

Archetypal Analysis of Regional-Religious Styles for Temples of Dhaka city: Influenced by Indo-Islamic Style

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Abstract

The history of Dhaka is significant because it stands with a very long cultural legacy of more than four hundred years. This city is not only famous for the growth of Muslim civilization as evidenced by the number of mosques but also bears witness to the existence of rich Hindu temple architecture with its varied styles and decorative designs is a part of that legacy. The architecture that has developed in this country under ever changing political conditions over the past hundred years' is basically uniform and regional with its character. The architectures that erected during this period was a combination of both Muslim [mosque and tomb] and Hindu [temples] religious architectures, which were also influenced by each-others characteristics. Temple architecture of Bengal its own style and form reflects something new and distinct regional identity which can be defined as Bengal Regional- religious Architecture was influenced by Indo-Islamic Styles of architecture. But temple architecture of this region has been going through a gradual degradation process due to the negligence and lacking of awareness of people and concern bodies. Considerable number of them is disappeared; only few of them still survived along with its rich heritage. This paper analyzes the archetypes of some selected regional-religious temples of Dhaka city through both physical and literature survey for proper documentation to determine the attitude and the possibilities of the future conservation and restoration of these ancient edifices.

Keywords: Regional-Religious Architecture; Indo-Islamic Styles; Archetypal Analysis; Formal Expression, Conservation and Restoration.

1. Introduction

Dhaka has a very long cultural legacy of more than four hundred years, which has earned its reputation for being at the crossroads of many cultures that contains reminiscence of the past great civilization of the region. It is not only famous for the growth of Muslim civilization as evidenced by the number of mosques but also bears witness to the existence of rich Hindu culture that flourished till the arrival in phases of the Muslim conquerors. Despite the destruction that ensures any conquest there is still evidence of Hindu history through the temples that not only bears historical interest but is still a place of worship and congregation amongst the Hindu population. Therefore, Hindu temple architecture with its varied styles and decorative designs is a part of that legacy. Temple architecture of Bengal produced something new and distinct regional identity which was influenced by political, social, religious and Cultural Revolution as well as the material and environment of this region. Each and every temple of Bangladesh is not only a document of contemporary art but also a witness to the Bengal aspiration, which is reflected in their style of construction [1]. But unfortunately people of this region are not very much aware of it. From the survey of Bangladesh Bureau Statistics the total no. of temple in Dhaka city is 1344 [2]. Along with many other factors natural calamities, different political and regional issues, negligence and lacking of awareness caused the gradual degradation and disappearance of these temples. Considerable number of them is not even traceable. Therefore, the little amount of structures that still survived offer the nation a glimpse into the history of this country and its rich heritage.

This paper focuses on the archetypal analysis the temples of Dhaka city and evaluates their present context. Six of such temples of Dhaka City were taken as representatives and subject of the case study for this

paper. A physical survey was done on them to investigate their site conditions and built forms and Personal interview of local people and some history researchers have been conducted to understand the history and present framework. Therefore building plans, elevations, 3d modelling, photographs etc. have been prepared for proper documentation of these ancient edifices. Therefore the study concentrates on the history, construction, formal expression and documentation of the temples to determine the attitude and the potentialities of the future conservation and restoration.

2. The Context

Architecture is an expression in material form of a society's social, economical, technological and cultural achievements and perhaps uniquely so compared to any other form. It gives a vivid picture of a society. In case of Bengal, when we discuss about its architectures, we find that particular geographic, climatic and natural character that developed a unique cultural and regional identity in this region. Although various socio-political factors have been dominate this country over the past hundred years. However the fundamental unity of cultural of Bengal seems to have continued unaffected for over two millennia [3]. Therefore architecture that have developed under ever changing political conditions, they have remained basically uniform and regional with its character.

Although Hinduism is very old belief in this country but temple architecture did not flourish with unique style in Bengal before Muslim rule in 16th century. In between period of eleventh and twelfth century some brick temple developed throughout the country at *Sena* Dynasty. Some of them [temple of Bakura district (1080)] followed Orissa Style. Traditional *Chala* type roof was also use in some of the temples which was very indigenous form for Bengali rural House [4]. Actually *Senas* have conquered the power by defeating Pals, being in secured of losing their positions, they did not want to engage general people in any kind of social activity including religious practice. Therefore no particular style in temple architecture was developed in this period. From the thirteenth-fifteenth century the socio-religious and political life of the Bengal people was disturbed due to Muslim invasion and occupation. Islam diluted Brahminism (Vedic Religion/ Hinduism), Buddhism and Jainism in Bengal [5]. Therefore with the end of *Sena* Dynasty the old order passes and Dark Age of temple architecture had been started [6]. From fifteenth century, new dimension initiate to develop in Bengal architecture which was highly influenced by its indigenous political, religious, social and cultural

character through the movement of Sree-Chaitannayadeva. Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah came to the power at 1352ad. And gave a concrete and geographical shape to the regional identification of the people of Bengal by unifying Bengal permanently within definite limits and by establishing a stable central authority [7] and independent *Sultani* rule in this region; he encouraged the development of all types of religious architecture throughout the Bengal. A distinct regional style of architecture evolves for the first time. The buildings erected during this time combined traditional Islamic techniques (arches, vaults, domes) and types (mosques, tombs, forts) with local materials (brick and terracotta) and form (hut) [8]. In this period both Muslim [mosque and tomb] and Hindu [temples] religious architectures were also influenced by each-others characteristics. As for example Muslim Architects followed '*Chala*' type construction, curvilinear roof and terracotta decoration [floral and geometric ornamentation] from Hindu temples and in the same way temple architecture adopt some Islamic Characteristics like the use of dome and vault over the *Garbhagriha* and entry treatment [*khilan*] [4]. At later period [including British episode] different style also added and enriched temple architecture. In this way temple architecture of Bengal developed its own style and form which can be defined as Bengal Regional-religious Architecture which was highly influenced by Indo-Islamic Styles of architecture [5].

