APPENDIX-I

Dr. Ganesh Nandi's interview conducted on 24.05.2014

Q.1 What do you think about the existing art and craft of Barak valley?

A. The art and culture of Barak valley has a long past, there are two divisions in art, for instance, folk art and modern art. When and how the folk art had been started in this region, is not sure. But it is fact that it has come into existence along with the different tribes. Barak valley is the land of many tribes. Art and craft of any tribe is the part and parcel of their life and also of social system. All the crafts came into existence for the purposes of daily life. Crafts of various tribes of this region have been receiving good responses now, for instance, the *Dimasa* textiles as well as *shital pati* of Barak are getting good response from outside. Even these art and craft has given the economic support to the natives of this region. The industrial materials strongly influenced the peoples of this valley. Therefore, it is more or less disturbing the traditional art and craft industries of this region.

Q.2 What you feel about the importance of museum in this region?

A. I think museum is the part and parcel of education and any education is not possible without museum. I personally believe on this concept, because if anybody wants to know their history, they must know the background of their ancestors. Museum is such a medium which can tell you about the material culture of different phases of the society. In case of art education the museum study is very much essential. The *Priest Head* and *Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-Daro* are well known for everyone, because of the museum. In contemporary times we are using bronze, but it always gives us the strange feeling, because when we consider the skill-full works of the *Harappa* and *Mohenjo-Daro*, we are easily getting knowledge about the civilization of that period, because of excavation and its preservation in the museums. There are many resources which are available in Barak valley but those need to be preserved in the museum. Last of all, I would like to say that *Barak Upatyaka Banga Sahitya O Sanskriti Sammelan* now making museum in Silchar.

Q.3 Do you consider the bamboo houses of this region as craft work?

A. The bamboo house has its own significance and it is very much attached with this land. Previously houses were the status symbol of the people; therefore they tried to put the more aesthetical touches into their houses. There many designs were used in the ceiling as well as in the walls and those were very attractive and aesthetically pleasing. Besides these the bamboo houses are always eco-friendly. Presently the bamboo houses exist in the villages of this region. This bamboo made houses will be more advanced if the tourism of this valley has grows. At present for the attraction of the tourists we should transform some of the official buildings and guest houses of this valley into a traditional bamboo houses. It is unfortunate for this valley that, bamboo houses of this region only exist as the part & parcel of the poor men's belongings.

APPENDIX-II

Dr. Rajesh Bhowmik's interview conducted on 2.05.2014

Q.1 How the art and craft of North-East India is flourishing?

A. There are many crafts in North-East India. Art and & craft both are distinctive in nature, because the approaches of these two branches are not equal. There are two types of artists who co-exist with each other, the traditional artists and institutional based artists. Crafts exist since the inception of the civilization; craft is a kind of material culture. The medium of crafts has been changed from inception to contemporary, but the usefulness of the craft articles remain same in the every part of North-East India.

Q.2 Is there any dissimilarity in bamboo houses of North-Eastern states of India?

A. First of all I would say that it is a living tradition. In Majuli of Assam state, I have seen that peoples made their house above the ground and the floor is made out of bamboo. The partitions are also made by bamboo and create the rooms, such as, dormitory room, drawing room, bed room and kitchen room. They made the entire floor with square design. This kind of floor has much significance, because during rainy season it is safe from flood as well as from snakes and insects. Even in Tripura, these types of houses are available and these are commonly known as *tong-ghar*. *But* the peoples of plains mostly prefer to use earth as their floor.

Q.3 Sir, I would like to know your opinions on pottery making tradition of Assam and Tripura.

A. In North-East good numbers of potters are surviving. The pots which are used in Barak Valley as well as in Tripura are very plain and simple. Regarding colour, the potters mostly use the natural earth colour which normally comes out as red colour after firing. The pots made by the potters have different utility; that might be ritual and non-ritual as well as it is also seen that some pots have the same shape but their utility is totally different from one another's. The pottery making is the matter of necessity for these states.

Q.4 What do you think about the aesthetic of hand fan and what is the utility?

A. Hand fan is a part of material culture and this fan is not only popular in India, it is equally popular in other countries. Various kinds of hand fans are available in North-East and these all are made out of different mediums, such as, leaf, bamboo, cane and cloth .But their basic utility is same and some of the fans are made in such a manner that move easily as well as some of the fans are non-moveable. The designs made on the fans are usually distinct from one another. To produce a bamboo fan, bamboo strips are put in horizontal and vertical manner, which create an aesthetical looks after weaving.

