

**BANGLADESH  
FOLK ART & CRAFTS  
FOUNDATION**

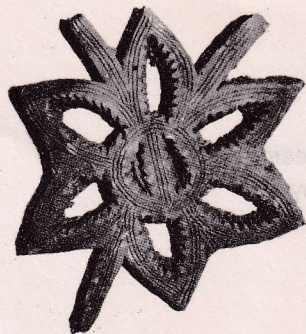


**SONARGAON, DACCA**



Prayer Mat ( Chuni ), Noakhali

BANGLADESH FOLK ART &  
CRAFTS FOUNDATION



SONARGAON  
DACCA

Bangladesh Folk Art & Crafts Foundation  
Publication Series—No—4

Published by  
Shafiqul Ameen  
Executive Director  
Bangladesh Folk Art & Crafts Foundation

Cover Design  
M.A. Qayyum

Publication Date—1979

Printed by BRAC Printers

## PREFACE

Just after the liberation war and the achievement of Independent and sovereign Bangladesh, Our language and culture attained its due status and right as a natural truth. In the wake of the genesis of Bangladesh in the social firmament of our geographical entity, the necessity for the quest for our heritage with a view to develop our language and culture was deeply felt.

Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation which came into being with the objective of looking back to our past and preserving our tradition, has been ceaselessly making its efforts to live up to the expectation. Efforts have been made to collect the various specimens of our Folk Art and Crafts and revitalise the existing utilitarian artforms still in use and practice by the common man in our Vast country side.

With this end in view Foundation arranged a seminar on 18th June 1979. Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haq an eminent linguist, Scholar and ex-Vice-Chancellor Jahangir Nagar University was supposed to attend the seminar as a chief guest. Due to illness he could not attend the seminar.

Mr. Syed Mahbub Alam Asstt. Director of Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation prepared the seminar paper on Foundation's aims, objects and future programme. This seminar paper was duly accepted by the Scholars.

Shafiqul Ameen  
Executive Director  
Bangladesh Folk Art & Crafts Foundation

# Folk Art Museum and Crafts Village 'Miniature Bangladesh'

Syed Mahbub Alam

The cultural base of Bangladesh has grown on the foundation of village-oriented popular festivals and folk arts and crafts.

The human society of eternal Bengal has kept alive this folk culture. The society in our country mainly comprises of the people of our villages. This society is also the controlling factor of the national cultural trend of Bangladesh and a vehicle of our nationalism. From the everyday living of this society to the methods of harvesting, way of eating and drinking, games, popular festivals, poetry, literature, acting, dancing, painting, sculpture, handicrafts, dress, ornaments, pottery, terracotta, dolls, embroidered quilts, fans, matress, earthen lids, wall paintings ornaments brass wares, musical instruments-all these are folk arts and crafts which are assets of our culture.

Artisans and craftsmen of these folk arts and crafts are all unlettered ordinary people of our villages.

These folk arts and crafts were not created simply out of the creative urge, rather from the necessity of survival in everyday life as in the interval of work, ordinary people of the villages have created these folk arts and crafts. Beauty and subtlity have appeared in these folk arts and crafts by themselves. These folk arts and crafts are the cultural heritage of eternal Bengal-main driving force in building up of nationalism of Bangladesh.

Industrialisation and improvement of communications created tremendous influence throughout the world. Urbanisation have been rapid. Gradually the storehouse of world folk culture is being depleted.

Though comparatively late, not unlike other countries Bangladesh is also being influenced by the urbanisation. The rich heritage of Bangladesh culture is being distorted and destroyed slowly.

Under the circumstances, to save the cultural resources of Bangladesh, its folkarts and crafts from complete destruction, it became necessary to collect, preserve and revitalise them and in 1975, with the great endeavour and sincere effort of shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, Government established Bangladesh folk arts and crafts foundation in historical Sonargaon, which was the 14th century capital of Bengal and was famous for Muslin and other crafts. The object of the Foundation is to establish and propagate the heritage of folk arts and crafts of Bangladesh in the present day Bangladesh and the world.

The Foundation has taken up the project of the Folk arts and Crafts Museum and Crafts village-Miniature Bangladesh to collect, preserve and revitalise specimens of folk arts and crafts. The work of the folk arts and crafts museum has already been started.

The Foundation has created opportunity of direct introduction of the rich cultural heritage of Bangladesh to its people and the people of the world by exhibiting the specimens of folk arts and crafts collected in its museum.

The real picture of the social, economic and cultural state of the village-based society of Bangladesh will be found in the specimens of folk arts and crafts collected at the museum. In addition, the struggle for survival and the pleasing aesthetic taste of people is reflected in these folk arts and crafts.

The colour, form, design, beauty, and subtlety reflected inevitably in these specimens of folk arts and crafts will be considered as a sample of healthy, powerful and ideal teaching for the present-day society of Bangladesh.

The programme of the Foundation shall not be limited to exhibition of the specimen of folk arts and crafts, alone, rather in the light of historical evolution of these specimens and in consideration of eternal utilitarian importance of these specimens in modern trend, arrangement will be made for training of folk arts and crafts in crafts village workshops.

It will be possible to offer training in the traditional production and ornamentation method of the folk cultural resources-folk arts and crafts, in these workshop of crafts village.

**As a result workers, students and women after having been trained here will have practical knowledge and**

experience of the traditions of folk culture and this will offer proper opportunities of earning additional income through work during the leisure.

In the project, the main objective of the Foundation will be implemented through programmes in three levels.