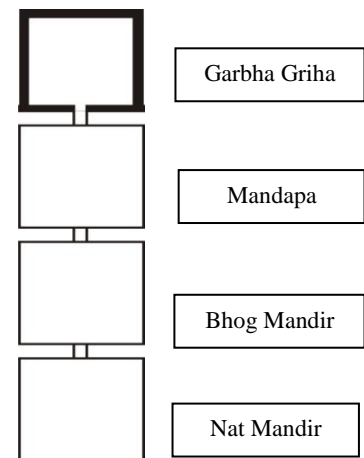


Fig 1 | zoning of northern Temple

3. Zoning

The temples of the ancient Bengal belonging to the northern or Nagara Style [2]. Northern style temples were composed of different chambers like *Garbhagriha*

[surrounded by *Pradakshina Path*], *Antarala*, *Mandapa* or *Jogmohon* (assembly hall) and *ardha-mandapa* (porch), *Bhog Mandir* and *Nat Mandir* [fig 1]. But in this region we find most of the temples have only one chamber, i.e. *Garbhagriha* [some of them surrounded by *Pradakshina Path*]. Only some of them have *mandapa* with open verandah and single entry with a little decoration [fig 2]. Temples those have *Nat Mandir* and *Bhog Mandir* including *Garbha Griha* and *Mandapa* are minimal in number. Even if the earliest temple of the fourth to fifth century was identical to Gupta temples i.e. single-celled sanctum with a shallow portico resting on four pillars in front [9].

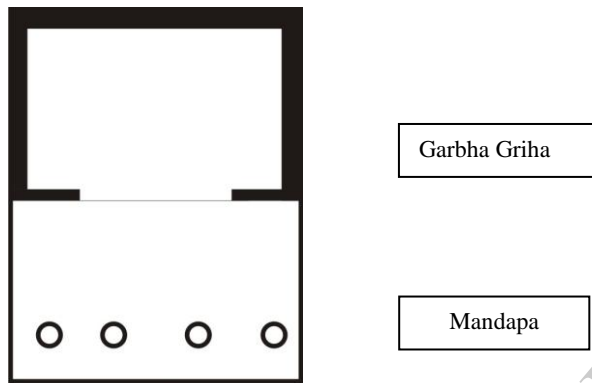


Fig 2 | Zoning of Bengali Temple

Each building within the traditional homestead of Bengali region [fig 3] is generally rectangular in shape and customarily single-storied, though occasionally double-storied structures are seen. The main unit is often entered through a semi-open verandah [fig 4]. Buildings are constructed on a raised plinth, commonly made of compacted earth, and the floor is left bare. The raised earth is a characteristic feature of indigenous architecture. Temples also follows the same pattern of a living unit –rectangular chamber as *garvagriha* (sanctum) with veranda as *antarala* and fore-court as *mandapa* (assembly hall) [10].



Source: <http://203.77.194.71:83/isvs-4-1/paper-dump/full-papers/19.pdf>

Fig 3 | Traditional rural homestead with *Dochala* huts



Source: <http://203.77.194.71:83/isvs-4-1/paper-dump/full-papers/19.pdf>

Fig 4 | *Chau-chala* hut with verandah

4. Material

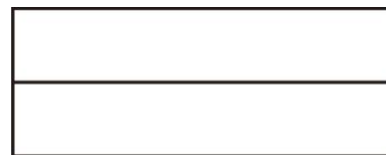
Majority of the temples in Bengal are made of bricks since it is a deltaic region composed of mostly alluvium. Brick and lime plaster used as finished material of these temples. From roughly 18th and 19th century under liberal Mughal reign Hindu *Zamindars* (landlords) constructed a large number of brick temples, decorated with terracotta plaques.

4. Form

Temples may be sub-divided into three or four different types according to the form of the roof over sanctum.

5.1 Chala Type

Brick temples of Bengal bear the Royal architectural heritage of this region which was sometimes influenced from its rural structure [fig 5] like do-chala (double pitched)'. From certain archeological instances it is proved the authenticity of *Do-chala* house in the distant past and its extensive continuity of 4000 years [11]. Pitched roofs are usual, and of the gable (*dochala*) or hipped (*chauchala*) or *atchala* varieties. According to Mccutchion, 'a tall central *char-chala* with mud walls from which project verandah roofs at a lower level supported on bamboo poles-precise *at-chala* today [12].



Do-chala: Gabled roof consist of two elongated eaves that converge at curved edge

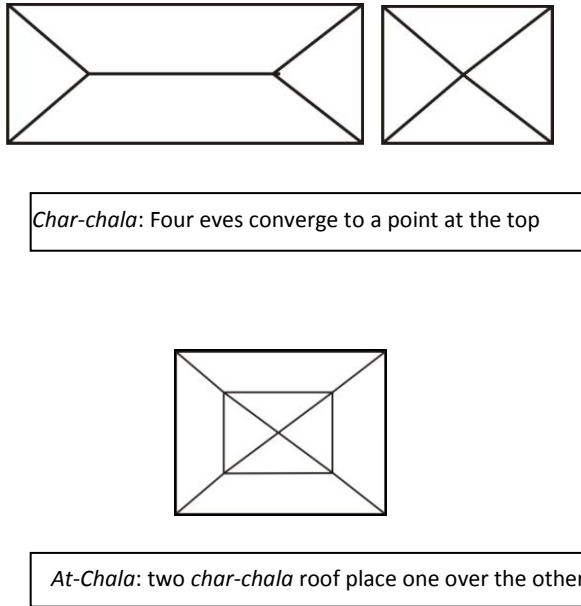


Fig 5 | Different types of Chala roof

5.2 Deul Type

This category found at few temples and moths [*Samadhi Mandir*]. In this style the central shrine was surmounted by a ribbed dome or curvilinear tower ornamented with vertical bands of vines sometimes supported by square or octagonal base. This style was influenced from the Orissan style and divided into the *Rekha Deul* and *Pida Deul*. Mostly central spires are sharply pointed and few of them are crowned by *Kalasha* finials [fig 6].

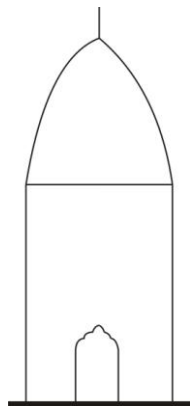


Fig 6 | Deul Type temple with finials

5.3 Ratna Type

The *Ratna* type of temple is a composite structure designed by combining features of folk *chala* architecture of Bengal with the traditional *shikhara* type of temple. The combination was conceived on the lines suggested in the regional religious architecture of Muslims in which a substructure resembling the *chala* hut both in plan and elevation was combined with the traditional dome to produce an integrated structure. Externally the similarity was so close that single domed structures of the Muslims may be taken to the precursor of the *Ratna* type of temple [7]. In this type of temple the roof is more or less flat and is surmounted by one or more tower or pinnacle called *Ratna* (Jewel). As for example, the Taj Mahal, Agra (Muslim architecture) has one dome at the center of the roof and four smaller domes on the four corners like the *Pancha* (five)-*Ratna* type of temple. Therefore we find different types of *Ratnas* in Temples like. *Ek-ratna*, *Pancha-ratna*, *Nava-ratna*, *Trayadasa-ratna*, *Saptadasa-ratna*, *Ekavimsati-ratna*, and *Panchavimsati-ratna*

6. Ornamentation

In many cases we find the evidence of multi-foil arch which was used as main entrance of *Garbha-griha* influenced from *Mughal* style or sometimes three doors [central one with a big span for entry and two others for elevation treatment] which was influenced from *Sultanat* Mosque [fig 7]. Beside this most of the temples are exclusively decorated with different types of arches like semicircular, pointed, multi-cusped, trefoil and true shaped arches. The facades of the temples are ornate with Venetian shuttered windows, series of niches, floral or curve decoration. Ornamentation of the temples is commonly adopted from different Muslim architectures.

