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Role and Contributions of Bangladesh National Museum in Preservation and Promotion of Contemporary Cultural Heritage and Works of Art

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ABSTRACT

The Contemporary Art & World Civilization Department of Bangladesh National Museum is holding a crucial position in ensuring the preservation and promotion of our contemporary cultural heritage and works of art. This study aims to assess the role and contributions of the Contemporary Art & World Civilization Department of Bangladesh National Museum in the context of acquisition and preservation of history and heritage of Bengal through analysis of gathered artifacts and input from diverse sources, including general visitors, civil society, field experts, and researchers. Additionally, this research seeks to identify potential avenues of future growth and development within the department. Firstly, the matter of expanding gallery space and separating the department may be taken into consideration. The acute lack of space within the main museum warrants a separate building or branch museum to be able to house the large collection of the department. The security devices must also be functional. Secondly, as the research findings suggest, this department houses a considerable number of delicate works of art. Conservation of these artifacts is of utmost importance. Thirdly, the gallery walls of this department require renovation. And lastly, the matter of storage management is of utmost importance. Many priceless artifacts may be harmed after being exposed to elements or due to improper storage management. It is necessary to better equip the storage with relevant technology and train conservation officers in managing them. The findings of this study will offer valuable insights to the general public, civil society, experts, and researchers, and contribute to the enhancement of the department's activities.

Keywords: Contemporary Art, World Civilization, Artifact, Cultural Heritage, Preservation, and Curatorial.

INTRODUCTION:

History does not dictate the enrichment of artistic expressions. Despite Bangladesh's relatively brief history and the challenging socio-cultural backdrop seemingly un conducive to artistic development, the contemporary art culture within the country has undergone a rapid and diversified proliferation. Contemporary art itself is a vast and contested concept; however, its salient feature lies in its apt portrayal of

the multifaceted struggles of our present, unlike classical art which reflects the past. Furthermore, contemporary art signifies a departure from traditional aesthetic norms, emphasizing innovative and original expressions that align with the dynamic shifts observed in the global cultural landscape.

Keeping these lessons in mind, Bangladesh National Museum, as one of the institutions in Bangladesh

engaged in promoting contemporary art, is committed to the developing Bangladeshi contemporary art culture to greater heights (Fairooz *et al.*, 2023).

Having begun its journey in 1975, the Department of Contemporary Arts & World Civilization is one of the four curatorial departments of the Bangladesh National Museum. As evident from the name, this department is responsible for the collection, registration, conservation, exhibition, and research of creative contemporary artwork. In addition to its emphasis on contemporary art, the department also takes on the important role of exhibiting objects of interest from various countries around the world, aiming to provide visitors with a glimpse into the world civilization, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. This department is in charge of managing 9 galleries, among which one is dedicated to showcasing the cultures of different nations, featuring Korean, Chinese, Switzerland, and Iranian corners (gallery, 44). The department's impressive collection of artifacts include works of internationally acclaimed Bangladeshi artists such as Shilpa-charya Zainul Abedin, Safiuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Kibria, Qayyum Chowdhury, S. M. Sultan, Patua Quamrul Hassan, Murtaja Baseer, Nitun Kundu, Sculptor Novera Ahmed and so on. The collection also includes replicas of artworks from renowned artists across the world. Furthermore, the department prides itself on housing a collection of works by contemporary artists of Bangladesh, irrespective of age. Aside from the aforementioned artworks, the collection also includes replicas of celebrated art-works created by renowned artists from around the globe. The department also features original objects of interest representing civilization and culture from various parts of the world, many of which were acquired from the USA, UK, Sweden, Switzerland, Egypt, Iran, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Maldives, Nepal, South Korea, and Sri Lanka. Through these exhibitions, the department is dedicated to fostering a broader understanding and appreciation of global civilizations.

Review of Literature

Understanding Contemporary Art

The concept of art is a much debated one as well as multidimensional. Mataichi Miya provides a very simplistic conceptualization of art: "the thing that looks Art to a person who thinks that it is Art, is Art" (Miya, 1923). According to Islam, (1985:9), art is a

way for people to express their thoughts and feelings spontaneously. Artists aren't restricted by rules when creating, and they make art based on their independent choices. Through art, they explore the world and nature in their own unique way, paying close attention to details. Herbert Read, (1968:18) writes-

"All artists have this same intention, the desire to please; and art is most simply and most usually defined as an attempt to create pleasing forms. Such forms satisfy our sense of beauty and the sense of beauty is satisfied when we are able to appreciate a unity or harmony of formal relations among our sense-perceptions" (Read 1968:18).

As per Casella and Kincaid, (1922)'s observations, art is an existence that incorporates both material and spiritual concepts as well as elements that may, or may not, stand the test of time. As the definitions suggest, the concept of art itself lacks any boundary. Anything and everything can become art depending on perceptions. It also serves as free mode of expression for artists. That being said, a question may naturally arise what distinguishes *contemporary art* from traditional or classical forms of art. What purpose does a separation of the category serve? Stallabrass, (2004) distinguishes contemporary art as "a zone of freedom", that is to say, a free realm of traditional rule-breaking. The ever evolving norms of art is an integral aspect of conceptualizing contemporary art. Rhoads, (2010) on the other hand, likens contemporary art to "rouge on the corpse." In Rhoads, (2010)'s opinion, contemporary art is revival of art, unlike how traditional skeptics may think of it. Leake, (2014:24) contends that contemporary art, as the term *contemporary* suggests, reflects on our present rather than the past, unlike traditional forms of art. In her words, contemporary art is about understanding "who we are, who we are becoming, and how to live, know, and act (Leake, 2014:24)." Leake, (2014) also highlights the importance of contemporary art in social engagement through learning and sharing ideas in the form of art, thereby fostering shared learning on the basis of local context.

The broad scope of conceptualizing contemporary art, however, does pose a conundrum for it to be represented institutionally. Larceneux *et al.*, (2016) in their study of the global trend of placing contemporary artworks in museums designed for classical artworks based on a case study of Louvre Museum,

revealed that significant chunk of visitors in their project viewed the initiative in a positive light. Therefore, Larceneux *et al.*, (2016) concluded that incorporating contemporary arts in classical art museums are an excellent way to enrich a museum's quality and collection.

Significance of Contemporary Art

Although it can be argued that essentially every art is contemporary to their own time, Smith, (2009) tactfully points out that *contemporary* does not simply entail blindly adhering to "present" as the idea and elements of contemporaneity has underwent major changes since 19th to 20th century, alluding to a post-modern era of art in contrast to what was considered "modern art" during that timeline. Smith, (2011) explains the idea of contemporaneity in art as-

Art can speak to us, in some special, direct way, about our own experience of living in the present time, of belonging to it, of being contemporary ... When a work of art provokes this feeling explicitly, however, it suggests that it is of our times in some special way ... such feelings of something significant being shared (of belonging to our times) can be vivid, the even-perhaps especially- in cases where we recognize that the work we are looking at has been made by someone with a different perspective on the world today: he or she may be from another country or culture, of a different gender or sexuality, or from an older or younger generation. Nevertheless, a sense of coexistence, or contemporaneousness, is present: we are all in these times together, however differently. We are, in a word, contemporaries (Smith, 2011: 9).

In other words, contemporary art has evolved into a worldwide subculture characterized by the distinct values and discursive frameworks, market dynamics, and institutional repositories (Smith, 2010). Longman, (1960), on the other hand, finds the idea of the *contemporaneity* to be synonymous to *originality*. In his assessment of increasing degradation of art critique criteria, Longman, (1960) asserts that in the past, aestheticism was considered the highest standard in critiquing art. However, the trend of contemporary art is witnessing a growing obsession with originality, ingenuity, and the contemporaneity while subordinating the aesthetic values of art. Shusterman, (1992) points out that the traditionalists who embrace aestheticism are not too happy with this

development, as many aestheticians tend to degrade popular art (contemporary art) as "mindless, tasteless trash" (Shusterman, 1992:167). This is yet another aspect where contemporary art differs from classical art. Contemporary art also distinguishes itself from classical forms of art insofar that it has far-reaching influence in crucial aspects of ensuring social justice or identity formulation, especially in a post-colonial world. According to the Knight, (2006) images or objects as we see in artworks are reflections of their artist's perspective. That is to say, a contemporary artist's work would inevitably reflect the cultural, social, gender, and economic aspects that shape the artist's perspectives. For example, Knight, (2006) cites the work of an African-American contemporary artist, whose works embodies the racism faced by those of color, especially those in American society. In vein and Wilson, (2003) contends that-

Contemporary artworks, artifacts from visual culture, and the theories, ideas, and ideologies that surround them are of our time and they hold the possibility of informing us, more than art and artifacts of previous eras, about our contemporary lives, they probe and problematize contemporary the society, and they raise issues pertaining to our values and our aspirations (Wilson, 2003; Fairooz *et al.*, 2024).

