joint owners are not always equally interested or economically capable to take part and protecting such heritage. Economic condition of the founders of *Thakurdalans* and the present owners are not same, so bad economic condition and shortage of man power for regular maintenance of such large structure force present owners to demolish it.

Conclusion

Whatever the problem is, it is true that *Thakurdalan* is an important key to draw true picture of the cultural history of Calcutta. Without knowing or recognizing its political and cultural importance or significance we cannot able to understand the transitional phases of Bengali elite class. *Thakurdalan* premises were being constructed in small or big sizes as per founders' economic condition. When social gatherings shifted towards other 'places' (like theatre, etc.) in the last phase of 19th century (Chattopadhyay, 2006) the primary political reason behind making *Thakurdalans* started to become obsolete but it continued to be built up for some more years as an elitist trend. Almost every *Thakurdalan* has a separate history of its owners and its own. But many of them are almost close to destruction. That is why immediate initiative should be taken to conserve these structures to hear their voice from the past and to get one of the important chapters of the cultural root of a historical city.



Plate 1 : Thakurdalan premise of Shobhabazar Rajbati



Plate 2: Pillars of *Thakurdalan* of *Shobhabazar Rajbati*

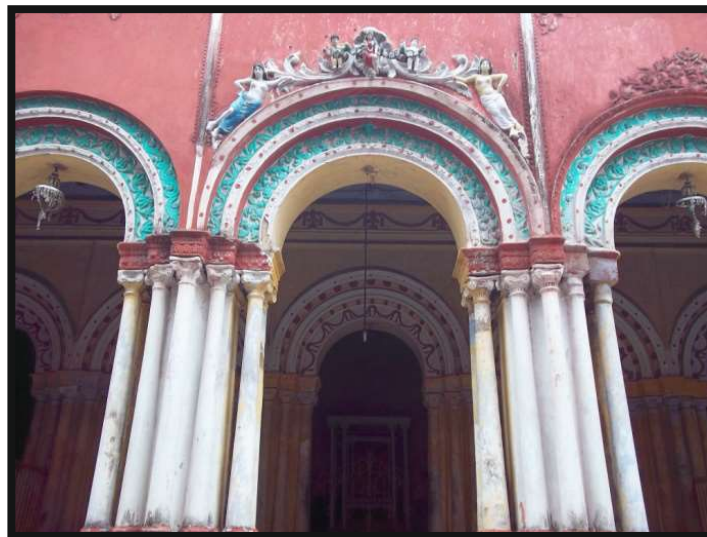


Plate 3: *Thakurdalan* of Gokul Mitra

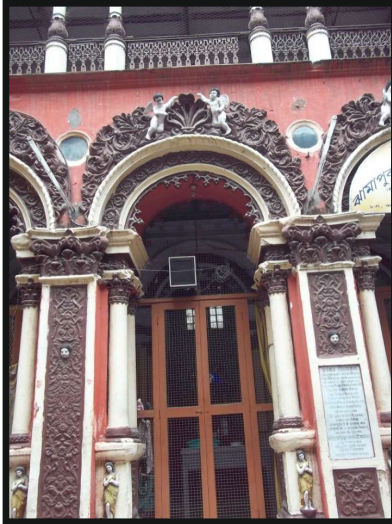


Plate 4: *Thakurdalan* of Raja Digambar Mitra



Plate 5: *Thakurdalan* of Rani Rasmoni



Plate 6: *Thakurdalan* of Raja Rajkrishna Deb

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Preventive Conservation of the Traditional Fishing Tools by the Fishermen of Sundarbans in West Bengal

Ashis Majumdar

Abstract

The fishing communities are dependent on the resources of fish in Sundarban of West Bengal. They earn their livelihood by fishing among many other occupations. Every day or seasonally they go to the river or estuaries in Sundarbans for catching fish and crab. Generally, they use most wonderful indigenous method and technique for the purpose. This paper focuses on the preventive conservation methods practiced by the fishermen in Sundarbans with their indigenous knowledge for conservation of these traditional tools.

Keywords: Sundarbans, Fishing Communities, Traditional Fishing Tools, Techniques, Preventive Conservation.

Fishing Community

A large number of fishermen of Sundarbans are dependent on fishing in river, coves and estuary. The people of *Malo* and *Rajbansi* communities lead their livelihood by catching fish. They originally belonged to fishing community. After the partition of India they had come as refugees and lived in different parts of Sundarban. Most of the fisherman came in Sundarban from Khulna district in Bangladesh. Then the people of *Rajbansi* community live at the places like Satjeliya, Gosaba, Masjidbari, Jharkhali, Mollakhali, Amlameti, Kultali, Namkhana, Raidhigi, Kachukhali, Hasnabad, Nyajat, Haroa, Hingalgonj, etc. Bagdis are also fishermen who came from *Rarh Anchal* (*Rarh* region is a toponym for an area in the Indian subcontinent that lie between the Chota Nagpur plateau on the West and Ganges Delta on the East). The *Bagdi* people are divided into five categories – *Tetuliya*, *Dule*,

Jele, Tibar and Mete Bagdi. One part of *Kaibarto* category leads their livelihood through fishing. At present a large number of people of the islands in Sundarban involve in catching fish. The people of *Rajbansi* and *Malorai* also demand themselves as a category of original fishermen. The 80% islanders of Sundarbans are involved in this occupation.