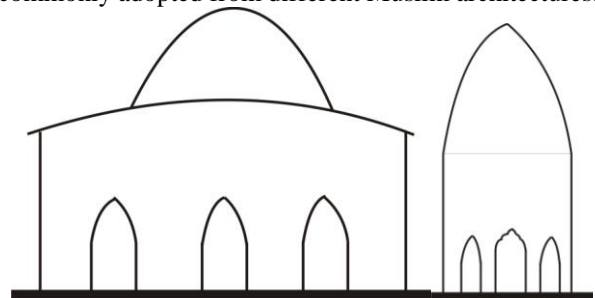


Fig 07 | Temple influenced from Sultanate Mosque

7. Case Study

Temples of Dhaka city are the witness to the Bengali aspiration, represent the cultural and religious identity

and heritage of the glorious Dhaka. Here we discuss the detail description of the some temples.

7.1 Shiv Bari Mandir

The temple is located near The University of Dhaka at *Bangla Academy* [Ward No57]. There is no inscription about the date of construction of the temple. The temple is locally known as '*Debalaya Shiba Bari*'. From the history it has been known that once Swami *Brahmananda Sarasvati* (perhaps a Nepali) came to have a holy visit [*darshan*] of the temples of Dhaka. During this visit he found a *Shib-Lingo* under a banyan tree and began to worship there. Most of the *year's Shib Lingo* was situated there for worship. Then Sankar Acharaya established there the '*Bura shib bari*' for the people to worship. After the banyan tree was wrecked in the 1326 Bengali year, the Bardhaman Raja built an '*Ek Chala Shib Mandir*' [2], which was later replaced by *Pancha Ratna* [4] [Fig 8 and Fig 9].



Fig 8 | *Pancha Ratna Shiv Mandir* [3D model]



Fig 9 | View of Temple

7.1.1 Zoning

The temple complex [Fig 10], has a *Natmandir* [Dance Chamber], *Garbhagriha*, accommodation for priest and others, a graveyard [*Shamadhi*], a stable and a pond. The temple including *Garbahagriha* [Womb House], *Nat Mandir* and accommodation unit measures approximately 137'6" X 43'9".

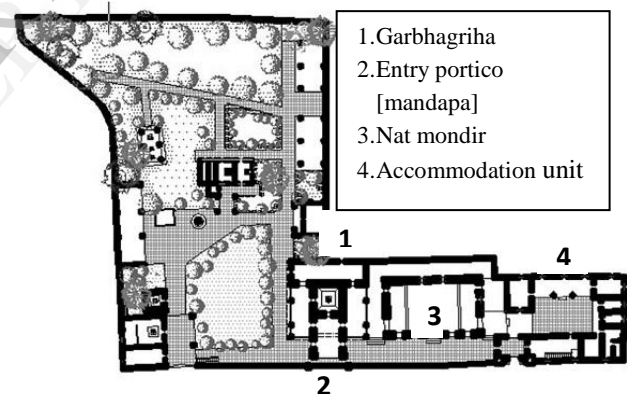


Fig 10 | Plan of temple complex

7.1.2 Form

It is a *Pancha-Ratna* type temple [Fig 11 and 12] with a grand entrance through a covered portico. The *Garbhagriha* is square in plan (32'6" x 32'6"), in the midst of an octagonal tower above it. The temple is two storied [Fig 13] and a decorated wooden staircase connects the upper floor of the temple.

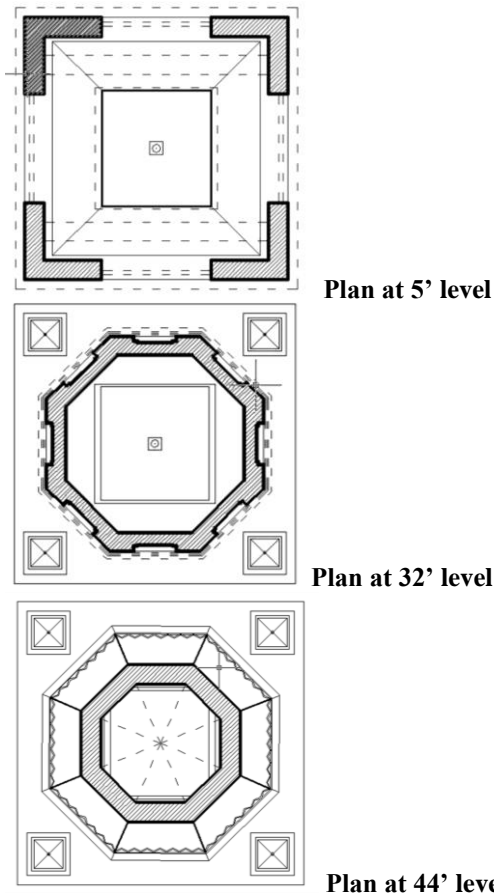


Fig 11 | Blow-up plans of Garbhagriha of Shiva Temple

7.1.3 Ornamentation

The facade of temple is decorated with the picture of bull [which symbolizes *Shib Bahon*] and lotus flower [2]. Column capitals are also decorative. Entry [Fig 14] of the temple is highlighted by a massive gateway with buds and marlon decoration [Fig 15], trefoil arch and star shaped Jali influenced from different Muslim style. Different types of arches used in this temple which are Mughal pointed arch, semi-circular arch, multi-foil arch etc.