Addressing social issues of our contemporary lives aside, contemporary art may also influence self-determination, as highlighted by Taylor, (2011). In the context of Southeast Asia, Taylor, (2011) contended that contemporary art is neither tied to history nor culture. As a post-colonial region, Southeast Asia's cultural ingenuity and the history had been denied by colonizers as "they found Chinese writing systems and Indian religions, and concluded that the inhabitants of the lands lacked original culture, or that whatever culture they did possess was not theirs (Taylor, 2011)."

The Southeast Asian art, however, has flourished since the colonial era at an unpre-cedented scale, and artistic intelligentsia has moved beyond rejecting western notion of hegemony to engaging in community projects, which according to Taylor, (2011) seeks to undo the colonial map drawn by the west. Contemporary art, therefore, can be said to be an integral element in fostering cultural identity as well.

Evolution of Contemporary Art in Bangladesh

There is little to no history of contemporary art in Bengal as a region. Lack of documentary evidence aside, most of regional examples of contemporary art can be attributed to Indian murals, and Bengal was quite distant from those mural-making regions (see Monsur, 2012). Moreover, the geography of Bengal was far from being optimum for mural work. As such, no surviving evidence remains of the contemporary art ever being practiced in ancient Bengal.

In his analysis the Zaman, (2023:9) categorizes the contemporary artworks acquired by Bangladesh National Museum as belonging to the “modern” period, encompassing works produced since the 1930s. Bangladeshi contemporary art culture is the significantly defined by influential artists from the recent past, including figures such as ZainulAbedin, SM Sultan, Shahabuddin, Hashem Khan, and Novera Ahmed, among others (Zaman, 2023). All of them are graduates or students from Calcutta Art College and following the partition, pioneered the way for contemporary art in Bangladesh (then known as East Pakistan). As Hoque, (2003:10) pointed out, even after foundation of an art institute in Dhaka by the Zainul Abedin and his compatriots, post-partition East Pakistan was a society greatly incompatible with artistic pursuits, with no patron or connoisseurs of art. Zaman, (2023) observes that the Bangladeshi contemporary art, in contrast to its Indian counterpart, has received comparatively limited recognition and support, which Zaman, (2023) characterizes as being given a metaphorical “cold shoulder,” thereby hindering its exposure. The question then arises as to why Bangladeshi contemporary art was not given adequate recognition. As Zaman, (2023:12) points out-

In any artscene, the promotion of art needs an intellectual armature built around the past and the emerging trends to create grounds for all kinds of objective/subjective accounts of art, which are the products of subjective structure developed in a given social matrix ... Every the Indian piece represented in the Whitechapel catalogue, by their master artists accompanies a small descriptive note, Each text, extracted from a book or from journals such as *Modern Review* or *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, complements the work by providing key information. Artworks of the three Bangladeshi moderns [Zainul Abedin,

Shafiuddin Ahmed and Quamrul Hassan] had no such textual accompaniments. (Zaman, 2023: 12).

As the Zaman, (2023)’s analysis reveals, academic pursuit in contemporary art had been lacking in the newly partitioned East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. With delayed infrastructural and the institutional development in art, such rigorous academic pursuit of Bangladeshi contemporary art had been a difficult feat to achieve, which in-turn, cast a shadow over the growth of Bangladeshi contemporary art. According to Monsur, (2007), the growth of contemporary art in a post-colonial Bengal was further stunted by not only the lack of institution and equipment, but also limited professional career prospects in art. As such, Bangladesh’s trend of contemporary art evolved through a series of cultural and political revolutions and societal upheaval, which is reflected through the artworks of Bangladeshi contemporary artists. Kamal, (2010:29) wrote that “the more tangible the art, the more consumers, abstract art has fewer consumers”, a trend that can be said to be particular in the arts of Bangladesh. Instead, Bangladeshi contemporary artists frequently adopt allegorical themes to depict struggles and various aspects of daily lives of Bangladeshi people. As Sunderason, (2017) writes from her experience of viewing the *Nabanna*, a painting of harvest by ZainulAbedin-

Intertwined with the lines of loss, return, sowing and reaping in the scroll, are narratives of East Pakistan’s continuing struggle for selfhood that sought time and again to wrestle self-determination from its federal centre in West Pakistan. The milieu of the exhibition was that of an accelerating momentum of popular struggle. Sunderason, (2017)

Monsur, (2012:19), in his analysis of the Zainul Abedin’s artistic philosophy, asserted that unlike western naturalism, Abedin’s philosophy was more in line with realism, although he external appearance of objects were far from being his focal point. Instead, Zainul Abedin sought to understand the very nature of the subject of his art, which Monsur, (2012) termed as “innate truth” of the object. As such, it can be said that that Zainul Abedin’s artwork seeks to place the subject of his art in a well-understood, the personalized context that reflect his views (Monsur, 2012). Although initially an apolitical artist, the aftermath of the great famine in

1943 saw a drastic change in Zainul Abedin's style, as his following works were imbued with the underlying political insinuation (Hossain, 2016). Although credited as the pioneer of modern, contemporary art in Bangladesh, Zainul Abedin is far from the only artist in this regards.

Quamrul Hassan is another trailblazer of contemporary art in Bangladesh. As articulated by Huq, (1998:100), in painting the poster featuring the monstrous likeness of Pakistan Army Chief General Yahya Khan, *Patua* Quamrul Hassan demonstrated not only a profound imaginative capacity and adeptness in employing pen and brush but also an unparalleled depth of antipathy towards the adversary. The artist successfully infused the portrayal with a fervent indignation that resonated with each observer, and the resulting posters, conceived by various artists, emerged as potent and sophisticated instruments during the liberation war, with particular emphasis on the incendiary nature of the singular depiction of General Yahya Khan (Huq, 1998). Jahangir, (1993:14-15) evaluates Quamrul Hassan's unique art style as one based on his the personal experiences of rural life, albeit somewhat different from ZainulAbedin's. Instead, Jahangir, (1993:14-15) argues that Quamrul Hassan's art style reflected his orientation toward the *Bratachari* movement, a culture that rejects colonial urban culture. In other words, Quamrul Hassan's arts evoke a pre-colonial nostalgia and serves as a reminder of Bengali past. Therefore, Jahangir, (1993) concludes that Quamrul Hassan's works draw inspiration from the ingenuity of Bengali folk arts. Although Quamrul Hassan was an artist adept at blending both eastern and western as well as folk and modern styles of art, he harbored a natural affinity for traditional aesthetics (Huq, 2003). There are also artists like S.M. Sultan and the Mohammad Kibria who must be mentioned. Although S.M. Sultan spent nearly his entire life as a wanderer and generally painted based on his observation of artworks of masters, he himself developed a distinct style of his own, that is, his inherent restlessness was reflected in his work, most of which has a "fast-moving, sketchy character (Khan, 2003)."

He also took very little time to complete his artwork (Khan, 2003; Biswas, 2013). According to Biswas, (2013), *pataart* is one of the oldest form of Bengali art, and S.M. Sultan was the one who first groomed himself in this form of art. Then there is Mohammad Kibria, whose distinctive style is color (see Islam,

2004). Kibria favored the emphasizing colors and according to Islam (2004), Kibria believed colors should exist as an independent entity. Kibria's theme of art has always been nature. Unlike his contemporaries, Kibria's works never expressed his thoughts, rather it revealed his habitual aloofness and self-delineation. Another name that must be mentioned is that of Safiuddin Ahmed. Safiuddin Ahmed is credited as the pioneer of printmaking in Bangladesh in an era where paintings and sculptures were considered mainstream forms of art (see Som, 2007: 299). According to Som, (2007) Ahmed's choice of using printmaking as his primary mode of artistic expression in that era and the context had been a revolutionary one, which eventually inspired many artists across the subcontinent to take up printmaking in times to come. These first generation artists who paved the way for contemporary art in Bangladesh had simultaneously not only enriched the country's artistic resources in a short span of time, but also left behind the legacy of a distinctive artistic culture for a country with no art history to speak of.

METHODOLOGY:

Research Objective

This study aims to assess the role and contributions of the Contemporary Art and World Civilization Department of Bangladesh National Museum in the context of acquisition and preservation of history and heritage of Bengal through analysis of gathered artifacts and input from diverse sources, including general visitors, civil society, field experts, and researchers. Additionally, this research seeks to identify potential avenues of future growth and development within the department. The findings of this study will offer valuable insights to the general public, civil society, experts, and the researchers, and contribute to the enhancement of the department's activities.