Q.5 Why motifs and designs are important in textile?

A. Regarding this I must say each community has their separate motifs and designs. Those depend on believes, folklores and tradition as well as motifs and designs are used on the clothes as per the utility of cloths. Every community has separate identical designs and these are mostly seen in a particular area or region. In contemporary times weavers are using traditional designs with modern approaches.

APPENDIX-III

Dr. Meghali Goswami's interview conducted on 9.06.2014

Q.1 Madam, Please give your views on *Assamese* textiles.

A. *Mekhela* and *chadar* are always essential for *Assamese*. Many colours are used on *mekhela* as well as on chadar, which provide the aesthetical looks to these cloths. White colour costumes are auspicious for *Assamese* community. During wedding, bride only wears white and it is also seen that white is also used by *Assamese* when they visit the temple. People use *ga-mosa* in their daily life as well as in the festivals, such as-*Bihu*, it is a seasonal festival. Assamese people celebrate three types of Bihu, those are *Rongali bihu* that is to welcome the New Year, *Bhogali*, it is a harvest festival and then *Kongali, when* the paddy in the fields are in growing stage . *Ga-mosa* is an auspicious cloth used in these *Bihu* festivals.

Q.2 Do you feel any differences amongst Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley?

A. Geologically you can say that these are different, But, Barak and Brahmaputra Valley are man-made words. Regarding costumes I will say, yes there are differences, because in Barak we cannot see the real traditional style of *Assamese*. Because geographically Barak was the part of Sylhet, then it became part of Assam. The entire culture what we see now, this actually the cultural influences of Sylhet and it is very much different from Brahmaputra Valley, because the customs and the dialects of these two valley are different. In Barak Valley the celebration of *Durga puja* is significant where as in Brahmaputra Valley that is *Bihu.*

APPENDIX-IV

Dr. Biswatosh Choudhury's interview conducted on17.06.2014

Q.1 What is the significance of *kantha* in contemporary times of Barak Valley?

A. During the period of seventies/eighties, *kantha* was the part and parcel of every class in Barak Valley. So, it is significant that there were some group of people who were engaged in *kantha*-making tradition. Even I saw those females who were financially poor came to my house and offered *kanthas* to my mother for purchase. Because they were engaged in *kantha making profession and* besides they also carry some designs with them to show the buyers. The peacock and *alpona* with various motifs were popular as design. It is very miserable to say that in contemporary times the utility of *kantha* in town areas are exceptional. Now peoples are mostly chosen the sophisticated contemporary items, but the villages of Barak Valley are still using the *kantha.*

Q.2 Do you consider the bamboo house of this valley as craft?

A. It is a wonderful example of craft work; this craft always carry the scientific essence. The fencing of bamboo house is made with designs and which visualize various patterns. Some time it is also seen that clay and cow-dang are mixed together and create plaster, which is used on the fences for durability. In summer season bamboo house is more suitable because it always keep the inside cool.

Q.3 When *Durga puja* was first started in Barak Valley as public *puja*?

A. It is not possible to say about the year and date when *Durga puja* had first started. It was usually the family *puja* of rich houses and gradually public *puja* started. *Durga puja* required huge amount of money, at the same time man power is equally required, these issues were might be the reasons of public *Durga puja.* As per my study, during thirties one or two public *Durga puja* had started in the region. But it was increased either in the last phase of forties or the beginning phase of fifties. After partition when people were started to come from Dhaka, Faridpur, Comilla and Sylhet then the upsurge of inhabitants might be the one big reason behind the public *Durga puja.*

Q.4 What you think about the role of *Shital Pati* in this region?

A. The *shital pati* is still noticeable in the markets of Barak Valley, for instance- on every Thursday we may observe *shital pati* in Fatak bazar. The role of *shital pati* is more significant in Barak region. During the time of wedding *shital pati* is gifted to the bride as gift as well as the response of the *shital pati* is largely seen during summer season. *Shital pati* is still surviving but practically the utility of *shital pati* is less than the earlier.

APPENDIX-V

Dr. Swapan Paul's interview conducted on 23.05.2014**.**

Q.1 Is there any authentication found in Barak Valley, which expresses about the reality of idol-making practices of this region?

A. It is very difficult to say anything openly, but the place which is now known as Barak Valley was the part of gigantic Bengal and its main centre was in *Sreehatta.* Earlier the present Barak Valley is known as Cachar only. So, we cannot differentiate the social, culture aspects of this valley with present Bangladesh. The culture which now exists in Barak valley is transformed from present Bangladesh as well as the style in idols which now exists in this place is the extension of *Sreehatta's* style.