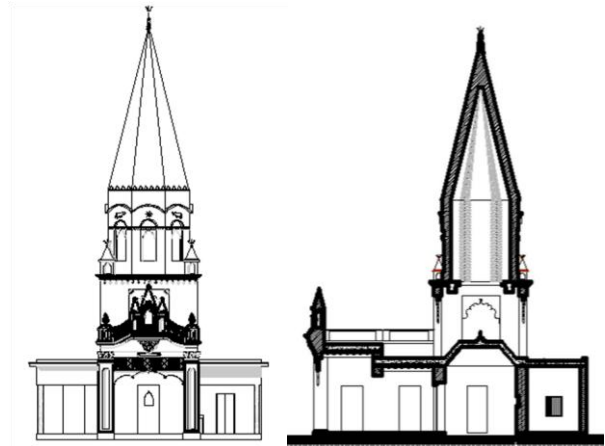


Fig 12 | Elevation and Section of Temple



Fig 13 | Elevation Inner view of Temple Complex

7.1.4 Present Condition

Every year different ceremony of Hindu community like *Janmashtami*, *Durga Puja*, *Shiv night*, *Guru Purnima* etc. are still celebrated in this temple.



Fig 14 | Entry view



Fig 15 | Buds and Marlon Decoration

7.2 Shamashan Temple

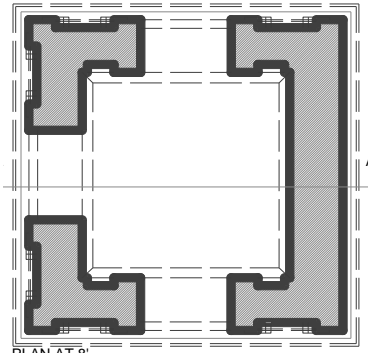
The Temple is located at Distillery Road, Banianagar, Dampara, plot No. 29/2 Dhaka [Ward no 80]. From inscription it has been known that the temple was built in 1700 Ad (appx) .The complex of the temple beside Dholai Khal was built as a rest house by *Zamindar* Kalachand. Locally it was known as Math of Kalachand Babu. Saint Yadav Tagore started worship inside the temple [2]. People believe that the temple belongs to some spiritual mystery. Hence, no renovation was ever done of this temple. After the liberation war worshipping and performing rituals were stopped.

7.2.1 Zoning

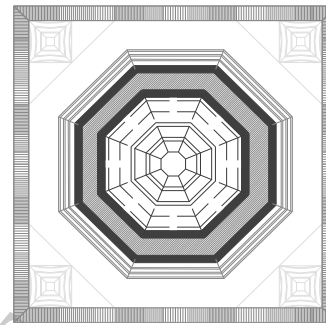
The temple is based on a square platform and has single chamber [*garbhagriha*]. A *Smashan* was present beside the temple and the canal named Dholai Khal was run in front of the temple.

7.2.2 Form

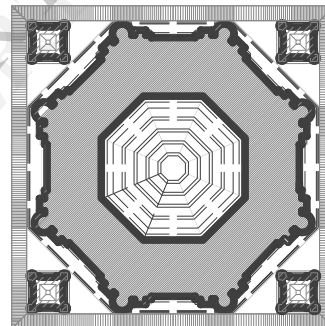
The temple has a square *Garbhagriha* with an octagonal shaped tower above it. The plan and elevation of the temple [Fig 16, 17], follows strong axial and symmetrical composition. The temple is raised on a square base (10'x10") and crowned with four richly ornamental towers at corners and a central one over the top with diminishing spires. Thus it is appearing as a *Panchratna* temple [Fig 18].



Plan at 8' level



Plan at 22' level



Plan at 32' level

Fig 16 | plans of Smashan Temple

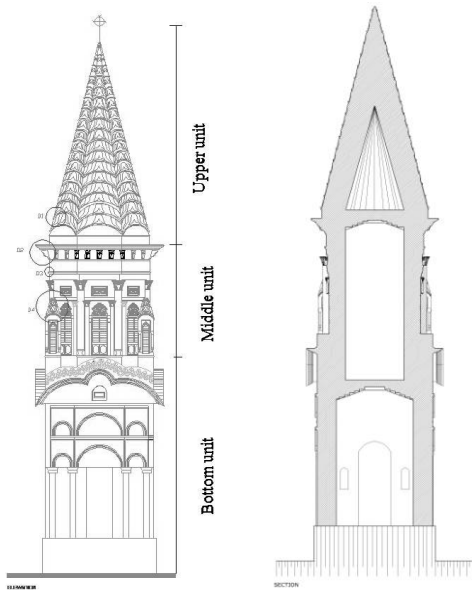


Fig 17 | Elevation and Section of Smashan Temple



Fig 18 | Panchratna Temple



Fig 19 | Venetian Windows



Fig 20 | Ratna and Ornamented capital

7.2.3 Ornamentation

The elevation of the temple is composed of three repetitive modules. The bottom unit of the facade is decorated with trefoil Arch [Fig 17], semicircular arch and Middle unit have Venetian shuttered windows with floral and curved decorations, columns with ornamented column capital [Fig 19], and four *ratnas* at corner [Fig 20]. The central tower on the top rested on octagonal drum, with molded cornice and floral decoration.

7.2.4 Present Condition

From many years the temple is not used for ritual purpose. Now adjacent land as well as the temple has been illegally encroached by local people [Fig 21]. Slums have been constructed around the temple and some part of it is used as press. The surface of the temple peels off with all its artistic decoration. Near about 5400 people live in the locality and almost 40% of follows Hindu religion. People of the locality want to use it as a temple again.



Fig 21 | Illegal Encroachment of the temple

7.3 Radha Krishna and Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir

Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir is situated at Tanugonj lane, Sutrapur, Dhaka. Shiva Mandir is the oldest and main temple of the complex. It was built about 300 years ago [from local community]. The Math was built by Sri Mayob Das Mohanta in 1311 Bengali year in the name of Bihari lal Babaji, who was the main priest of shiva Mandir. Beside this Math there was a prayer hall which is known as Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir. It was built by an elite Brahmin, named Bikhon Lal Pandey, who was an employee of East India Company. After that in 1996 the Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir has established as new prayer hall. Now a day’s all the Hindu puja has been arranged in the Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir.

7.3.1 Zoning

There are four temples situated at cluster which are Shiva Mandir, Bihari lal babajir Math, Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir and Radha krishna Jiu Mandir[Fig 22]. Both of Shiva temple and Bihari lal Babajir Moth are based

on 13'-9" square structure with an octagonal tower rises above them.