Method

This study adopts a comprehensive analytical approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods to the delve into the underlying meanings and concepts associated with the main issues. The primary data sources include interviews with museum visitors, focus group discussions involving visitors and stakeholders, and key informant interviews with experts and specialists. Secondary data sources consist of museum visitors' comment books, previous stakeholders' opinions, and com-

ment books from mobile exhibitions. An inductive thematic approach was employed to analyze the data and derive research outcomes. Additionally, quantitative data were analyzed using the statistics soft-

ware SPSS. The data collection methodology has been outlined in the following map.

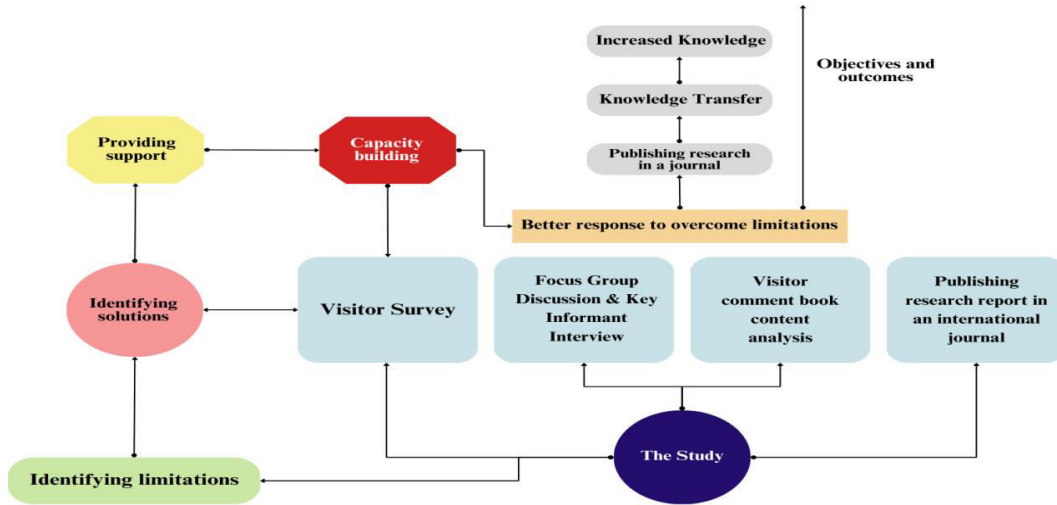


Fig. 1: Expected outcome of the study.

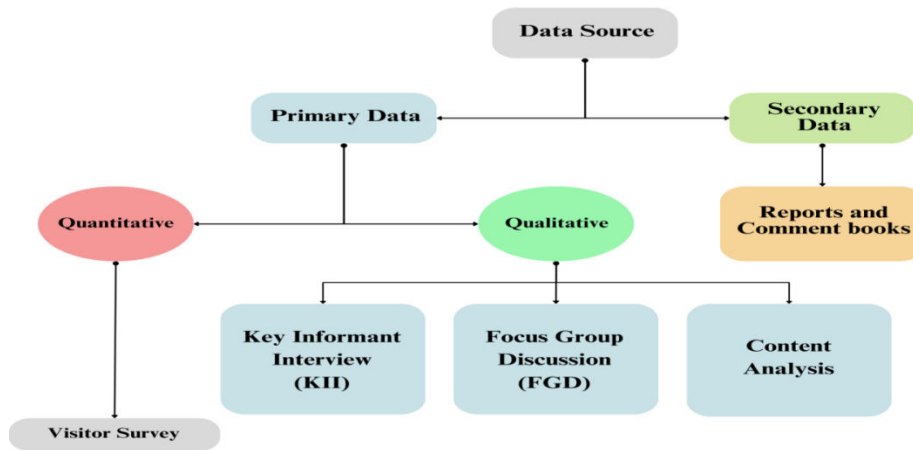


Fig. 2: Data Collection Methodologies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Popular Work of Renown Artists:

In evaluation of most popular artwork of Zainul abedin the majority, namely 35% of the respondents, found the artwork the “Durbhikkho” much to their

liking. Among the other works of art, 16% respondents liked the work “Muktijoddha”, 15% liked the work “Gorur Gari”, 14% liked the work “Moi Dewa”, 12% liked the work “Gun Tana”, and 8% liked the work “Jele”.

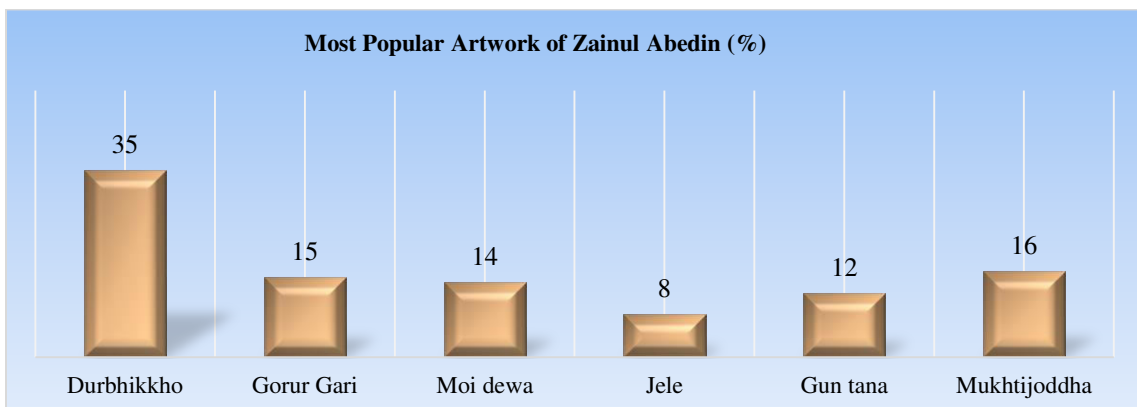


Fig. 3: Most Popular Artwork of ZainulAbedin (%).

In evaluation of popular works of the Patua Quamrul Hassan, 33% of the respondents found the artwork “Tin Kanna” much to their liking. Among the other works of art, 20% liked the work “Banglar Graam”, the 16% respondents liked the works “Banglar Meye”

and “PakhirJhak” respectively, 12% liked the work “Nari o Kalash”, 14% liked the work “Moi Dewa”, 12% liked the work “Gun Tana”, and 3% liked the work the “Akromon”. It is notable that none of the respondents liked the work “Composition”.

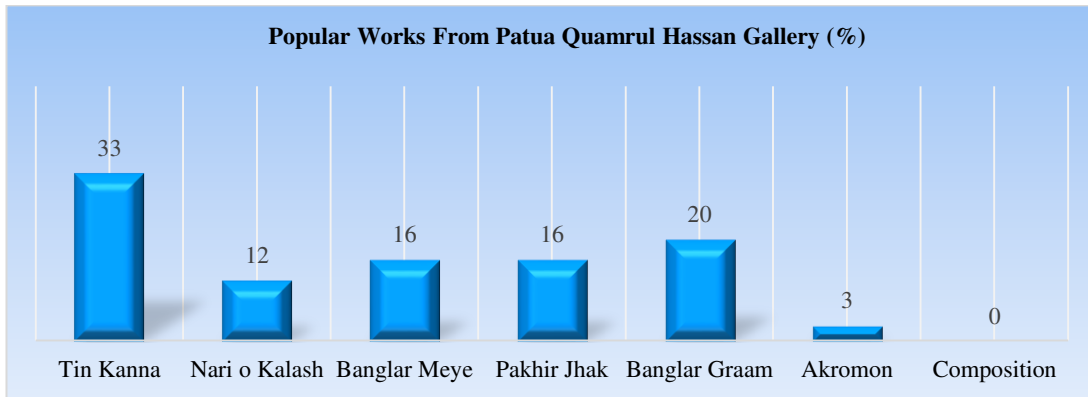


Fig. 4: Popular Works from Patua Quamrul Hassan Gallery (%).

According to the survey responses, 31% of the respondents like the artist Hashem Khan’s artwork “Rickshaw-7” whereas 22% like “Thala-71”. 31% of

the respondents like both artwork. In contrast, 16% do not find either to their liking.