Fishing Tools

The fishing tools can be classified into four categories depending on the material used for their construction. These fishing tools are made of (a) bamboo, (b) hooks, (c) bamboo & nets and (d) nets. The fishermen of Sundarbans use different tools, such as *ghuni, antol, polo, kenko, doar, paron, gungi* or *toradang, konchor raksha, eknala, tera, kole*, etc. They use various types of fish hooks. There are also different types of net, e.g., *min jal, shangla jal, vesa jal, kai jal, chhankni jal, khepla jal, batajal, chandi jal*, use by those fishermen who used to catch fish in the *khanris* in Sundarbans. Those fishermen who are going to fishing by trawler and large engine boat in deep seas use various types of nets, such as hilsa net, which are different type of shapes like *fart jal and ghano jal*. *Fart jal* is used for big hilsa and *ghano jal* for small hilsa fishes. In local market small hilsa is called 'khoka' hilsa. There is pomfret net for pomfret fish. Trawler and engine boat are most important than other equipment.

Technique

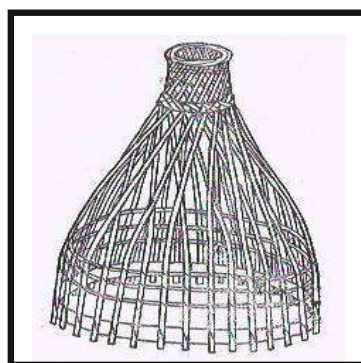
A large number of fishermen of Sundarbans islands use fishing boats and nets for fishing. In ancient times they used traditional equipment. Now they use country boats (*nouka*) and modern motorized fishing trawler with the permission from the Forest Department. They have a lot of traditional knowledge and technique for fishing. They apply their own science in which river, sea and nature of fish are observed directly through generation to generation. The fishermen observe the weather by analyzing water colour, speed of wind and nature of wave and also able to mark the presence of different varieties of fish in the water.

Traditional Fishing Tools Used and their Preventive Conservation

Ghuni, attol, polo, kenko, doar, gungi, etc., are used in rainy season for fishing. These tools are made by bamboo, cane and jute rope.

Ghuni:

A special type of trap made of thin bamboo sticks tied together with cane strings in shape of a rectangular box. There are small vertical slides, one on one side and two on the other. But some cases one in one in each side and also two in one side and three in the other are found. The first one is known as *ghuni* in Bengal and the second is *toobo* of the *bunas* of Bengal and the *jhumri*. The thronlined trap is known as the *paron* in Bangladesh.

**Polo:**

The *parois* (fisherman) of Bengal are usually found to catch before rains in the soft muddy place and sometimes in shallow water, with the help of this trap instead of using bare hands. Such type of cage trap is known in Bengal as the *polo*. The tool resembles the shape of a dome with short stem of about 6" diameter open at the top. The diameter at the bottom varies from 2-3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. and even upto 4 ft. The height varies from 2-3 ft. It is prepared out of small bamboo strips fastened with fine and flexible cane slips. The man who uses it, hold it by the side of the stem, presses its rim on the mud, then pulls it back and lifts above or up to the level of water and again presses it as before while moving on through water. Whenever any fish is caught, he puts his hand inside through the stem to catch hold of the fish

Khaloi:

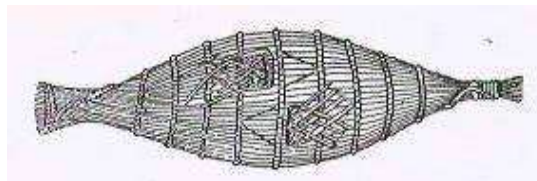
The *khaloi* is prepared with bamboo strips which are used for temporary keeping of fishes during hand-net fishing. The strips required for the weft are

very long, while those for the warp are short. The 'khaloi' is woven in the shape of an earthen *kalasi* or pitcher.



Vombuchanhai:

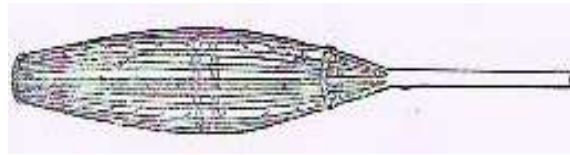
There is another variety which has also two valves but placed in opposite directions to allow fishes coming against and with the current of water to get into the trap. This is illustrated by the specimen known as the *vombuchai* used by the Chakmas of Chittagong hill tracts.