Q.2 When and where *Durga puja* was first started in Barak valley? Please tell briefly about the involvement of idol makers.

A. The name Barak valley has a very recent origin, as I told earlier its culture is the extension of *Sreehatta* when and where *Durga puja* had started, which is very challenging to find out. But if we observe the culture of *Sreehatta*, then we will get some idea about this present culture. So, as per my knowledge the present idol-maker who are involved in this profession belong from *Kumbhakar's* community, it is remarkable that earlier the *Kumbhakar's* of this valley were not engaged in this profession and mostly they were involved in making boats, houses, *dhekis* and many other things. Those who were involved in idol-making were the astrologers and mainly Acherjee Brahmins; they mainly molded the idols in small sizes.

Possibly during 1907, Dangar Chandra Paul had settled in Dhubhagi bazar of Zakiganj present Bangladesh, it was very nearer to *Kushiyara* River. There he had stayed for few years and seen that the local *Kumbhakars* were basically engaged in making potteries and they were mostly settled from Dhaka and Bikrampur. So, Dengur Chandra Paul had first started idol-making in that place and he was also from Dhaka. During the period the festival of *Durga puja* was not so much popular.

Q.3 Is there any resemblances amongst the idols of Barak valley and the idols of Tripura, West Bengal, Orissa and Patna?

A. In response to your question, here I would like to say also that previously Barak had its own style in idol-making and that style had the part and parcel of folk-art. In undivided Bengal, there were sixty-four types of patterns in idols which were used in idol making. Those patterns were common in Dhaka, Bikrampur, *Sreehatta* and some places of present West Bengal. After partition when present Barak had separated, the inspiration of *Sreehatta* was mostly seen in the idol-making of this region. At present those uniqueness are not possible to find out, because the artisans of this place now moving to other places and the artisans of different places are now coming to this Valley and which create the new aspects in the existing idol-making practices. Therefore, the idols of this valley are practically similar like other places of India. But, the deep-rooted tradition of the idol-making of this valley is more or less exists in few places, for instance, Dullabcherra, Panibhora and Anipur.

Q.4 Nowadays *Ganesh puja* is very much popular in Barak valley, so tell something thing about this *puja*?

A. *Ganesh puja* is always popular amongst the Bengalis of this region, most of the families as well as business houses worshiped Lord *Ganesha* in the first *Baishak (as per Bengali calendar)* and commonly they prefer to use the *Ganesh murti* in small sizes. The *Ganesh puja* celebration of Maharastra now swaying the people of this valley and as a result the sizes of *Ganesha* are now changing very promptly. The enthusiasts now prefer to use large *murti* of lord *Ganesha.* Therefore, the artisans of this region are also making the large idols of *Ganesha.*

Q.5 What you fill about the Lord *Vishwakarma* and his popularity amongst the people of Barak region?

A. *Vishwakarma* is always a distinguished deity in this valley. Therefore the idol maker made variable sizes of Lord *Vishwakarma,* which at all times fulfills the religious aspects of devotes. As well as the seven/eight feet idols of Lord *Vishwakarma* are common in this valley.

Q.6 What is the significance of clay in idol-making practices? How many varieties of clay are available to this valley?

A. Clay is very common and part and parcel of idol-making. The two types of clay are commonly used for idols and these two types are available in this region. Besides these varieties another type of clay is also available. The said clays are known as *Atel-maati*, *Bele-maati and Duas-maati*. Mostly the artisan collects the *atel-maati* from river, lake and from the paddy fields. During rainy season *bele-maati* is found at the bank of rivers. In case of idol-making *bele-maati* with sand is suitable composition to use in idols. The simple straw structure of idol is mostly covered with the *atel-maati*, locally that step is known as *godran*. For the softness of that structure the artisans commonly use *bele-maati*, but it is fact that *bele-maati* could not provide the strength to the idols.

The usefulness of *atel-maati* is multipurpose than the other clay. Therefore in every parts of India, *atel-maati* with paddy dust is commonly applied by the artisans to produce an idol as well as the *atel-maati*, paddy dust and jute is the excessive composition for idol making. This mixed-medium generates the plasticity within the clay, besides that the artisans also prefer to use *atel-maati*, wooden dust and jute. Recently, the few idol-makers are experimenting with the mixer of *bele-maati*, wooden dust, jute and *atel-maati*, because this composition provides the better result in idol-making. The colour of *atel-maati* is gray as well as the colour of bele-mati is like greenish gray. Apart from all the another type of clay is known as *jodra-maati and* this is also prepared with *atel* and *bele*. This clay is mostly used to create fingers.