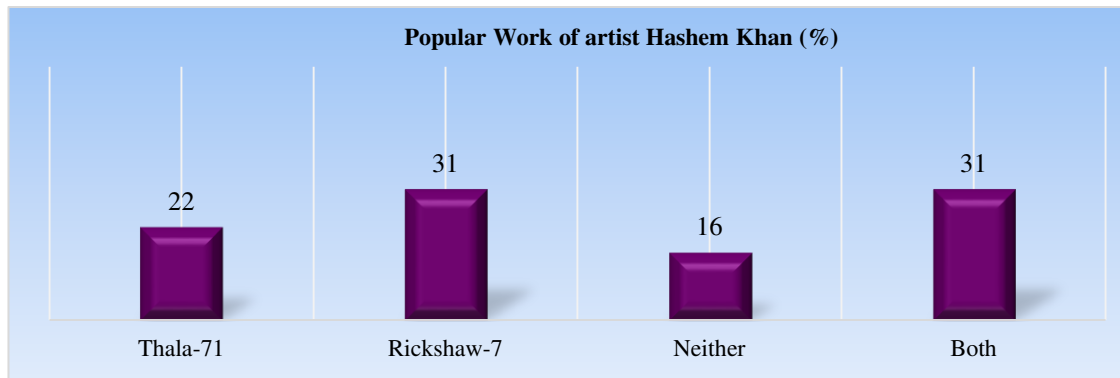


Fig. 5: Popular Works from Patua Quamrul Hassan Gallery (%).

According to the survey responses, 34% of the respondents like the artist Rafiqun Nabi’s artwork “Bhikhari” whereas 20% like “Boro Katra”. 38% of

the respondents like both artwork. In contrast, 8% do not find either to their liking.

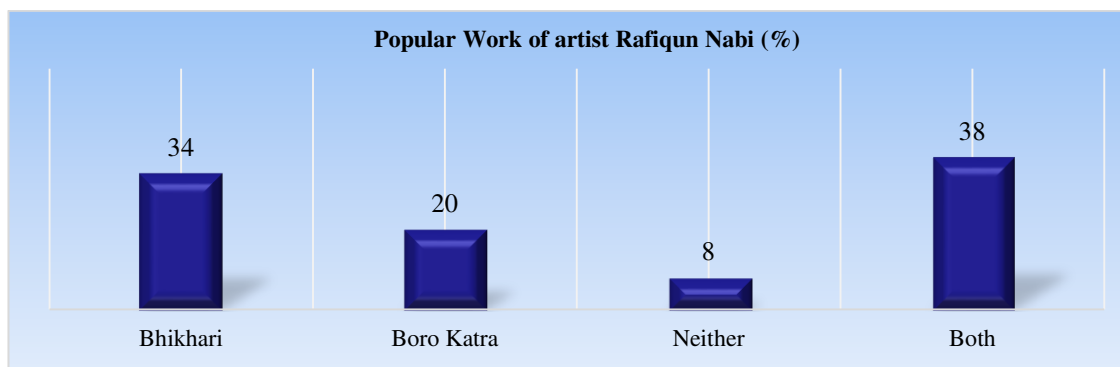


Fig. 6: Popular Work of artist Rafiqun Nabi (%).

Popular Exhibits, Paintings and Sculpture

The survey responses reveal that among the exhibits from the galleries of Contemporary Arts, paintings Universe PG | www.universepg.com

and sculptures are the most popular, with 41% respondents deeming paintings as their favorite and 33% opting for sculptures. Among the remaining

respondents, 21% liked the printmaking exhibits and only 5% liked tappist exhibits.

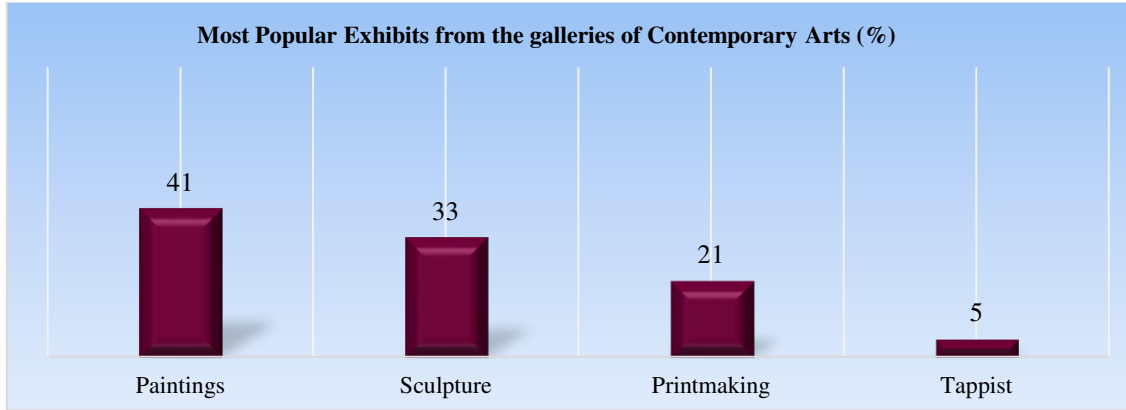


Fig. 7: Most Popular Exhibits from the galleries of Contemporary Arts (%).

The survey responses reveal that among the paintings displayed in Gallery-34, the “Prem o Nari” is most popular among the visitors, with 23% of the respondents marking it as their favorite. 21% of the respondents liked the painting “Nouka”, 14% liked the painting “Chitroshilpo”, and 13% liked the paintings “Ojanta-1977” and “Kalomeye” respectively. 8% of the respondents liked the painting “Nishorgo”, 5% liked the painting “Prokriti-6” and 3% liked the painting “Beijing Opera”.

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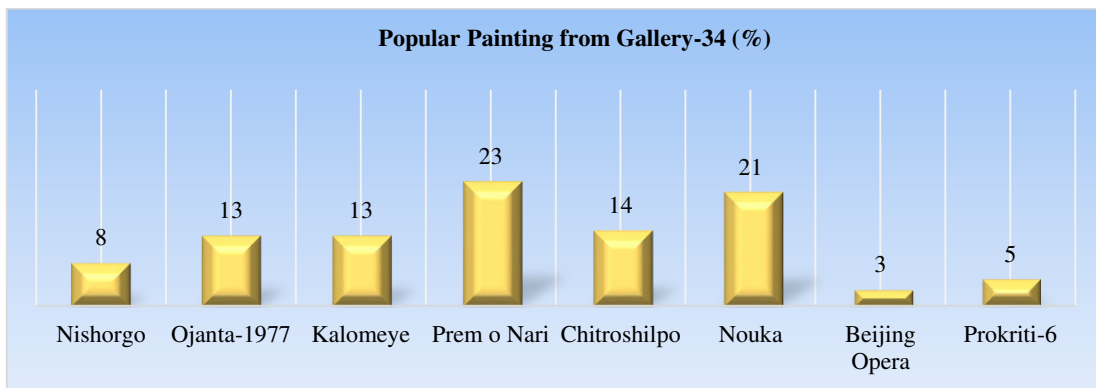


Fig. 8: Popular Painting from Gallery-34 (%).

The survey responses reveal that the sculpture “Shadhidontar Jonno”, from Contemporary Arts-1 Gallery is highly popular among visitors, with 65% of the respondents marking it as their favorite. The sculpture “Chaadni Raat” also received approval of 35% of the respondents.

of the respondents marking it as their favorite. The sculpture “Chaadni Raat” also received approval of 35% of the respondents.

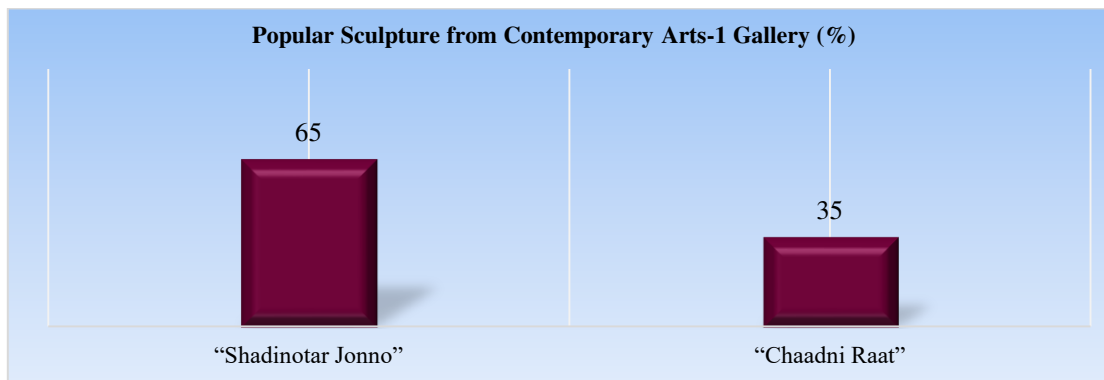


Fig. 9: Popular Sculpture from Contemporary Arts-1 Gallery (%).

The survey responses reveal that the sculpture “Life Cycle”, from Contemporary Arts-2 Gallery is highly popular among visitors, with 53% of the respondents marking it as their favorite. 13% of the respondents

liked the sculpture “Three Figures” the most, whereas 17% of the respondents liked the sculptures “A woman’s figure” and “sitting woman” respectively.