Doar:

It is the most important equipment for the fishermen of Bangladesh Sundarbans area. It has two valves. After rainy season when the pond and paddy field are dried up, the fishermen are conserved those equipment with well wash in fresh water, then drying and repairing from any damage part. And those are tied in a queue and hanging in the crossbeam of straw mud house preventing from sunlight and water. In marginal area of Sundarbans these equipment are preserved in straw thatching hut very carefully. In this way of conservation equipment remains well maintained. Pitch is used to

conserve the equipment of bamboo in recent time. Moreover kerosene is used in that equipment to protect from insect.



Harpoons:

There is another traditional fishing tool is harpoon. It has different type. Which have their head points detachable but after their detachment they remain together by a string tied to both of them. The shaft floats on water and there by indicates the position of the head within the water. The head points of these weapons vary from one to many – when the weapon has one head it is called the *eknala*, three head points called *tera*.

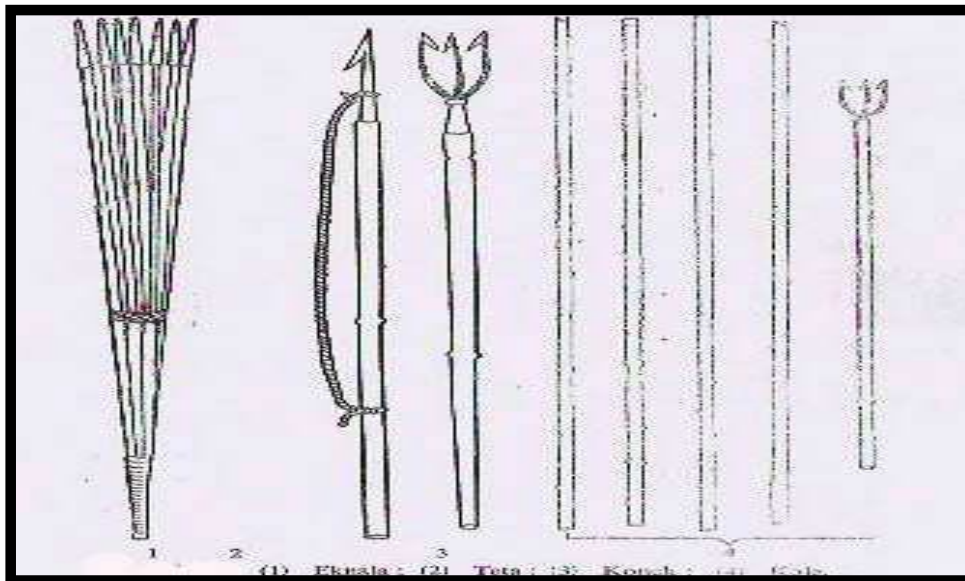
Arrows:

The special fishing equipment is arrows. It is shot with the help simple bow and is used by the fishermen of Sundarbans area and the Andaman island fishermen and Santals of Mayurbhanj. Shooting with arrows is a device found in many places while shocking the fish with the help of dynamite and then collecting them certainly by that moment by the device.

Konch:

Konch, raksha, tota, eknala, tera, kole, choki, arrows, harpoon and different types of fish hook are important fishing tools. Those metal fishing equipment are conserved very carefully. The fishermen of Sundarbans follow the ancient technique and apply their long experience for conservation. The equipment are very sharp and pointed. During the use if damaged they are repaired in their own technique. After using, those are cleaned and smeared with oil. There are two parts of those tools – one part is wooden or bamboo handle and the other part metal. The wooden part of the tools is smeared with oil

like-mustard oil, kerosene, Mobil (motor oil) and pitch. Metal part of the tools are used with pitch and covered with oil cloth for protecting from rust. In recent time this metal part is found to be coloured and smeared with nickel for protecting from rust.



Fish-hook:

Fish hooks are small curved rigid steel wire or without barber point. They are attached to a string known as line tied to one end of a fishing rod. This is called the *barsi* in Bengal. The Rod and line method of fishing is comparatively a recent device. Here the fish is lured with the help of a bait, which when swallowing the bait is caught in the hook. In recent times rod and lines are developed into the wheel-rod and the line is used in catching big fish. In rod and line method thorough knowledge of the habits of fish is essential. Sometimes a number of hooks are attached in bunch or each at an interval to a very long string provided with a float at the upper end. This is called the *doone barsi* (used by the *jaliya kaibarto* and *malos* of Sundarban). Hooks are always provided with baits at the point to allure a fish. Fish hooks are cleaned

very carefully with sand and water to remove rust. Then water is removed from it and those are sunk in the coconut oil or mustard oil or kerosene.