Q.7 What types of bamboo are used in idol making?

A. Nowadays traditional structure does not exist; therefore the uses of wooden pieces in the structure are now very common phenomenon. The height as well as the dimension of structure depends on requirements of the idols. Usually the *shil boruwa* and wooden pieces are used for the structure as well as *betuwa* and *muli* are used for *chal-chitra*.

Q.8 Which kind of colours and brushes are needed for the idol-making?

A. Previously the idol-makers prefer to use the colours, which were mostly made out of natural mediums. But at present readymade colours are being applied by the idol-makers and the medium of those colours are water as well as chemical. It is also fact that commonly the idol makers of Barak Valley try to avoid the colours, which affects the nature.

Earlier the colours are usually used on idols with the brushes and most of the brushes were handmade. Among those handmade brushes *bhornar-tuli* was very popular. But recently many types of brushes are available in the market and those are commonly used for colours. Along with all the primary as well as secondary colours the artisans usually use *maajan khori* as base colour for idols.

APPENDIX-VI

Sanjiv Deblaskar's interview conducted on.26.06. 2014

Q.1 How *Durga puja* was first started in Barak Valley?

A. Actually, no one has written the history of *Durga puja* in Barak Valley as such. First of all, *puja* perhaps were started in the houses of *Zaminders*. But, before that *puja* had possibly organized in the royal family, regarding this we have seen that the *Durga puja* had started by *Dimasa* king, prior to the capital was shifted to Cachar plains. The capital had shifted to Cachar at around 1745 then possibly we have taken that tradition. A poem related to *Durga puja* has written by Chandra Mohan Barman which also reflects the essence of *Durga Puja.*

It was in my writing that, during the period of 1790-1810 the *Durga puja* in my family had started. Firstly, the *puja* had started without idol, only the *ghat* worships were celebrated. Earlier inhabitants were engaged in idol-making they were not *Kumar*. Later these inhabitants came from Dhaka in around 1930. So there is no local stamp of this valley in idol making, because their idol reflects the pattern of greater Bengal. Earlier Acharjee's were involved in idol-making but it was not their profession, only they produced the necessary idols related to worship. During that period, the main attention was in the aesthetical aspects of idols. Presently, the attentions are in the *pandalls* and others. Therefore, the present generations do not have the idea about the iconographical norms of idol. But the view point of generation of 60's or 70's is different, they are aware about the iconographic aspects. Therefore, at present the iconographic consciousness does not exist more or less.

Q.2 What is the position of *kantha* into this region and what are the similarities between the motifs of *alpona* and *kantha*?

A. It is my observation that before and after the birth of child there is a tradition of *kantha* making and there we may notice the reflection of flora and fauna, flowers, and the reflection of environment. In the *alpona* we notice the footsteps of Goddess *Lakshmi*, paddy, *sastik*, conch, fish, farmer, agricultural equipment and boat. These motifs are more or less seen in the *alpona* of *Durga puja*, *Manasa puja* or the *alpona* of other purposes. The reflection of

these all motifs we can see on the *kantha*. The *kantha* making is still alive in Barak Valley. Commonly after August or September, the villagers start to make the *kanthas*, because in the winter season they have to use the *kantha*, so there is no chance to give more attention in the artistic skill or in the other things.

Q.3 Sir, what you think about the bamboo and its usefulness in this region?

A. In North-East the production of bamboo is very much large and it is mostly available. The land of this zone is very aggressive, because bamboo is rapidly grows in this region. Previously North-Cachar was covered with large number of bamboos, therefore the production of other things were not possible. The North-East region is a dominating hub for bamboo, in North-Cachar and also in plain Cachar bamboo has different purposes as well as bamboo is one of the most important elements for the construction of house. Therefore, in the life of this region bamboo is always an essential medium.

Q.4 There is no such museum in Barak Valley to preserve the existing tradition of art and culture. So, regarding preservation what is your opinion?

A. In the Normal School Silchar there was a museum, still it exists though it is not a living museum, it is a dead museum. Script, art & craft and the other materials were there in that museum. But if one museum is not constantly improved then we should say it as dead museum. Therefore, it is dead; it is not attracting the visitors. Even the belongings are also not properly preserved.