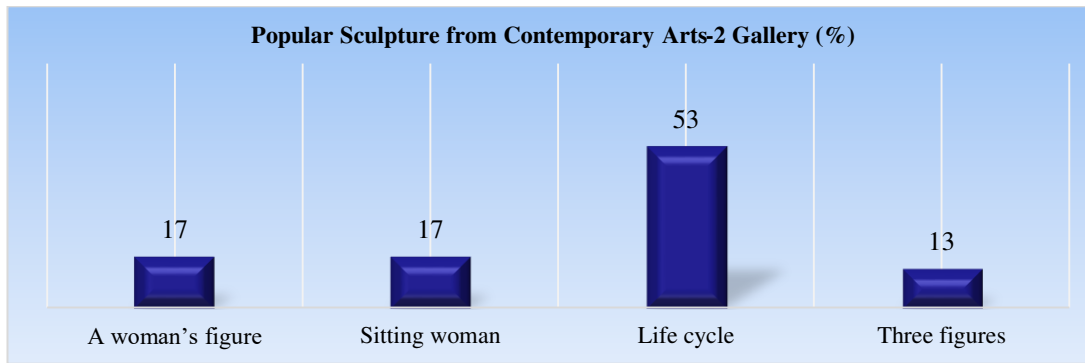


Fig. 10: Popular Sculpture from Contemporary Arts-2 Gallery (%).

Views on Popular Paintings and Sculpture

Views on S.M. Sultan’s Painting ‘Dhaan Kata’: According to the survey responses, 75% of the respondents find the aforementioned painting very much to

their liking, whereas 7% of the respondents deemed it good. In contrast, only 3% of respondents found it somewhat likeable, and 20% did not like it at all.

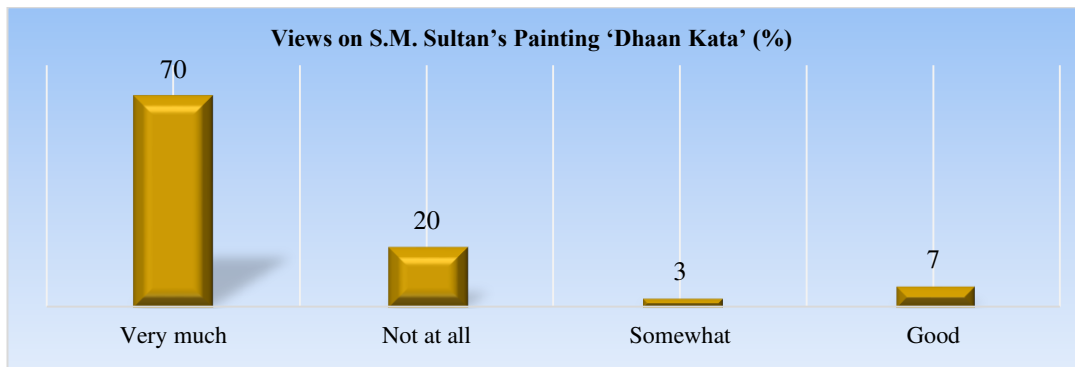


Fig. 11: Views on S.M. Sultan’s Painting ‘Dhaan Kata’ (%).

Novera Ahmed’s sculpture “Poribar”: According to the survey responses, 44% deemed the sculpture “Poribar” by Novera Ahmed to be very good, where-

as 39% deemed it average. On the contrary, only 8% found it to be very poor and 9% had no opinion.

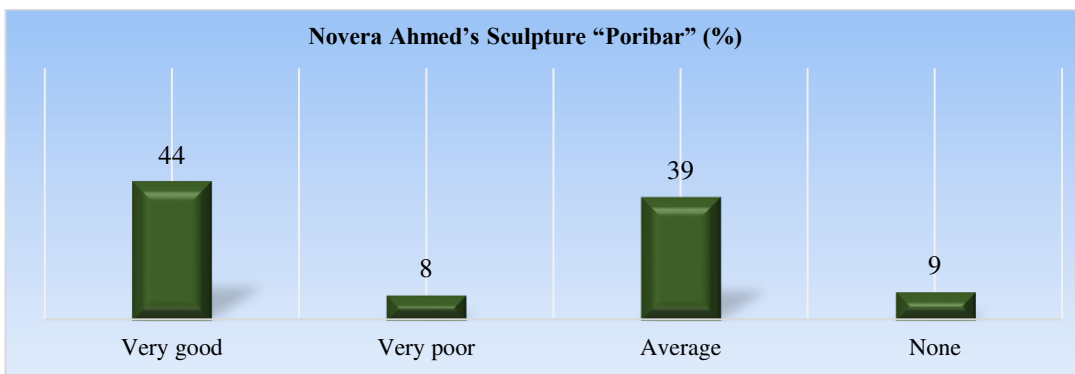


Fig. 12: Novera Ahmed’s Sculpture “Poribar” (%).

Knowledge on the Quamrul Hassan’s Work “Desh AjBissho Behayar Khoppore”: The survey responses reveal that 44% of the respondents are familiar with Quamrul Hassan’s work “Desh AjBissho Behayar Khoppore”. On the other hand, 18% of the respondents are not familiar with the work, whereas 19% of the respondents respectively have yet to see the work or are unaware of it. Views on the artist Quamrul

Hassan’s Painting ‘Maach Dhora’: According to the survey responses, 35% of the respondents find the aforementioned painting very much to their liking, whereas 41% of the respondents deemed it good. In contrast, 18% of respondents found it somewhat likeable, and only 6% did not like it at all. Views on artist Hamidur Rahman’s Painting ‘Nouka’: According to the survey responses, 35% of the respondents

find the aforementioned painting very much to their liking, whereas 41% of the respondents deemed it good. In contrast, 18% of respondents found it somewhat likeable and only 6% did not like it at all.

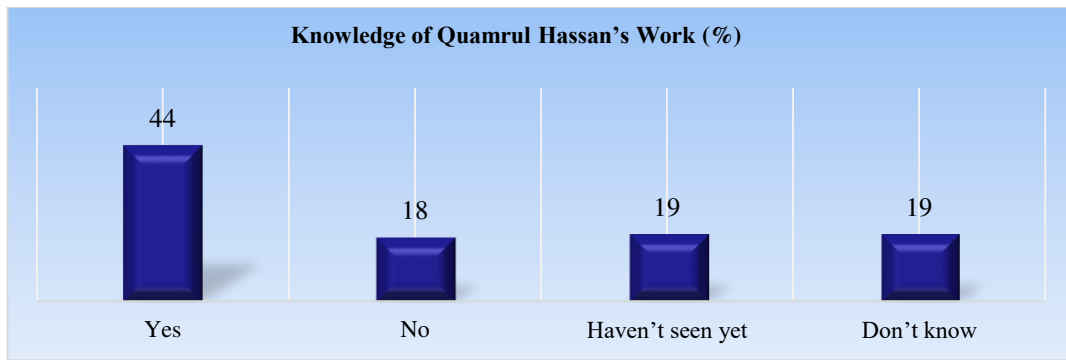


Fig. 13: Knowledge of Quamrul Hassan's Work (%).

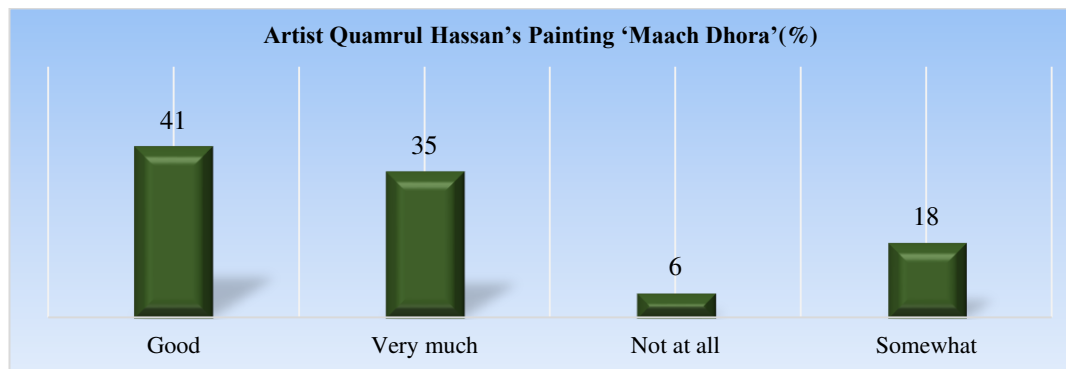


Fig. 14: Artist Quamrul Hassan's Painting 'Maach Dhora' (%).