Net:

Among the tools of fishing, net is the most important equipment. Fishermen apply different methods to conserve those net. *Min jal* is generally used from the time of *astomi tithi* (eight day of waxing moon) to full moon for catching prawn. Its rectangular shape is made with bamboo. It is pulled opposite the current in the river bank to catch the seeds that come with the tide. Women and children focus on pulling nets along the bank of a river. A three or four feet wide or six feet long mosquito net fitted into wooden frame is what use to they collect prawn seed. However, this is a more predominant



Women catching tiger prawn seeds along the river bank

method and is more popular among women as it enables them to remain close to their neighbourhood and return to their household chores whenever they want to. Children on their way to school or way back find it convenient to spend time to catching prawn seed along the riverbanks. Most of the poor families, who catch fishes along the riverbanks, live in proximity to the river because their houses are located either on embankments or closer to the edge of embankment. Prawn seed catching constitutes an important source of income for poor families in the Sundarbans. Surprisingly, prawn is also a source of quick and huge money for the islanders. For many Sundarbans islanders, prawn is like a lottery as it helps to change their fortune almost overnight. In West Bengal, the growth of an export-oriented brackish water prawn aquaculture industry started in the 1960s. The industry picked up very rapidly and by the late 1970s, prawn seed collection had become very popular in Sundarbans. Prawn seed collecting nets are conserved in traditional way. After catching fish they are cleaned with pond water and then repaired, if there is any damage. *Chhaknijal*, *khepla jal*, *chakna jal*, *tora jal*, *thela jal*, *bera jal*, *kai jal*, etc., are preserved in the same method.

Chhaknijal/ Hand operated nets:

With or without bamboo frame *chhaknijal* is attached with a round bamboo frame. It is used by the lower Sundarbans islanders and Oraon communities of Chotanagpur.

Jhankijal/ Cast net:

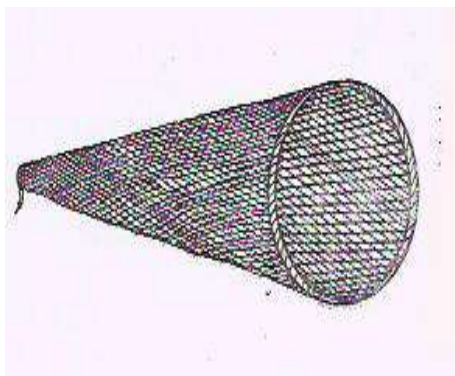
With sinkers at the edges which when thrown spread on the water in a circle. This type of net is called *khepla*, *kwela* or *jhanki jal* in Bengal.

Berajal/ Sein net:

There is long net provided with floats along the upper edges while along the lower edges sinkers are tide. The example is *berajal* used by the *nuliyas* of Odisha coast and the fishermen of West Bengal in Matla River, Raimangal, Namipukur, and Chituri Khal.

Shanglajal/ Trawl net:

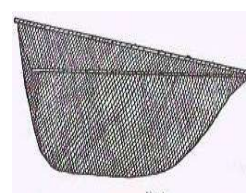
This is a bag like net provided with a bamboo frame which by a string arrangement can be operated or closed. The fishermen of Sundarbans use this type of net by boat. In local language this net is called *shangla jal*.

**Koijal/ Automatic net:**

This is a long net with floats along the upper edges stretched across a current or stream. The *koijal* used for catching specially *koi* fish in the paddy fields or pond during the rainy season in an illustration. This *jal* is used generally in rainy season for catching fish like *koi*, *singi*, *mangur*, *shoal*, *lata*, *punti*, etc.

**Vesajal:**

It is almost triangular in shape. The three sides of the net are bound with the bamboo poles. The two sides forming an acute angle along are placed on the gunwale of the boat or attached to the fixed bamboo poles set up in the river or water logged area and are entirely of long bamboo, but the extreme side of the net is secured by a double split bamboo. This net is known locally as the *vesal*.



Pomfret net:

The pomfret nets are usually used for fishing in the Bay of Bengal. Especially



this net is used in winter season. The fishermen prepare the pomfret net for fishing in the middle of November. They take 10 to 15 days for preparing this net. This net is larger in size around 2000-2500 meter long in diameter. The fishermen use this net during middle of October to February. At the end of the season the pomfret net is conserved by the fishermen for next season. After catching the fish the pomfret net is washed in the fresh water. In the sunshine they are dried. The fishermen usually repair any slit of the net. Pomfret net are folded step by step. Those

nets are kept on a wooden platform with shade. This net is conserved for long time and is made useable for a long time. The pomfret net is conserved by fishermen in their own indigenous knowledge and ancient technique. Fishermen



used to conserve pomfret nets after the season from the ancient time to till now. As the pomfret nets are made with nylon rope. The fishermen keep away those nets from the sunlight because the consistency of nylon reduced with the sunlight. After they clean the pomfret nets with pond water, these are kept on the wooden platform under the

shades for protecting from rats, insects, pets, etc.