Besides that we all know about the museum of Gurucharan College, Silchar. Mostly this museum is for manuscript, a manuscript collection museum. This museum is up-to-date with all the modern facilities, it could be visited by all, but I have never seen the gathering of the people. In the inaugural ceremony the number of people was there, but there after I did not find the enthusiasm. So there are two museums right at this moment. But we have another provision for museum in the new building of *Barak Upatyaka Banga Sahitya O Sanskriti Sammelan*, Silchar. There we shall try to preserve all these things. Museum is very much essential, because we are losing the tradition. Secondly, not only to carry the tradition, dying art form and dying artisans should be patronized, they should be offered to make their subsistence and create

environment of earning from it. To fulfill these all, museum is essential. We are not museum minded, actually the Indian people are not museum minded, and the people of Barak Valley do not have any concept of museum. So it is needed to be created and I feel it very strongly. Museum is a separate discipline; there are many types of museums. So, numerous disciplines could be opened within the broad span of museology.

Q.5 Do you fill any possibilities of tourism in Barak Valley?

A. There are numerous kinds of tourism; there is a folk tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and much other tourism. Tourism does not mean to visit only the pilgrim areas and towns. So within the folk tourism all the crafts are included as well as the folk tourism visualize all the culture. All the craft of this valley can be related with the folk tourism. So that, the visitors can purchases the local *kanthas*, potteries and the other crafts.

Q.6 Sir, I would like to know your views on *shital pati* of this valley.

A. *Shital pati* of Kaliganj is internationally reputed; I did not have that much of experience. But, only one thing I would like to share that, Syed Mujtaba Ali, around in 1969 was invited from Gurucharan College Silchar and then he had demanded for *shital pati*. The *shital pati* is very scientifically manufactured, when you will sleep on it you would feel like air-condition. The letter of Syed Mujtaba Ali has published in the journal of *Gurucharan College.*

APPENDIX-VII

Dr. Amalendu Bhattacharjee's interview conducted on.25.06. 2014

Q.1 When *Durga puja* was started in Barak Valley?

A. During the period of King Suradarpa Narayan of *Dimasa*, the *Naradiya Purana* was translated in *Bengali;* there *bandhana* of *Devi Durga* was clearly mentioned. Even in the poem of Chandra Mohan Barman, we get the reference of *Durga puja.* The period of Suradarpa Narayan was 1710-1730, that was 18th century. Therefore, we should assume that since early 18th or mid-17th century, the *Durga puja* was organized under the patronage of royal family. The book named '*Cacharer Itibretta',* the list of ritual expenditures of Gobinda Chandra is published, along with other expenditures. That *Durga puja* was expensive is written there. Regarding family puja, right now it is not possible for me to say anything about it. But, public *puja* is very recent origin, in 1833 Silchar town was established and during that period the businessmen of Janiganj had started *Durga puja,* the word *Sarbojanin* was not used during that period, earlier that was known as *Panchayati* puja.

Q.2 Sir, I would like to know your view on the idol makers of Barak Valley.

A. The word Kumar is mainly derived from the word *Kumbhakar,* they are involved in the making process of *kumbha,* means *kalas*. Here it is clear that the people who were engaged in pottery making they were known as *kumbhakar earlier,* which is now known as *kumar* in Barak Valley. In India this occupation is very ancient, Kumar's are not only involved in the making of utensils as well as they are also involved to create the ritual clay objects, for instance , *ghat, chata* locally known as *pradeep* and many others clay items as well. Similarly they are engaged in making toys for children.

At the same time the main profession of Acharjee *Brahmin's* were astrology as well as *kusti* making, which is still being practiced by them. In the beginning of idol-making the *kumars* were not engaged in this profession, only the Acharjee *Brahmin's* were involved in idol-making. Especially, they made the idols of *Manasa, Rokkha-kali and Durga* in small sizes; those were very much popular during that period. *Manasa*-idol has many patterns and designs, one form of idol known as *Ghat Bishahari,* which is only made by the Kumar's;

because here *ghat* means *kumbha*, therefore Kumar's were engaged in this idol making and it has never been made by Acharjee's. In Barak valley *Manasa* is worshiped in many forms such as, the worship of snakes, the worship of female figures and in the form *Ghat Bishahari.* In contemporary times *kumars* have more dominant contribution in the idol making practices of Barak Valley.

Q.3 What is the significance of painted pottery in the rituals of Barak valley?