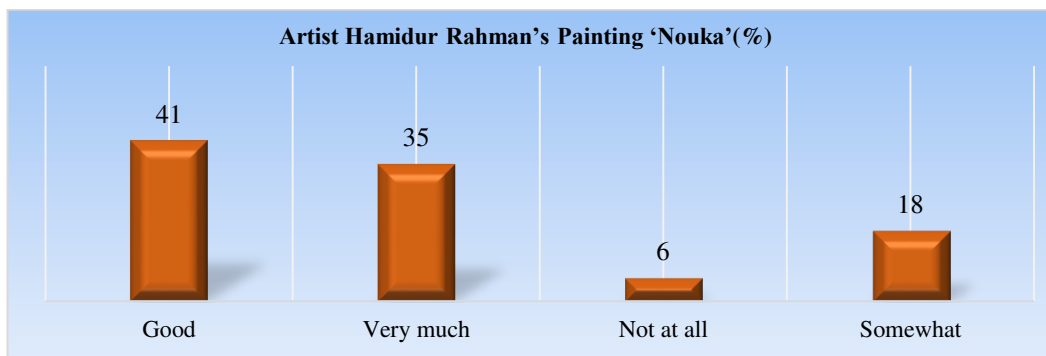


Fig. 15: Artist Hamidur Rahman's Painting 'Nouka' (%).

Views on artist Murtaja Baseer's Painting 'Pakhi': According to the survey responses, 22% of the respondents find the aforementioned painting very much to their liking, whereas 43% of the respondents deemed it good. In contrast, 29% of respondents found it somewhat likeable, and only 6% did not like it at all.

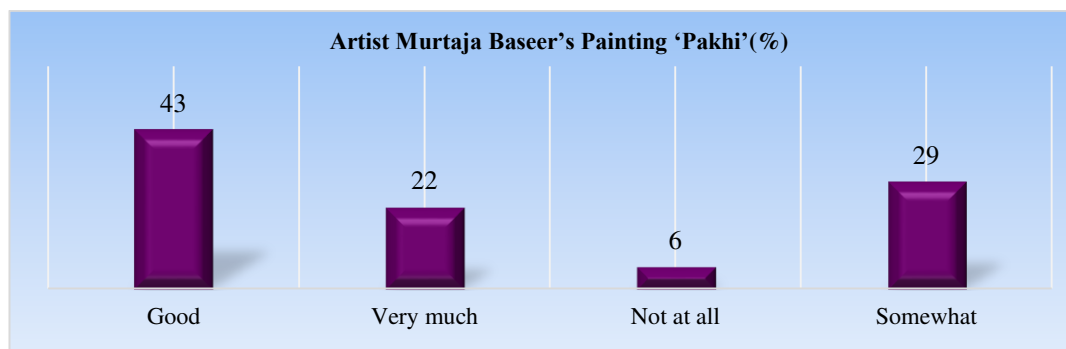


Fig. 16: Artist Murtaja Baseer's Painting 'Pakhi' (%).

Views on artist Tarun Ghosh’s Painting ‘Story of Behula’: According to the survey responses, 20% of the respondents find the aforementioned painting very much to their liking, whereas 35% of the res-

pondents deemed it good. In contrast, 39% of the respondents found it somewhat likeable, and only 6% did not like it at all.

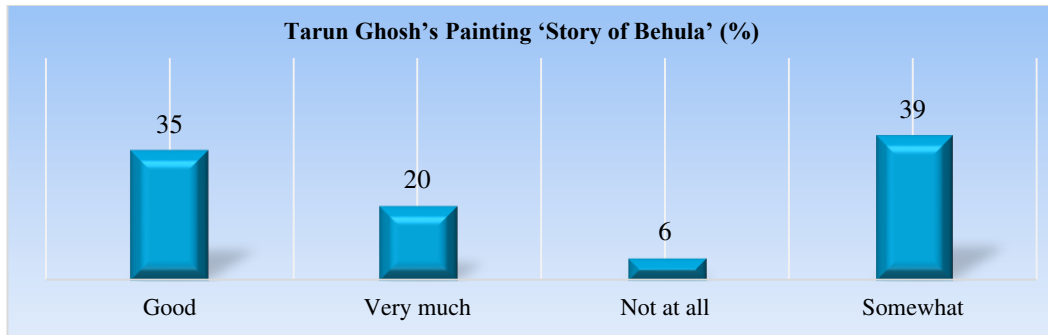


Fig. 17: Tarun Ghosh’s Painting ‘Story of Behula’ (%).

Further Scope of Development: Contemporary Art Section

The survey responses provided the general opinion among the visitors in regards to a prospective new gallery dedicated to an individual artist’s artworks. According to the survey, the majority, comprising 38% of the respondents, requested for a gallery featuring the artworks of artist S.M. Sultan. A signi-

ficant majority, the comprising 28% of the visitors, called for a gallery featuring the artworks of artist Quamrul Hassan. Among the remaining respondents, 17% supported the idea of a gallery dedicated to Sculptor Rasha, whereas 11% called for a gallery featuring artworks of artist Nitun Kundu. 7% of the respondents requested a gallery featuring the works of artist Shamim Sikder.

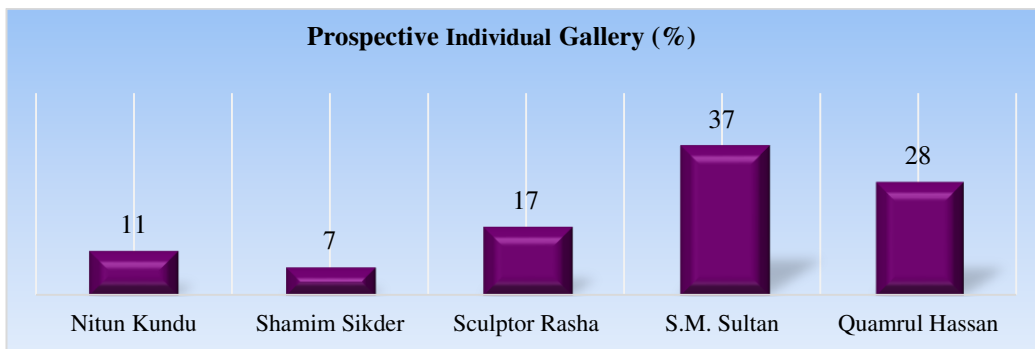


Fig. 18: Prospective Individual Gallery (%).

The survey responses reveal that 43% of the respondents welcome the idea of displaying works of other contemporary artists, whereas 37% of the respon-

dents strongly support the idea. Contrarily, 13% of the respondents find it unnecessary while 7% did not opt for either choice.

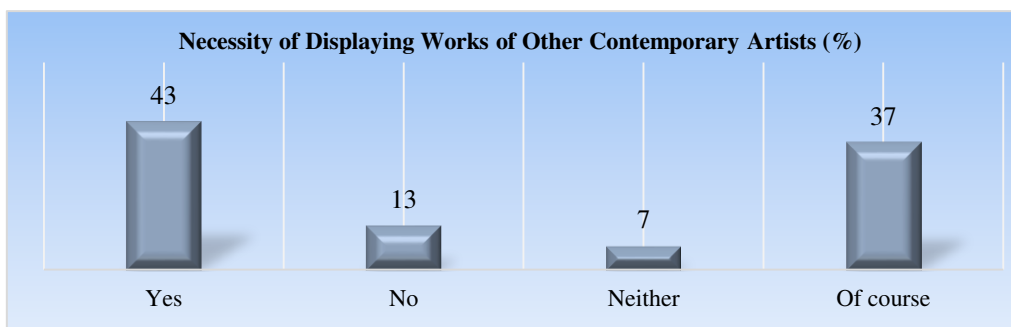


Fig. 19: Necessity of Displaying Works of Other Contemporary Artists (%).

According to the survey responses, 37% of respondents welcomed the idea of having a separate gallery for sculpture exhibition, whereas 29% of the respon- Universe PG | www.universepg.com

dents voiced strong support for the idea. In contrast, 25% were against the idea and 9% supported neither choice.

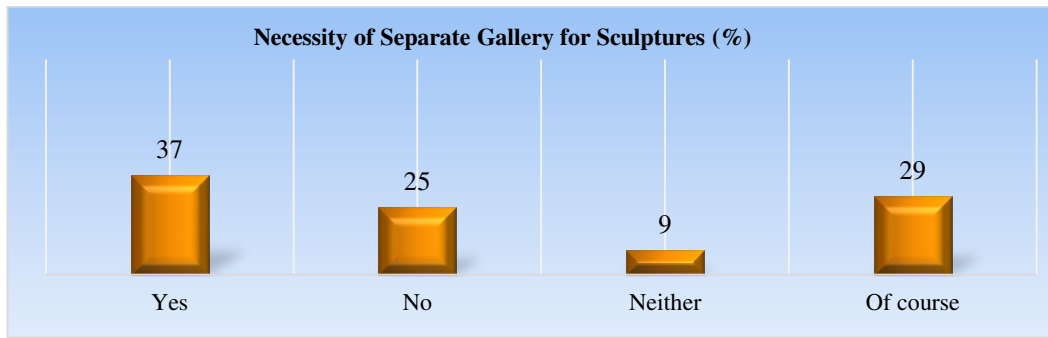


Fig. 20: Necessity of Separate Gallery for Sculptures (%).