Hilsa jal/ net:

The fishermen of Sundarbans, who go to deep sea for fishing with an engine boat, catch hilsa fish in rainy season. Mono-filament *jal* (it is a one type of net which is used for hilsa fish) and *nakura jal* are used for fishing Hilsa from June



to October. At the end of season the fishermen conserve those nets for next season. At first they carry the net from trawler or engine boat carry the net to nearby pond for washing by 10 to 12 team members. Then the damaged portions of the net are repaired by

hiring the labourers. The hired labourers repair the frayed nets with their crafted hands. In this repairing generally women and child labourers are used because fishermen get them with low wages. Then those are bundled in part by part. Those are kept on the brick in certain places. The thatching of straw is used for

safekeeping the *nakura jal*. Insecticides and pesticides are used for protecting the nets from insects, rats, etc. Sometimes platform is made on the water in the pond for conserving this type of net. This method is followed for protecting it from humidity and rodents. There is also use of electronic bell to prevent rats.

Boat and trawler:

Fishermen pull the boat and trawler on a shore from the river during the end of season for

repairing and conserving.

Then boats are washed with detergent, brush and water.

Then the pitch layer of the boats is removed by burning fire.

The joints of plank are covered with cotton and layer with putty and smeared with new pitch to protect from

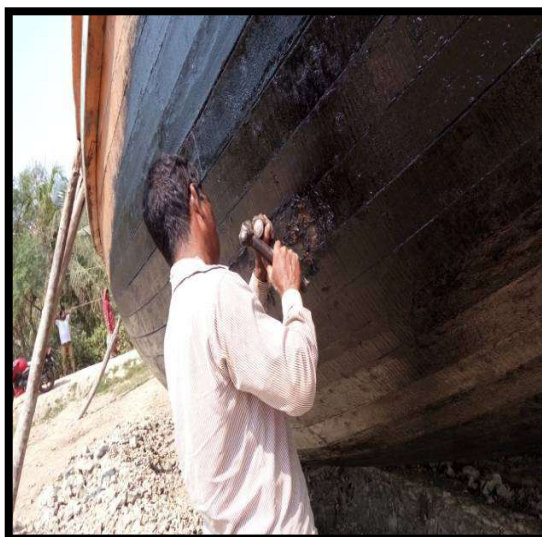
water. The putty is made by resin, turpentine and different type of materials. It prevents from saline water so that the water cannot get into the boat. This traditional system is practiced by them for a long time. At present modern technique, i.e., fibre technique is used instead of traditional technique. Propagators at boat and trawler desire to use fibre system in recent time instead of traditional system. The fishermen of Sundarbans in West Bengal conserve the fishing tools following the traditional method.

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Challenges:

The fishermen of Sundarbans from ancestral time use to conserve the equipment of catching fish in traditional way. But these traditional techniques are now under great challenge nowadays because now it depends on basically the weather of environment. In recent time technique of their conservation has been changed due to the change of weather and climate. For this reason different types of chemicals are used



nowadays. Therefore, they have to spend enough money for conservation in modern time. Besides this, they have to adopt modern technique of conservation of fishing tools. If the fishermen wrongly use the technique of conservation of modern fishing object, those tools get damaged.

Conclusion

The fishing community are very courageous to lead their livelihood by fishing even in the deep sea. Through struggling against the disaster of nature and frightful situation of water and jungle in other way they are deprived of from the advantages of society. They are strong minded because they fight against all kinds of disasters. They do not care any danger of life during fishing. Above all, they fight for their life and livelihood. They share and care each other. The close relationship of each category of people is the base of society. This study has tried to show how the fishing communities of Sundarbans use their knowledge and technique for preserving the traditional fishing tools. These include cleaning in fresh water, sun-drying, use of kerosene, insecticides or pesticides, putting up the nets on the *mancha* of the thatched huts roof, and so on.

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An Opportunity of Heritage Preservation of Folk Deity in Murshidabad District – A Case Study

Ajita Deb

Abstract

The district of Murshidabad in West Bengal is a region that belongs to the ancient civilization of India. The mention of this place is also found in the writing of many ancient scholars like Panini, Kautilya and Vatsyana. *Dumni Devi* is a folk deity from *Dumni Talain* the Murshidabad district which has been carrying great significance in the field of cultural heritage. The historical background behind the worshipping of this deity is very diversified. So the preservation of this heritage is seriously needed. Otherwise, one cannot rule out the possibilities of this place being ravaged by some natural disaster or any nuisance by miscreants and obliterating the entire history and the wealth this place holds. Because Dumni River had been flowing beside and Murshidabad district is also a flood-prone zone.

Keywords: Dumni Maa, Dumni River, Murshidabad District, Heritage Preservation, Folk Deity.