A. Mainly the potteries which are associated with the wedding must be decorative. There is a reason behind this, because anything painted represents as good fortune. But there is a restriction to decorate with any colours. The black colour is never used on any objects related to wedding ceremony. The bright colours are always preferable in wedding. The wedding ceremony is a remarkable function; therefore the potteries are painted in wedding with various designs and motifs. As well as beautification is the main purpose behind all. There are many references are available in the songs of marriage rituals regarding designs and motifs.

Q.4 *Kantha* exists in Barak valley; the glory of *kantha* was very popular in earlier times. So, what you think about its contemporary status in this valley?

A. First of all, regarding *kantha* I would like to say about '*Nakshi Kanthar Maath'* because this poem has proved the glory of *kantha* of undivided Bengal. The poet Jasimuddin was from East-Bengal, therefore he had good knowledge about this place. Now, in contemporary study of folk-lore there we get the uses of word *Nakshi Kantha* again and again. But perhaps in literature before Josimuddin no one has used this term *Nakshi kantha*. The preservation of *Nakshi Kantha* in different museums is now available, but from our place none has taken the initiative for preservation. Therefore, we do not have any collections of *Nakshi Kantha*. But still in the villages the traditions of *kantha* exist. The depiction of animal motifs on *kantha* might be very simply represented by the artisans but there we find antiquity and which reflect its connection with ancient tradition. I did not deeply study about the *kantha*, therefore which the differences exist in-between the *kanthas* of Hindu and Muslim is not possible for me to say. But, differences between these two communities are very natural, because the religions of these two are different.

Kantha is a part of folk-lore; when the British officials had first started the folk-lore study in India, folk-lore study of this place had also started. In the folk lore study of India William Crooke is a famous name. He had the president of London folk-lore society. For the research purpose of William Crooke, Paddanath Bhattacharjee had started to work in this region. *Sreehatter Itibritta* is the reflection of that, there Achyutcharan had used the local source, which is now known as oral history.

Q.5 Sir, I would like to know about the bamboo houses of the valley?

A. The early literature of this place, especially in the *poothi*, we have seen the description of many houses, houses were identified through their roofs, for instance, *chou-chala, aath-chala and du-chala.* In the architecture of *Dimasa,* we may see the reflection of *chou-chala*. The many philosophical folk-songs have been written in this place; there the body of human compared with houses. There are many designs which are seen in the bamboo houses, therefore bamboo house is a folk-architecture as well as it is a part of craft.

APPENDIX-VIII

Prof. Nikhil Ranjan Pal's interview conducted on 5.03.2014

Q.1 What are the diversifications in *Durga* festival?

A. Hindu religion of any province specifically in the Eastern and North-Eastern region, *Durga puja* has a significant role. But the chronological aspects of *Durga puja* and idol making have changed; earlier ritual aspects were more preferable in towns as well as in villages. But, the beginning phase of twenty first century has brought the drastic changes in *Durga* idols. During that phase, we have seen that the face of female film icons represent as *Devi Durga.* Then after certain times that trend has changed again, now artists are yet again doing traditional idols at the same time doing many experimental idols. So, the concept of idol making is changing. Along with idols now *pandalls* function as the main attraction. Now *pandalls* are counted as installation art. Extraordinary effects and themes which depicted by the artisans throughout the *pandalls,* for instance , cave of Ajanta, Titanic, White House, Temple of Jagannath and many other things.

Q.2 Do you think that *Durga puja* is functioning as the medium of mass-communication?

A. Absolutely, it is a part of mass-communication, because during *Durga puja* we see the participation of various communities and their interaction with one another. Most of the communities who are joining are the spectator of *pandalls,* idols and other related creative works. Many peoples do not have any ideas about the *Durga puja*, but they are taking the photographs as well as exchanging their culture, belief and thoughts. They are *Punjabis, Muslims, Christian* and others. Therefore, we can say that *puja* is now the central issue of mass-communication.

Q.3 Please express about the traditional idol makers and their feature.

A. Good question, the clubs which are now stressing *Durga* idols in different manner, are not connected with the tradition. Now these practices are more profound and most of the idols are made by the contemporary artists from different institutes. Because now situation has changed, the institutional based artists are also joining with this artistic practice. But simultaneously it is fact

that the presence of traditional artists must be there along with the customary concept of idol-worship. Because there are many roles and norms which are involved in the traditional idols and *pujas*, those can only be fulfilled by the traditional artist. Therefore the presence of traditional artists will exist and that will never die.