Fig 22 | Views of Radha Krishna and Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir complex

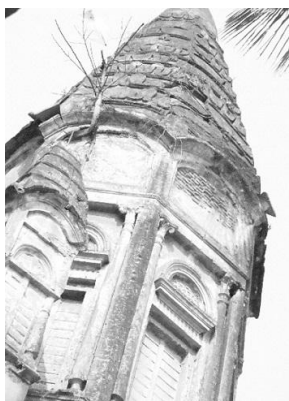
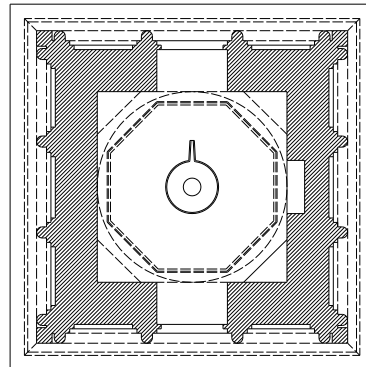


Fig 23 | Shiva Temple

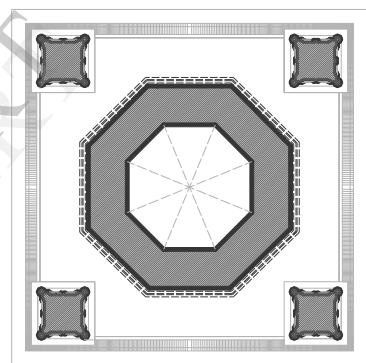


Fig 24 | Bihari Lal Babajir Moth

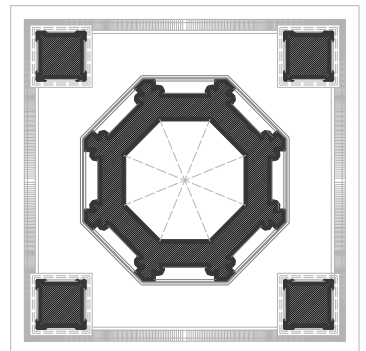
Shiva temple [Fig23] is a *Pancha-Ratna* type Temple raises in two storeys. At ground it has a square base with four slender rounded columns at each elevation. The each corner of the first storey is crowned by set of ornamented miniature tower with *char-chala* roof built as spires. The upper storey is octagonal in plan which also has group of slender columns at each corner, only for decoration purposes. The octagon is being covered by a conical dome [Fig25].



Plan at 8' level



Plan at 18' level



Plan at 26' level

Fig 25 | Plans of Shiva Temple

7.3.2 Form

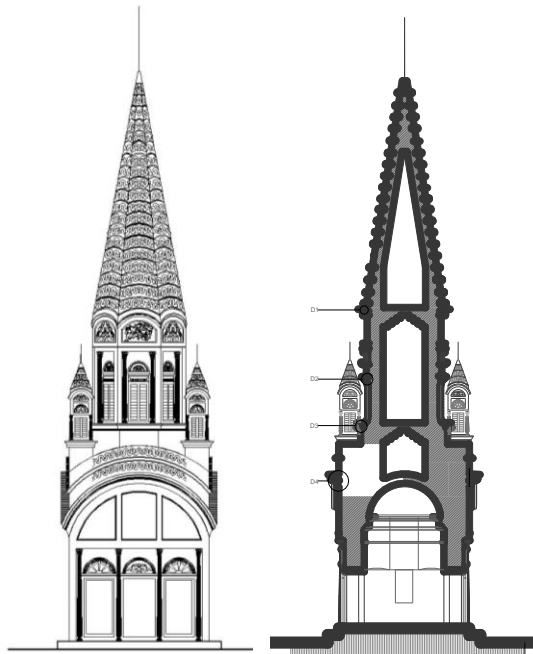
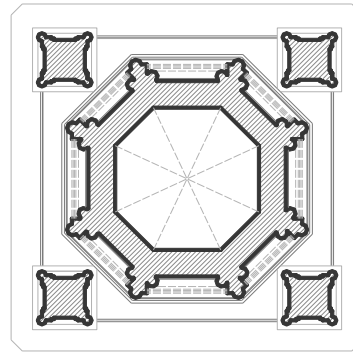


Fig 26 | Elevation and Section of Shiva Temple

The overall structure of Bihari Lal Babajir Moth [Fig 24, 27, 28] is almost similar with Shiva Temple.



Plan at 26' level

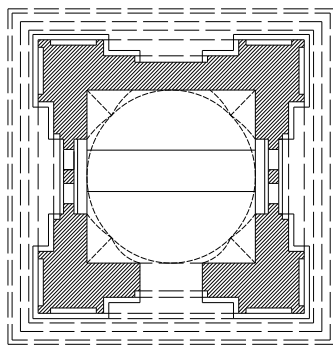
Fig 27 | Plans of Bihari Lal Babajir Moth

Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir is a flat roofed structure standing on a raised platform [Fig 29]. It has a large hall room with twelve doors (locally known as *Baro Duari*).

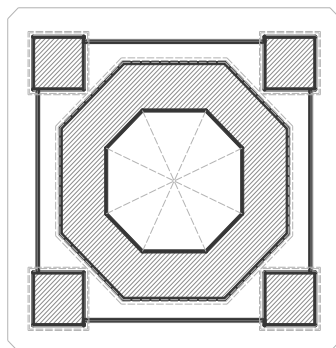
Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir is a new one storied structure with *do-chala* roof [Fig 30].

7.3.3 Ornamentation

The surface of the Shiva temple is richly ornate with engrailed semicircular archways, Venetian shuttered windows, floral and curved designs and mythical scenes from Hindu epics.



Plan at 8' level



Plan at 18' level

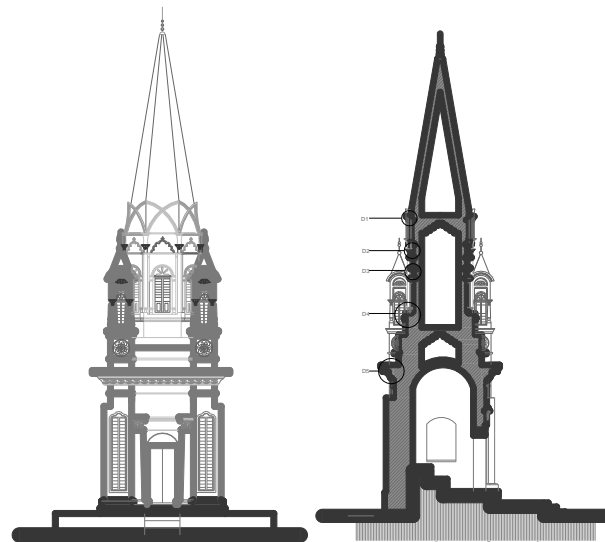


Fig 28 | Elevation and Section of Bihari Lal Babajir Moth



Fig 29 | Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir



Fig 30 | Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir

The dome of the Shiva temple was ornamented with repeated horizontal curved and floral decoration [Fig 31]. The central spire of the moth is sharply pointed and crowned by *Kalasha* finials. The cornice of the first storey is moulded and decorated. Multifoiled pointed arch, semicircular arch and lotus style arch is used for facade treatment.