The revered intellect, Sri Radha Gobinda Basak had said that as long as no one is writing about the folk deities of this part of the world, a significant chapter on the culture of Bengal will always be missing (Bose, 1966, p.1). The folk deities are an inseparable part of this folk culture. The variety found among the folk deities had added a different dimension to the study of folk culture in Bengal. Here, various folk Gods & Goddesses have been venerated irrespective of the location, caste, creed and religion. West Bengal is a home to many faiths and religions. The Jains, the Buddhists, even the animists have been living in this land for a long time. As a result of which, their existence is also reflected in the folk religion. Ghosh (1950) had reflected that the

culture of Bengal is not the culture that belonged to the Brahmins, rather, there are significant contributions at every layer from the archaic races, the backward classes and even the Jains and the Buddhists. There are various sites where idols of Jain deities can be seen being worshipped. Amiya Kumar Bandyopadhyay had written about a temple in Ambika Nagar in the district of Bankura. There is a Shiva linga beside a Rishavnath statue carved out of stone from which it can be deduced that it was an ancient Jain temple which had been converted into a Hindu temple with the passage of time. Such examples are countless in this land (Ghosh, 1950, p.41). One such shining example of religious fusion can be found in the deity *Dumni Maa*, situated in the area of Beldanga of Murshidabad District. *Dumni Tala* along with *Dumni Maa* is a place that holds both tangible and intangible heritage. The paper is trying to present different aspects which had accumulated during field survey of this area that makes this place relevant in the field of heritage preservation.

Murshidabad District had been under the influence of Hinduism, Muslims, Buddhism, Jainism during different times in the past which is still evident at various locations and the local cultures within the district also reflects it. *Dumni Tala* or *Domni Tala* is one such special place. Therefore, the significance of this place is undeniably high in spite of not being that much famous or written about. *Dumni Tala* is situated in the district of Murshidabad, under the Beldanga Police Station, in the village of Nowpukuria of the Karpasdanga area. The temple of *Dumni Maa* is on the side of Dumni River and on the other side is the Begunbari Village. Presently the two banks of the Dumni River is connected with dinghies. The rustic charm is quite prominent even though the population that includes Hindus, Muslims along with people from other communities is pretty dense.



Plate 1: Dumni River, Murshidabad District

Coming to the discussion about the idol of the deity, a lot of stone statues were present, along with the statue in question which was approximately around 1.6 feet in height. Mitra (1961, p. 137) mentioned that the female form and the sitting style of the deity were found identical to the Buddhist Goddess Tara by a Maratha archaeologist while he was having a discussion with a local priest, Annada Prasad Shastri. The figure of Lord Buddha carved above the female deity's head is very prominent. This definitely leads to the conclusion that the statue was of the Buddhist Goddess who was later worshipped by the Hindus as well as other communities. The current priest also opined that the Goddess has been worshipped long since the era of Buddhism as Lord Buddha is also sitting above the head of the deity.



Plate 2: Different stone sculptures including *Dumni Devi*

The present priest, Sri Ananda Deyasin, had provided a lot of information about the temple and the deity herself. Badyopadhyay (2013, pp. 51-52) discussed about the priests of the various folk deities available in West Bengal and he had mentioned that the Deyasins were a rare priest community. The servants of this deity were also known as Deyasins once and presently, they have assumed that title only. It is their faith or their claim that this deity had appeared in the dream of one of their forefathers and ordered to initiate veneration. (Mitra, 1961, p. 137).

There are a lot of differences of opinions regarding the time since when *Dumni Maa* has been worshipped and how the process had started. Specific answers to such queries are not available as very little research work has been done on *Dumni Maa*. Yet, an investigation can always be attempted. First of all, according to the present priest of the temple, Sri Ananda Deyasin, the deity has probably been worshipped since the time when Buddhism was widespread in Bengal as Lord Buddha appears above the head of the deity herself. Sri Deyasin narrated a legend as well, regarding the deity and her existence. He said that the Dumni River that was flowing beside the temple was once the course of the Bhagirathi-Hooghly River, through which a sailor was going one day to conduct his trade. On the way he stopped to visit his friend who lived there. The sailor happened to catch the sight of the local princess and fell in love. He married her and left for his home. On the way back, they faced some severe calamity and there was a shortage of food in the vessel. The newlywed bride asked the crew of the vessel to bring some raw bamboo shoots and with those bamboo shoots she prepared rice by chopping them into very small pieces. This kind of food habit and preparation was practiced among the 'dom' (undertakers of a crematorium) community and the sailor thought that he had mistakenly married a girl from the 'dom' community. He then made up his mind that he would leave her behind. He ordered his men not to tell about the marriage at his home and conspired with them to abandon her behind while she would fall asleep in the boat. The crew followed his orders and left the sleeping bride along with the bed at the very spot where the present day temple is situated. The bride was heartbroken by the fact that her husband failed to recognize her and being stricken with grief she drowned



Plate 3: Statue of *Dumni Devi*

herself in the river. After many years of this incident, one of the forefathers of the Deyasins received the divine command from the Goddess herself in his dream to redeem the statue which was lying beneath the tree and start venerating her in proper orderly rituals so that she can bless the humanity with her benevolence. A search was conducted and the statue was recovered under a banyan tree at that place. A temple was set up there and since then *Dumni Maa* is being worshipped with great respect and reverence. Sadly, no written evidence is available regarding the exact time and facts behind the foundation of this temple. Presently, the Bhagirathi-Hooghly River is also flowing parallel to the place.