Q.4 Can we justify that the *Durga puja* practices of different clubs are the part of curatorial project?

A. Mostly, because it is a kind of curating the source and curating the *pujas.* Many clubs are running after the ministers, corporate houses and big families as well as these clubs are getting supports from different sources and these all are very important issues related to curation.

APPENDIX-IX

Prof. Pankaj Panwar's interview conducted on 20.01. 2014

Q.1 What is the principle of art and craft and why it is different from the contemporary art?

A. We can describe the art in many names as folk-art, traditional art and tribal art, which belong to our society for ages. Most of the folk art or traditional art are the part of our life style. Contemporary art what we practice today whether we call it professional or whatever, we feel there persist distinction with the life style and art. These have not always direct connection, rather we are doing art for art sake or whatever we call it but these folk art or traditional are more or less the part of life style. They are part of everyday life and they have some functions in the society. So in that way they are very much organic and they generally reflect the environment and culture of the place, way of life style of the peoples.

Each region has very strong flavor of that place in respect of idol-making and they have their own language. So, if we talk about folk and tribal art, we can say that our country is very rich. In North-East, Assam and Nagaland are also rich on that. As an artist I am also equally inspired by present art, contemporary art, modern art, western art, and inspired by the all traditional, conventional art forms. So, as an artist I do not see much difference, for me this is visual image and the contemporary work is also visual language. In traditional art, there is simplicity and minimum uses of the materials are required. In contemporary art we do so many things because we have too much of resources. So, that is why folk art is always powerful to me. So, in institution these folk art can perform very important role, Santiniketan was started with the same concept and they emphasis to find own roots. Traditional art is our foundation, from there the journey starts. So if you have proper understanding of our past, about all sorts of these folk, tribal arts, then it deeply enriches you about the visual language, about the choice of materials and also about your cultural background. That is why these are very important in the institutions; students are to understand the possibilities of visual

language and use of materials. So, I would say preservation and conservation as well as understanding of all these tribal, regional, art are very necessary.

Q.2 Now, contemporary artists are engaged in idol-making profession as well as many changes are happening in this profession. So, what you think about these happening?

A. Now you have to realize that the context has changed dramatically. Because firstly now there is a lot of money has come into idol-making in *Durga puja*. But regarding idol-making, contemporary artists can also do the idols, because they are also artists. That is, you cannot say these are folk art. During *puja,* Nandalal Bose used to make many drawing of *Durga;* K.G. Subramanyan has also made so many *Durga, Saraswati* and *Kali.* They are not doing folk art. They are contemporary artists. So, the artists are working with their own style. It may have some influence or inspiration, you call it whatever. Secondly, the life has changed. Fundamental changes have come that is also true .If you see the temple architecture of earlier time and if you see the present architecture of temple there is difference and also there should not come any comparison. I accept change with time but I also accept, when there is a change in quality.

APPENDIX-X

Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed's interview conducted on.17.08. 2014

Q.1 Sir, I would like to know about the *Kantha* of Barak Valley.

A. We know about the *Nakshi-kantha*, which is very less in Barak Valley, in compare to Meghna-Jamuna Valley. We do not have any cottage industry related to *Kantha*. In Barak Valley the utility of *Kantha* is very much important and within the frame of *kantha* we see the art forms. Those forms are easily depicted by the makers. In this region *kantha*-makers are not skilled artisans, mostly the house wives are involved into this practices. There are some similarities in *alpona* and *kantha,* in *alpona* the religious beliefs are more prominent, where as in *kantha* the makers never follow any beliefs, only they try to replicate the motifs related to *alpona.*

Q.2 What you feel about the existing art and craft traditions of Barak Valley?

A. The craft tradition which mainly grew in Barak region is primarily based on economic needs. Now we are in electronic era, the demands of traditional crafts have been changed, because the demand of the society has changed. The society is now thinking about electronic crafts, instead of traditional crafts. Therefore the utility of traditional craft is very much important; if there is no utility the traditional craft will not exist more. Regarding craft tradition female has numerous contributions in craft traditions of this region.

Q.3 What you think about the culture of Barak Valley and its origin?

A. There was no existence of Barak Valley before eighties, because earlier it was known as Cachar District only. During the British period this valley was known as Surma Valley. Most of the parts of Sylhet district are now in Bangladesh; only Karimganj exists as individual district with present Barak Valley and the culture which has grown into this area is the eastern most cultural extension of Sylhet. Cachar & Hailakandi is the cultural extension of Karimganj, but this might be not accepted by the people of Cachar and Hailakandi.