Fig 31 | Decorations of the temple

7.3.4 Present Condition

The temple is occupied [Fig 32] by local Hindu community and is under the maintenance of ISKON society. Ground floor of the old Shiva temple and moth is used as their living room of priest and their family [Fig 33] and their condition is deteriorating day by day. The front façade of the temple is totally hidden by shops [Fig 34]. The two new structure Lakshmi Narayan Jiu Mandir and Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir is now used for ritual purpose. Vedic *Gurukul Viddalaya* (school) runs at Radha Krishna Jiu Mandir during holiday morning. To meet the growing demand of local people, new unplanned buildings added in the temple complex for various activities. Those help to increase the destruction of original fabric of the complex



Fig 32 | Illegally Occupied



Fig 33 | Living Room



Fig 34 | Front Facade

7.4 Ram Saha Moth

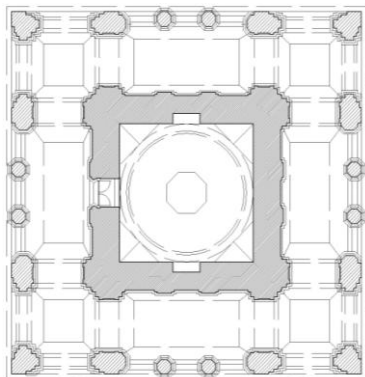
The Temple is located in Jagannath Saha road, Amilgola; Lalbag Dhaka [Ward no 59]. It was built by Zamindar Ram Saha of old Dhaka, in the memory of his mother. It is a graveyard Math. The road Jagannath was named after his brother. The temple is known as 'Shree Shree Radha ballava Jiu Vighraha Math' to local Hindu Community.



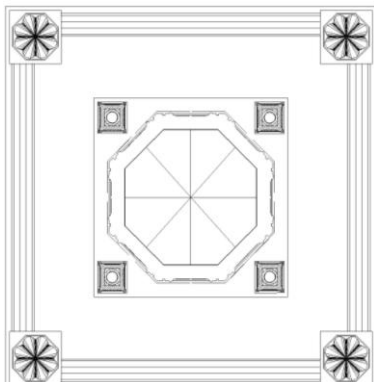
Fig 35 | Views of Ram Saha Moth

7.4.1 Zoning

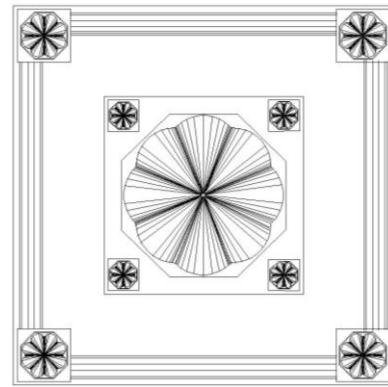
The temple [Fig 35] is built as octagonal pointed tower on a square base. It contains a *Garbhagriha* in the center and a 5'6" wide *Pradakshina Path* surrounding it. The Temple measures 30'10" square plan.



Plan at 5' level



Plan at 15' level



Plan at 25' level

Fig 36 | Plans of Ram Saha Math

7.4.2 Form

The temple is crowded with four richly ornamental corner towers on two storeys' and a central one over the third storey. It is a *Navaratna* type of temple [Fig 36]. The temple is built as octagonal pointed tower on a square base.



Fig 37 | Elevation and Section of Ram Saha Math

7.4.3 Ornamentation

There are five true arches at each side of the ground level [Fig 37]. The central three arches are comparatively smaller in size, two of which were closed with Venetian shuttered windows. There is a verandah at upper floor which has decorated railings with diamond shaped punches. All the *ratnas* have onion shaped spire and there are *Amlaka* and *Kalasha* finial on the top. The

temple is exclusively decorated with semicircular, pointed, multifoil and true shaped arches [Fig 38]. And the whole outer wall surface is profusely embellished with Marlon design, rich floral and curved decorations [Fig 39].



Fig 38 | Multifoil and True Arch



Fig 39 | Outer Decoration

7.4.4 Present Condition

The lower part of the temple is illegally occupied by the local people [Fig 40]. The verandah is used as a room.



Figure 40 | Temple occupied by the local people



Figure 41 | Toilet beside Arch wall

The wall plastering, floral decoration of plaster, decorative *ratnas* and arches – all are in the process of damage. Water penetrates through all the cracks and crevices, damp spread all over the temples. Therefore original state of the lower level cannot be identified properly [Fig 41].

7.5 Bakshibazar Moth

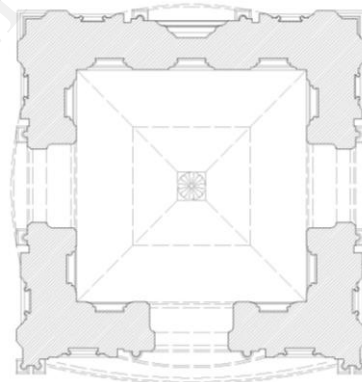
The Temple is located in Compound of Fazle Rabbi Hall of Dhaka Medical College, Bakshibazaar. Any known history or name of the builder cannot found about the moth. There is no inscription about the date of construction of the temple. Probably the temple built in about 16-17 Century (from local people).

7.5.1 Zoning

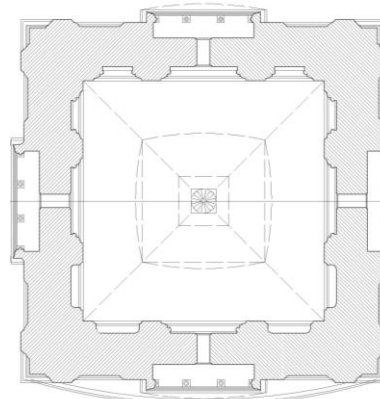
The Math Temple has single chamber measures 14’6” X 14’6” at plan rises on a square base and 48’-00” at height.

7.5.2 Form

The math is square in plan and is built on a single platform, facing towards south-east. It is a *chala* type temple where *Char-Chala* of three tires followed for roof construction [Fig 42].