Bandyopadhyay had also mentioned of *Dumni Maa* of Murshidabad district while describing the various deities of the districts of West Bengal. While he was collecting information, he had witnessed the deity being worshipped on a cemented platform beside an incomplete temple. The local people also wholeheartedly believe this legend. They are not at all interested in learning how those statues had come to that place. The devotees visit the place to offer their prayers and offerings. A very special pooja (worship) and festivities is held during the entire month of Baishakh (Mid-April to Mid-May). The celebration also includes a fair. A heavy crowd is witnessed in the mornings of every Tuesdays and Saturdays. In the literature, sacrifice of goats by beheading is also mentioned, though presently no goats are beheaded, they are offered symbolically and let off. Devotees who had taken a vow often perform their own pooja.

The village of Nowpukuriya, every Saturday and Tuesday *Dumni Maa* is worshipped and on special days fairs are also held. The ritual and practice is more than 500 years old. The priests are continuing their service for almost 24-25 generations. Almost the same story is given on the revelation of the deity. Some difference is there though. Such as, the person who had married the deity here is a landlord who was passing through the place and was mesmerized by a beautiful lady and had a secret marriage with her and had deserted her. The deity on being forsaken by her husband was intensely dolorous and the river that is seen there was created out of the tears from her eyes. In the book,

it is mentioned that the servants of the deity who have assumed the title of 'Deyasin' were previously known as 'Patuni'. Sri Ramapada Patuni, who used to worship the deity had shed the title of 'Patuni' and gradually assumed the title of 'Deyasin'. In the present time (2018), the servant of the deity, Sri Ananda Deyasin is the descendant of Ramapada only. This is the only family who has been serving the deity since her revelation.

Dumni Maa is open for all and anyone can offer her their prayers. It was learnt from the earlier priests that before the partition, many Muslims would come to *Dumni Maa* to offer prayers and vows. Still the Muslims come to her but the number has certainly reduced. The title of 'Domon' is found among both the Hindus as well as Muslims. All the 'Domon' title holders are presumed or believed to have been already blessed by *Dumni Maa*. A Muslim man named Domon Sheikh was also found to have lived at that time. The Hindus and Muslims both are still offering their prayers to *Dumni Maa* till date.

In order to fathom the significance of *Dumni Maa*, it is imperative to analyze the history of the district of Murshidabad. The history reveals that the district had rulers from different faiths at various periods of time. The famous ancient grammarian Panini had made mentions of Gaudapur which almost dates back to the 5th Century BCE. Materials from Gauda are also mentioned in "Arthashastra" by Kautilya. From the texts written by Vatsayana, it is also evident that he was well acquainted with the place called Gauda. From the 2nd Century CE to 5th Century CE, various parts of Bengal had different administrations. Although it was not a part of the Kushana empire, yet, there was enough connection and communication between them. Even so, from a cave situated at Susunia in the district of Bankura, some inscriptions in the Brahmi script dating back to the 4th Century CE, it can be clearly understood that during the rise of the early Gupta Empire, that area had a small but powerful monarchy force. From this inscription, it is also known that the place had a king named Chandravarman, whose father was Singhavarman. The Allahabad inscriptions also mentions that Samudragupta had annexed the kingdom of one Chandravarman and if both the Chandravarman are the same person, then, it

can be concluded that during his time that is, 335-375 CE, the Gupta Empire also included this region also. After that, kings named Dharmaditya, Gopechandra and Samachardeva were also known to have ruled this land of Bengal. In the 6th century, the decline of Gupta Empire was set in motion. During this time, many independent kingdoms mushroomed in Bengal. In the beginning of the 7th Century, the kingdom of Gauda was the most powerful among all of them. The capital of Gauda was Karnasubarna which was near the city of Baharampore of the Murshidabad district. Majumdar (2017) opined that Karnasubarna was situated 12 miles away from the south Murshidabad. Sasanka was the ruler of Gauda whose kingdom covered the present state of Odisha, Rajgir, Patna of Bihar and Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh. Sasanka was once the general of Mahasena, who ruled Gauda at the time. Sasanka established his independent kingdom before 606 CE. He fought against the tripartite force of Kannauj-Thaneshwar-Kamrup. This also proves that massive cultural exchange took place centering the kingdom. Majumdar described in his texts that during the rule of Sasanka (590 – 625 CE) great expansion of Buddhism took place and the focal point was his capital, Karnasubarna. At the end of 7th Century CE, different parts of Bengal were probably being ruled by the later Magadha Guptas and the Kharga rulers. At the beginning of the 8th Century CE, the ruler of Kannauj, Yashovarman had murdered the ruler of Gauda. The court poet Vakpatiraja had described it in his composition, “Gaudabaho”. Later, Yashovarman was defeated at the hands of Lalitaditya, the king of Kashmir and Bengal probably was under the rule of Kashmir for some time. It is also known that at in the 8th Century CE, Bengal was ruled by two kings named Gobindo Chandra and Lalit Chandra of the Chandra dynasty. It is assumed that Yashovarman had attacked Bengal during the rule of Lalit Chandra. Due to the consecutive attacks, the people of Gauda were absolutely devastated and it created a massive mayhem and disruption. This period is known as the ‘matsyanyaya’ in the history of Bengal. It is known from Tamrasashan in Kassimpur, that the people of Bengal had chosen a soldier named Gopal as their leader in order to be saved from the contemporary pandemonium. The rule of the Pala dynasty started probably in the year of 750 CE and they were