**Programmes are :—**

- i) Establishment of folk art museum for acquisition, preservation and restoration of folk arts and crafts.
- ii) Establishment of folk arts and crafts training workshops in crafts village.
- iii) Exhibition, production and distribution of folk arts and crafts.

## **1. FOLK ART AND CRAFTS MUSEUM**

Acquisition and preservation of traditional folk arts and crafts which face the danger of extinction. Make arrangement for its permanent, mobile, educational, and special exhibition and organise folk oriented pragmatic educational programmes at the national level.

The researchers will carry on research to retrieve various informations regarding folk arts and crafts of Bangladesh in order to properly project the traditions of folk arts and craft in Bangladesh both at home and abroad. The result of these research will be made known to people through publications.

## **2. TRAINING WORKSHOP**

The efficient but obscure and neglected artisans and craftsmen of various regions of the country will impart training to the trainees in the workshops in the field of folk arts and crafts. The duration of training will vary from three to six months. In each batch the minimum number of trainees will be twenty. The training schedule will be chalked in such a manner that people can avail themselves of these training during interval of their routine agricultural occupations. At this initial stage, keeping in view the functional aspect, programmes can be started on experimental basis.

These are : 1. Textile (weaving, printing, batik etc.)  
2. Ceramic. 3. Wood carving. 4. Cane, bamboo works.  
5. Jute works. 6. Metal (brass, silver) 7. Conch shell, bone works. 8. Hand made paper etc.



Training in workshops will be offered on the basis of research studies in the Museum. Training in workshops will be given keeping in view the colour, form, design, beauty and functional utility of specimens of folk arts and crafts. Arrangements will also be made for training in special and temporary workshops in places important for special type of folk arts and crafts.

A lot of foreign influence can be observed in much of folk arts and crafts production at present. As a result mere handicrafts are being produced in the name of our traditional folk arts and crafts. The workshops of Foundation will play a vital role through training and production to check this tendency and create healthy and favourable climate for the production of folk arts and crafts.

### **3. Exhibition, production and distribution.**

The training in folk arts and crafts in workshops will also contribute to the production of folk arts and crafts. It will be possible to produce once again those specimen of folk arts and crafts which are no more produced or are on the verge of extinction and preserved in the Museum. The folk arts and crafts production in the workshop will be sold in the sales centre in order to reach these to the common people. The produce of the workshop will set an ideal example in the improvement of production methods of folk arts and crafts as well as maintaining its traditions. The produced folk arts and crafts will also play an important role in identifying difference between the folk arts and crafts and what is mere handicrafts.

The production in the workshop will be able to play a vital role in improving and sustaining the traditional standard of our exportable items of folk arts and crafts.

There are many folk arts and crafts item which are being produced in various regions of the country but these are not known to many a people. These will be on display at the sales centre for sale and distribution and exhibition.

The Foundation will establish the environment of Folk Arts Museum and crafts village in the historic Sonargaon in keeping with natural rural environment of Bangladesh. In all, this will be the 'Miniature Bangladesh'.

In the 'Miniature Bangladesh' covering an area around 50 acres of land, there will be people, huts, trees and

plants, river and canal, tanks, farms and rural characteristics of our typical land.

The regional rural environment including the varied specimen of traditional rural architecture will be depicted in the Miniature Bangladesh to project regional cultural patterns. Besides, there will be a complete representation of tribal life in the Miniature Bangladesh.

There will be an open-air-space in the rural environment for arranging annual folk fair at a national level. The artisan and craftsmen of various parts of Bangladesh will participate in this folk fair arranged in this open air space. Besides, other folk Cultural festivals will be held in this open air space.

In the folk arts and crafts village of 'Miniature Bangladesh' project, the skilled artisan and craftsmen will carry on training in the workshop, and side by side flow of traditional agricultural occupation will continue.

In the Folk Art Museum of historic Sonargaon there is ever increasing rush of foreign tourists and local visitors. Consequently the Miniature Bangladesh, will be an object of attraction particularly to foreign tourists. This will offer an opportunity to have glimpse of the splendour of the life of Bangladesh and its people. Here the eternal look of Bangladesh will be found.

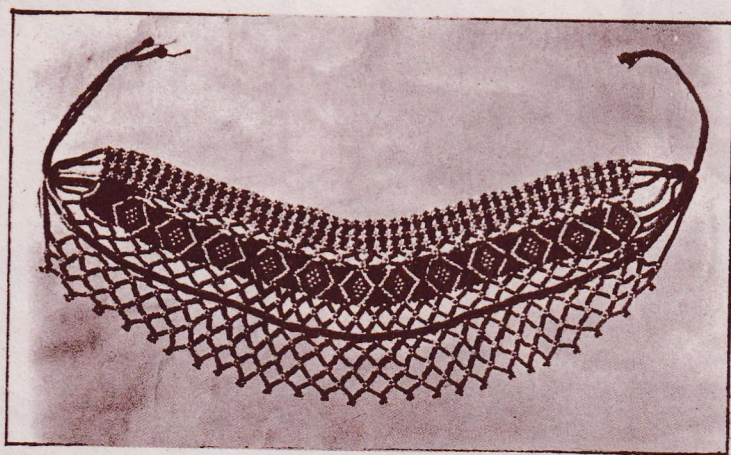
The people of Bangladesh and the outside world will get an opportunity to know the folk tradition of Bangladesh in the Folk Art Museum and Folk Arts and Crafts Village in a rural environment, manifested in the miniature Bangladesh.



Wood Carving ( Sylhet )



Terra Cotta Doll, Dinajpur, Mymensingh



Beaded Necklace, Mymensingh