The survey responses revealed that 35% of the respondents were welcoming of the idea to transform the open space in the museum premises into a sculpture park. The majority, namely 45% of the

respondents, expressed it to be necessary but did not strongly advocate for it. Only 20% of the respondents found it unnecessary.

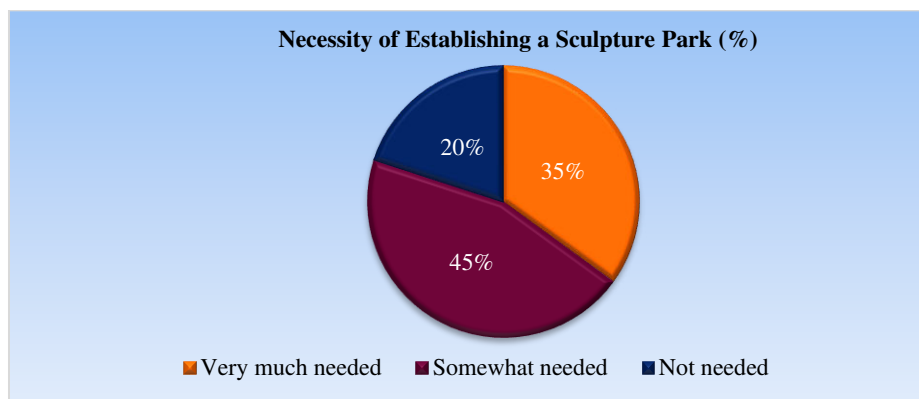


Fig. 21: Necessity of Establishing a Sculpture Park (%).

Popular Foreign Exhibits and Artifacts

Among the foreign artifacts listed in the questionnaire, the survey responses reveal that the “Pyramid fragment from Tосha khana” is the most popular, with 26% of the respondents finding it to their liking. Among the other artifacts 18% liked the “Human skeleton” displayed in History of Human Civilization Gallery, 17% liked the “Hand written Qur’an” displayed in History of the Human Civilization Gallery, 15% liked the “Terracotta army” from Chinese Corner, 12% liked the “Musical Instruments” from Iranian Corner and 6% liked the “Traditional clothing” from the Iranian Corner and “Coins” displayed in Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery respectively.

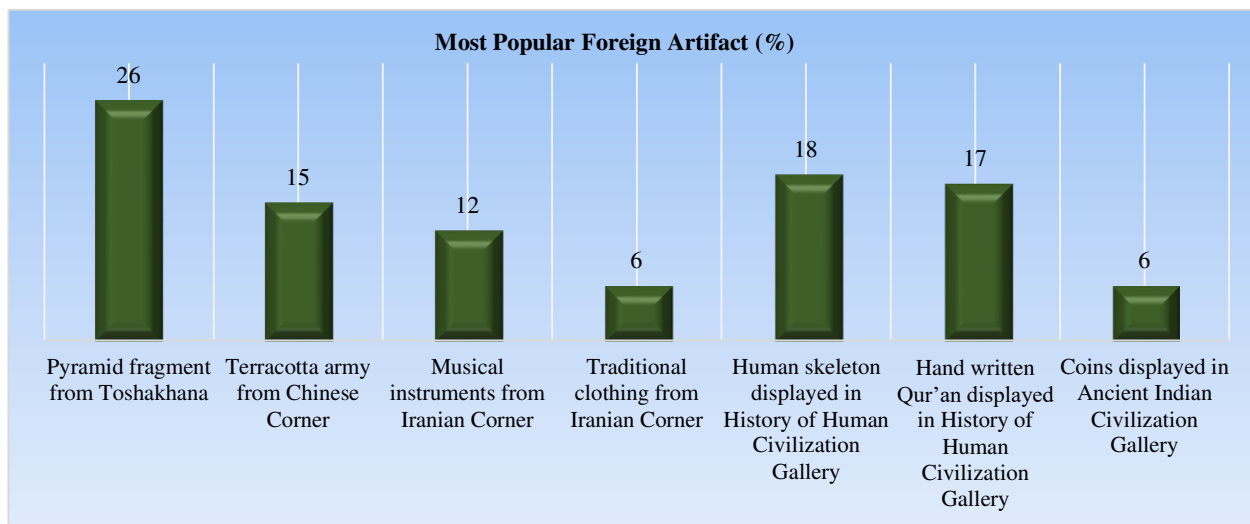


Fig. 22: Most Popular Foreign Artifact (%).

The survey responses reveal that among the 4 foreign corners, the Iranian Corner is the most popular, with 34% of the respondents finding it to their liking.

Among the rest, 26% of the respondents liked the Korean Corner, 23% liked the Chinese Corner, and 17% liked the Switzerland Corner.

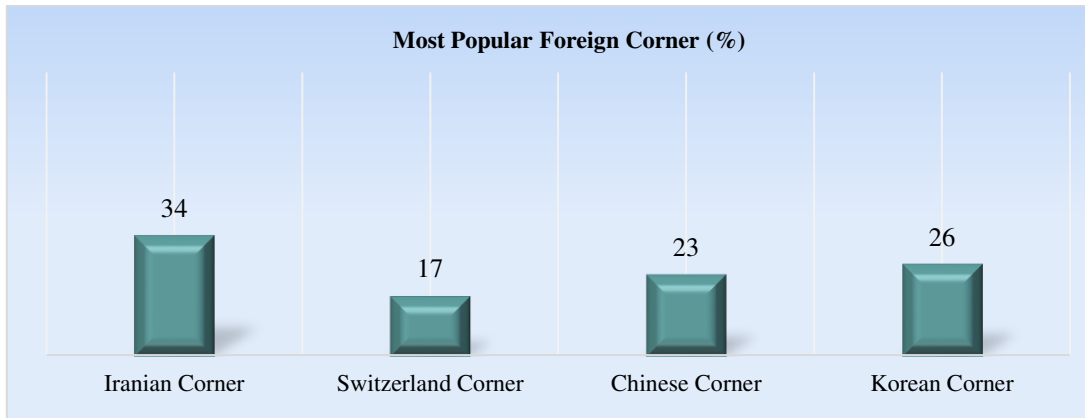


Fig. 23: Most Popular Foreign Corner (%).

The survey responses reveal that 41% of the respondents liked the “honor letter” from the Toshakhana, whereas 37% of the respondents liked the “utensils”.

On the other hand, 13% of the respondents liked the broken fragment of the pyramid and only 9% liked the stone artifacts.

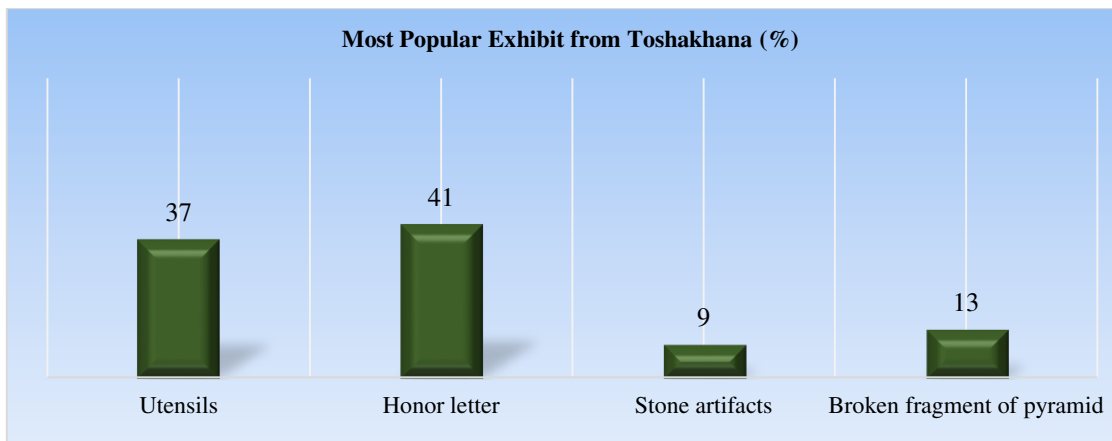


Fig. 24: Most Popular Exhibit from Toshakhana (%).

The survey responses reveal that 25% of the respondents liked the replica of Mona Lisa displayed in the World Civilization Gallery very much, whereas 45% of the respondents deemed it to be the good. On the

other hand, 18% of the respondents did not like the replica whereas 12% of the respondents found the quality to be very poor.