able to continue their rule for the next 400 years. During the rule of Mahipal, Rajendra-I of the Chola dynasty attacked Bengal. The Carnatic soldiers who had come along with the Chola soldiers decided not to return and permanently settled in Bengal. The Sen Dynasty rose from these people later on. Under the rule of Devapal and Dharmapal of the Pala dynasty, the cultural development of Bengal blossomed and emanated with radiance. The Gujarati poet, Sodhladeva in his composition, "Udaysundarikatha" had given the title of 'UttarpathaSwamin' to Dharmapala. The Pala dynasty was enriched with much fame during the reign of Devapala as well. Vincent Smith considered the Pala dynasty to be one of most remarkable and significant dynasties in the history of Indian sub-continent. Pala rulers have been mentioned in many of the government scripts as 'Bangapati' and 'Gaudaeshwar'. Therefore, it can be understood that the Pala rule had marked its influence at various regions of Gauda Bengal. The decline of Pala dynasty started after the death of Devapala. At this time, Mahendrapala, the ruler from Gurjar-Pratihara dynasty and the Rashtrakuta king, Amoghvarsha-I had attacked Bengal. A clan from the north India named Kamboj had also occupied the rule of Gauda for some time. Later the rule went into the hands of the Sen dynasty. The Sen dynasty ruled Bengal till the advent of Bakhtiyar Khilji. The Sens had arrived from the Carnatic land and were Brahmins in caste, but after they became rulers, they came to be known as kshatriyas. The Sen rule was established probably in the 10th Century CE. Vijaya Sen ascended the throne in 1095 CE and converted a small kingdom into an empire. Ballal Sen had introduced the 'kulinism'. He had left a very significant mark in the social life of Bengal. He was a very devoted patron of literature and cultural activities. He was very staunch and conservative in respect of social norms. Lakshman Sen ascended throne after him and assumed the title of 'Gaudaeshwar'. It was during the time of Lakshman Sen, that Bakhtiyar Khilji had claimed victory over Bengal with just 18 cavalries. During the rule of Ghiyasuddin Balban, Laksmanabati became a sanctuary for the Muslim culture. This was the time when, the Delhi Sultanate rule started spreading throughout the land of Bengal. Aggravated by the stern rule and governance of Balban, many Muslims and even Muslim rulers sought refuge in Bengal. Due to such

influx of Muslim population, a bough of Muslim culture started to flourish. Many Muslim *fakirs* and *darbesh* (mendicants with religious inclination) had arrived in Bengal and thus instituted a new path of education and culture. This also constituted a good foundation for communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. The descendants of Balban had also independently ruled Bengal. In 1340 CE, Laksmanabati came under the power of a person named Ali Mubarak who assumed the name of 'Allahuddin Ali Shah' and declared himself as an independent ruler. He was deposed by a person named Shamshuddin Illias in the year 1345 CE. Later he assumed the title of 'Illias Shah' and established the Illias Shahi Dynasty in Bengal. The rulers from this dynasty ruled over Bengal for more than 70 years which started a new era in the history of Bengal. Bengal was under the rule of Habshi rulers for some time also. This was the period which was also known as the Dark Age of Bengal. Probably in the year, 1493 CE, Allahuddin Hussain Shah ascended the throne and established the Hussain Shahi dynasty. This dynasty ruled for almost 50 years. Hussain Shah had arrived from Arab country with his father and settled in the village of Chandpara of the Murshidabad district. He drove out the Habshis from Bengal. After the death of Aurangzeb, MurshidKuli Khan had assumed the power in Bengal and Murshidabad was focal point of his empire. Naturally, this region was a centre for Muslim religion and culture for a very long time.

By going through the ancient history of Murshidabad, it can be understood that this region has been enriched by different religions and cultures since the ancient times. Therefore, *Dumni Maa* is a symbol and carrier of the culture represented by the district of Murshidabad. The significance of the place and the idol both are immense and incomparable. Also, the background story is an intangible heritage. The combination of the above-discussed qualities turns this place into a unit of heritage preservation. These priceless artefacts have to be carefully preserved and its damage or effacement has to be prevented by all means. The local people have to be made aware of the historical value the statues and idols are bearing so that they become more conservative and caring about them.

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