Plan at 5’ level



Plan at 22’ level

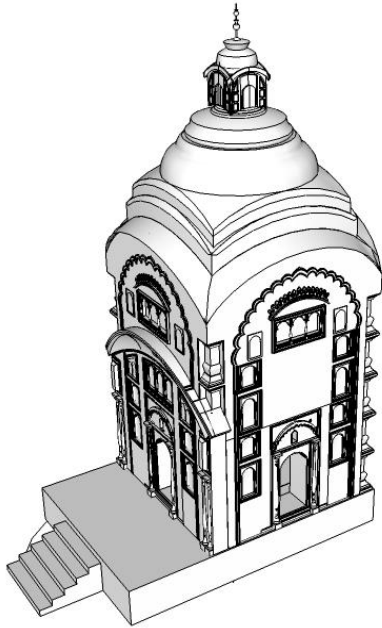


Fig 42 | 3d View and plans of Bakshibazar Moth

7.5.3 Ornamentation

There are four square columns at each corner and the temple is supported on brick walls. The façade of the temple is decorated with brick carvings and composed of multi-cusped arches and series of niches. Niches of the temples are semicircular and pointed. It has three doorway or openings at three sides. The porch in front is provided with semicircular arch entrances [Fig 43]. There is a 14'6"x6' rectangular pave at front. On the top of the temple there is a decorated *ratna*. Extensive ornamentation use at all sides of the math [Fig 43]. The overall appearance of the math was influenced from Sultanate Mos

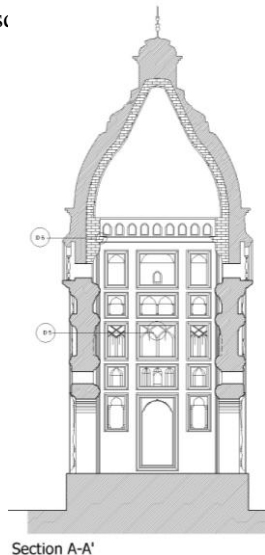


Fig 43 | Elevations and Section of Bakshibazar Moth

7.5.4 Present Condition

At present, it is in very much susceptible condition because of age, lack of maintenance and the warm humid climate of Bengal. All the decorations of the walls are mostly deteriorate. There is growth of vegetation on the wall surface and top of the temple is covered by a huge Banyan tree [Fig 44] which helps the deterioration of the math building rapidly.



Fig 44 | Present Condition of Bakshibazar Moth

7.6 Dhakeshwari Temple

The temple is located in old Dhaka right behind the campus of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Orphanage Road near Bakshi Bazar area and southwest of the Salimullah Hall of Dhaka University.

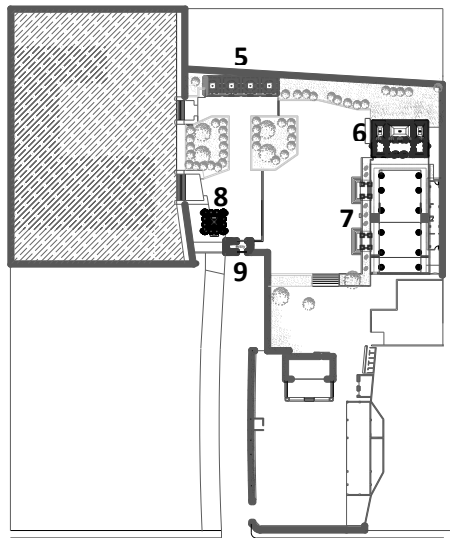


Fig 45 | Plan of Dhakeshwari temple complex

According to popular legend, Ballal Sen, a king of the *Sena* dynasty built the original temple in 12th century by, and the city was named after this temple [The name "Dhakeshwari" means "Goddess of Dhaka"]. The temple has its origins during the Gupta when ruled most of Bengal. But the researchers found that the style of architecture of the temple cannot be assigned to that period. It hosts the yearly *Puja* (worship) of Goddess Durga [4].

7.6.1 Zoning

The Dhakeshwari temple is a complex of several temples and ancillary buildings [Fig 45]. The complex has an inner-quarter on the east and an outer-quarter on the west. In the inner quarter stand the main temple, the *nat mandir* in front of it, a *Shiva mandir* and a *Shamadhi mandir* [Fig 46, 47]. In the outer quarter stand a few temples, one *panthashala* (school) and a few rooms. Inside the main temple premises, there are four identical structures devoted to Lord Shiva measures 116'4" X 29'6". To the east of these is the main temple, which hosts the statue of the Goddess. On the western side there is a large tank with north - south elongation with walking-path all around.

7.6.2 Form

The temple is the mixture of *pida* and *rekha* style (Ray, 1999). Among these, one group consists of four *rekha* temples. Each of them is built on a high plinth and approached by a flight of steps. The stairs of the eastern-most temple is made of marble. Each of these is entered

through narrow arched openings, one each on all sides the north.

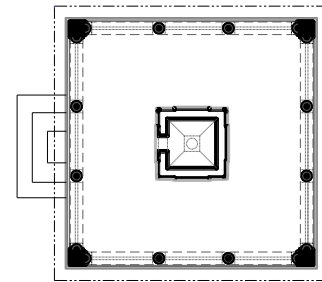


Fig 46 | Plan of Shamadhi Mandir

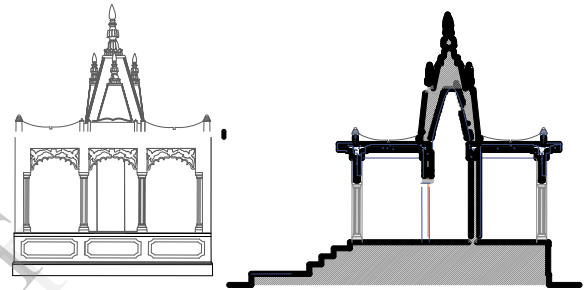


Fig 47 | Elevation and section of Shamadhi Mandir

7.6.3 Ornamentation

Each temple has a square sanctum [Fig 48], which is covered by a six tiers of pyramidal roofs of the curvilinear Bengali style and each is crowned by a spiked *kalasa* enclosed within a lotus bud [Fig 49]. The horizontal curved cornice motif in plaster is repeated at regular intervals all the way up to the receding towers [3].

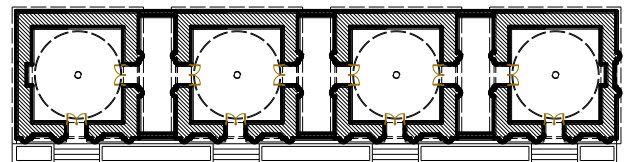


Fig 48 | Plan of the Shiva Temple

The other group which consists of three pyramidal *rekha* temples (main temple) is crowned with pinnacles. The *shikaras* consists of four receding tiers. The first one is a dome shaped Bengali roof and remaining three of which are the North Indian *pida* type, all capped by a lotus finial [3].