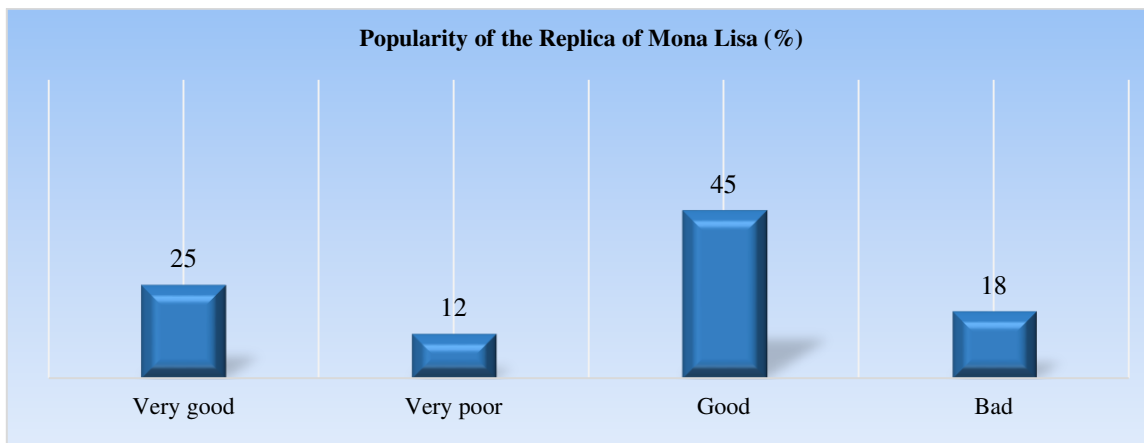


Fig. 25: Popularity of the Replica of Mona Lisa (%).

Further Scope of Development: World Civilization Section

Prospective Additions to the Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery: According to the survey responses, 40% of the respondents suggest adding “coins” as a

new exhibit in the Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery. 25% of the respondents, however, recommend “weapons”. On the other hand, 18% of the respondents suggest “utensils” and 17% suggest “statue” as potential new additions.

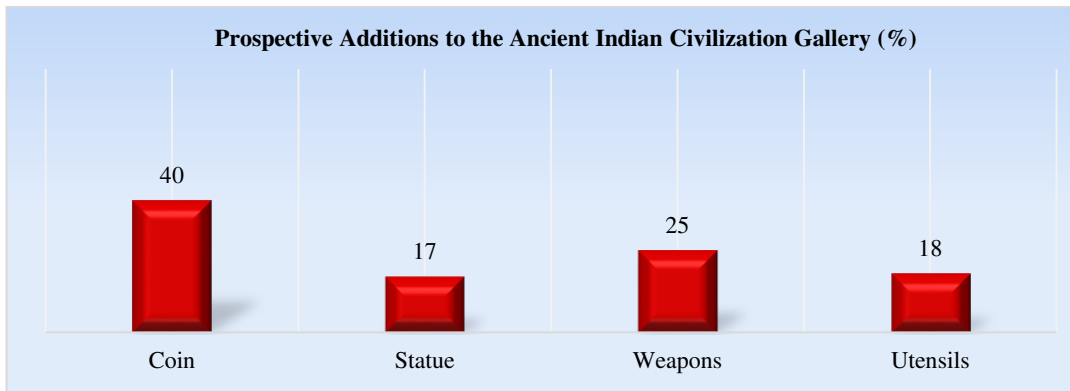


Fig. 26: Prospective Additions to the Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery (%).

Necessity of Displaying New Works of the Western Artists: The survey responses reveal that 43% of the respondents welcomed the idea of adding newer works of western artists in the gallery, while 24% of

the respondents strongly supported the idea. In contrast, 13% of the respondents found the idea unnecessary whereas 20% opted for neither choice.

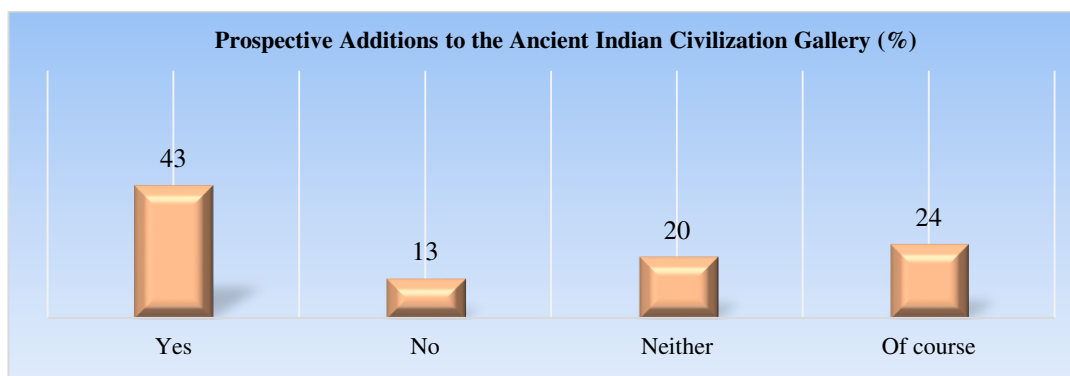


Fig. 27: Prospective Additions to the Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery (%).

Rating the Galleries

The survey includes a segment dedicated to evaluating the visitors’ opinion on each of the gallery managed by the Department of Contemporary Art & World Civilization. The ratings reflect the appeal of each gallery to the visitors, the general perception pertaining to the artifacts displayed within, the facilities, and overall impression as well as any dissatis-

faction a visitor might have after their visits to these galleries. The ratings have been provided in the form of a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to indicate the overall level of the satisfaction of the visitors. A comprehensive summary of the ratings provided by the participants of the survey has been presented below.

Table 1: Rating of the Galleries under the Department of Contemporary Art and World Civilization.

Gallery Information		Rating (Rounded %)					Weighted Avg.
Gallery Number	Name of Galleries	5	4	3	2	1	
16	Contemporary Arts-1	12	38	16	12	22	3.06
17	Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Gallery	11	39	18	8	24	3.05
18	Contemporary Arts-2	7	48	25	6	14	3.28
19	World Civilization Gallery	9	48	25	3	15	3.33
20	World Arts Gallery	12	50	23	3	12	3.47

Gallery Information		Rating (Rounded %)					
44	Korean Corner	13	42	25	5	15	3.33
	Iranian Corner	8	53	27	2	10	3.47
	Chinese Corner	9	52	26	3	10	3.47
	Switzerland Corner	12	53	26	4	5	3.63
45	Ancient Indian Civilization Gallery	10	64	21	5	0	3.79

Based on the weighted average calculation of the ratings for each section, Gallery 45 : Ancient Indian Civilization has the highest weighted average, indicating its high popularity among the visitors, closely followed by Gallery 44 and Gallery 20: World Arts. In contrast, Gallery 16: the Contemporary Arts-1 and Gallery 17: Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin appear to be the least popular among the galleries under the Department of Contemporary Arts & World Civilization. The survey response further elaborates comments from the respondents pertaining to improvements of the museum. The issue of improving the lighting system was highlighted. Some commenters recommended incorporating music in the galleries like in the Asiatic society. Some respondents have emphasized the need to expand galleries. There was also dissatisfaction with the air conditioners.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The research inquiries posited at the initial stage of this paper, the Contemporary Art & World Civilization is holding a crucial position in ensuring the preservation and promotion of our contemporary cultural heritage and works of art. Going forward, aligning with both the survey outcomes and insights from the FGD and KII sessions, this paper outline various recommendations with the aim to develop and expand the scope of the Department of Contemporary Art & World Civilizations’ activities. These recommendations offer avenues for the museum to further excel and contribute to the preservation of our cultural heritage. Firstly, the matter of expanding gallery space and separating the department may be taken into consideration. The acute lack of space within the main museum warrants a separate building or branch museum to be able to house the large collection of the department. The security devices must also be functional. Secondly, as the research findings suggest, this department houses a considerable number of delicate works of art. Conservation of these artifacts is of utmost importance. The galleries of this department, especially the world arts section, lack proper air conditioning. This is harmful for artworks, especially painting. It is imperative to

note that no exhibit should be displayed directly beneath the air conditioner, as has been done with a tapestry in one of the galleries; otherwise they would be exposed to water leakage from the air conditioners and be damaged. Thirdly, the gallery walls of this department require renovation. The plasters have begun to come off in many different parts. And lastly, the matter of storage management is of utmost importance. Many priceless artifacts may be harmed after being exposed to elements or due to improper storage management. It is necessary to better equip the storage with relevant technology and training conservation officers in managing them.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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