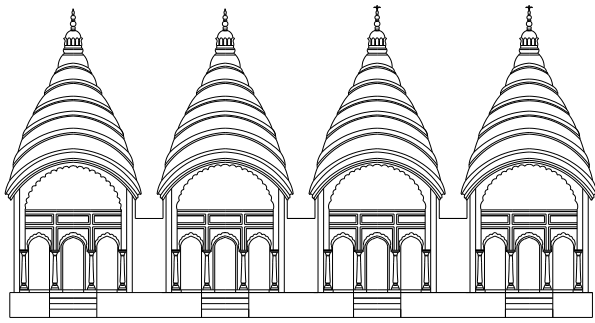


Fig 49 | Elevation of the Shiva Temple

The south facing main temple stands to the north of the *nat-mandir*. It is a three-roomed structure with a veranda having beautiful wooden doors with curving of different motifs of sculptural and floral. The rectangular veranda is entered by three slightly pointed multi-cusped arches on three heavy pillars [Fig 50]. The central room attached to that veranda has a vaulted roof and the side rooms are covered with flat roof on wooden beams. The spandrels of the arch in the central room are decorated with six lions. Marlon decorations are placed above the curved cornice. The three rooms of the main temple are crowned with domical-*sikhara* roof; the *sikhara* over the central room is much higher and bigger than the flanking ones [Fig 51]. The roof over each room is constructed in four gradually receding tiers, the lowest tier has a somewhat *chau-chala* look, and the upper three appear to be in the shape of north-Indian canopies. The two side-rooms of the central temple contain black basalt *shiva-linga* [Fig 52].

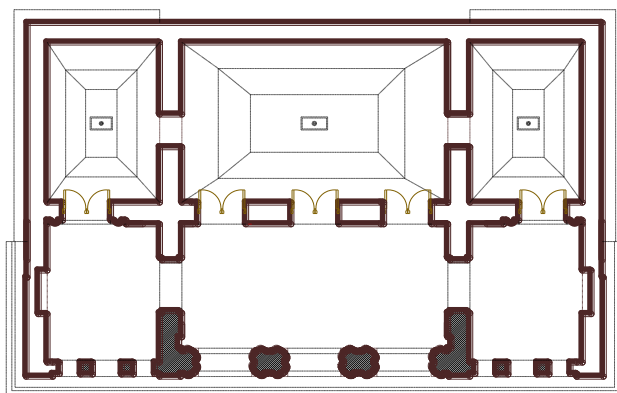


Fig 50 | Plan of main temple

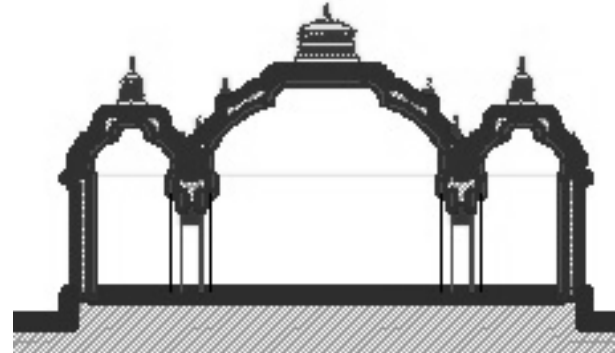


Fig 51 | Section of main temple

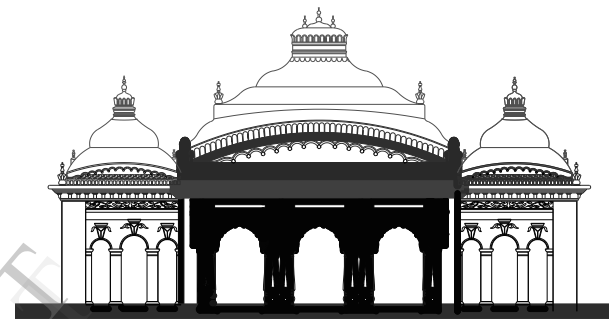


Fig 52 | Elevation of main temple

7.6.4 Present Condition

In 1971, during the liberation war, the Dhakeshwari temple had gone through several invasions. As a result, the temple has to renovate after the independence. The renovation process took its toll by diminishing almost all its original architectural characteristics. During this renovation process the temple was colored with a combination of pink and red which destroys its original character..



Source: http://www.mashpedia.com/Dhakeshwari_Temple

Fig 53 | Present condition of Temple

Though the temple has been maintained properly, but its original color, texture has been lost in many ways [Fig 53]. Fortunately, it still is considered an essential part of Dhaka's cultural heritage and the government also recognized that by renaming that as *Dhakashwari Jatiya Mandir* (National Temple). Now it is a hub of socio-

cultural as well as religious activity such as each year the largest celebration of Durga Puja (the most important event in the Bengali Hindu calendar) in Dhaka is held there. The *Janmashthami* [Day of the Lord Krishna's birthday] procession also starts from Dhakeshwari temple

8 Conclusion

Buildings and monuments are the products of accumulated wisdom expressed through the language of space and form. These symbolize a particular civilization, a significant development, or a historic incident and become significant in our culture and national life. Architecture is the common denominator between generations of people, a common means of communication with the tradition and heritage of a nation. It is the moral obligation of a nation to preserve this rich inheritance, held in trust for the future generations. Preservation of architectural work is, therefore of immense importance, for a society that values its past and cares for the posterity [13]. The discussion will mainly give direction to provide a baseline data, information and documentation to identify historical temples of the Dhaka followed by regional architecture influenced from Islamic period. Thus bring the temples to limelight to make people aware of the conservation and restoration of this historic heritage, which has particular value in temple architecture of Bangladesh and is now going into obscurity. In the surveyed temples, most failures of old fabric are resulting from lack of maintenance or inadequate protection from the disastrous elements. After liberation war most of the temples remain unused due to the reduction of percentage of Hindu community in Dhaka city. Beside these, inappropriate repairing methods and materials used to protect damages, often contribute to the deterioration and loss their originality. It is extremely unwise to use modern, harder setting types in repairing work. It is therefore of prime importance that, the material used for plastering should match as nearly as possible to the nature of the old work [14]. As conservation is still a relatively new concept in Bangladesh, people have less attention to conservation and restoration works. If these temples are not immediately taken under conservation process, the temples and also with the nation will lose their originality very soon.

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