Turk-Afghan and *Mughal* ruled in Sylhet as well as Karimganj. The state development of Cachar and Hailakandi are also late than the Karimganj.

During the period of *Kachari* Kingdom, the state development had started in Cachar. Extension of Aryan cultural also developed in Karimganj, because Aryan culture had first developed in Northern India and then gradually extended in Sylhet and then it shifted to Cachar and Hailakandi. Even during the rule of *Kachari* Kingdom they brought many peoples from Sylhet.

APPENDIX-XI

Dr. Shivtapan Basu's Interview conducted on.17.08. 2014

Q.1 Why *kantha* is important for *Bengalis*?

A. First of all, *kantha* art is the part and parcel of *Bengalis*. The *Bengali Hindus* and *Muslims* have been living together into this valley. Human beings cannot deny the ritual believes, therefore when we observe that the motif of horse on the *Nakshi kantha* made by *Muslim* women that horse is not the *Pankhi-Raaj*, it is Dul-*Dul-Ghura.* This is the auspicious symbol of victory, so, this kind of religious belief is very common phenomenon in *kantha*. The main fact is that the *kantha* making of this region is purely part and parcel of *Bengali* culture. Therefore, the village life of *Bengalis* always reflect in *kantha*, there we see the paddy fields, trees, snakes, creepers and many other motifs surrounded by the villages.

Q.2 What is your statement about the *Shital Pati* of Barak region?

A. *Murta* is an essential material for *shital pati*, this *pati* is also known as *murta-pati*. This *murta-pati* can be colourful; mostly deep colours are preferable, such as deep red and deep green. But it is also fact that when the colours are used on *pati*, the rate of that pati decreases than the plain *pati*. Usually *pati* makers make the *patis* with their own choice, but if someone gives them order then they make the *pati* according to the demand of that purchaser. The reference of *Jainamaz pati* is popular in the folk-songs of this valley.

Q.3 Sir**,** I would like to know about the *alpona* and its significances in Barak Valley?

A. *Alpona* is known as *rangoli* in many other parts of the country. Especially this *rangoli* is popular in the middle and the northern part of India.The word *alpona* is derived from the *Sanskrit* term *Alimpon*. This is commonly used in the rituals. In the *alpona* of *Laskhmi Puja*, the women used the white colour and they depicted the foot prints of Goddess *Lakshmi* as well as they also used the motifs of paddy, which symbolized the agrarian culture of *Bengalis*. The circular form of *alpona* is very much popular in this region. In case of culture nothing is rigid, therefore in the *alpona* many motifs have been changed and again many changes will happen in future as well.

Q.4 Please give your observation about the existing position of art and craft of this Valley. Is it flourishing?

A. The strategies of life are constantly changing, because life is full of struggle. On the basis of that struggle art and crafts of the world have been changing. In the arena of globalization, the art and crafts are struggling for survival. Because now so many materials are made out of plastic and those are more chipper than the local crafts. The economic strategy always works behind the selection of these chip materials.

But still the art and crafts are the part and parcel of human society because of the aesthetical aspect of human beings. The death of art means death of human society, culture and humanity. Art and craft is the mediator which has the connection with the contemporary as well as primitivism and it always provides us the essence of ancient civilization.

APPENDIX-XII

Dr. Raj Kumar Mazinder's interview conducted on. 20.10. 2014

Q.1 Do you consider that textile of Assam & its motif/pattern has been progressed over the years in Barak Valley?

A. Yes of course. I think communication, mingling among various ethnic communities and their culture variation in textiles has been flourishing more rapidly since Post Independence period.

Q.2 Please give your comment about the existing tradition of *Assamese* textile in this Valley. Recall an experience of seeing the works of *Assamese* weavers, which was outstanding and also touched you the most?

A. During whole year of rituals and festivals people had been engaged themselves in making textile among various ethnic communities both in hills and plains of all over Assam. It always touches me.

Q.3 Do you have any favorite costumes, which fascinated you very much? How do you think about the textile making of this region as compared to the other *Assamese* weavers of other places of Assam?

A. *Mekhela*/ waist garment used by ladies, are unique in varieties. Textile making in Assam is more exotic, near to nature and varieties.

Q.4 What is the role of women, children and men in textile production? What is their socio- economic background?

A. Social system of Assam consists of matrimonial societies among various ethnic communities where female takes an important part in every aspect of life, including textile making also.

Q.5 Is there any certain season and festival, when they create more textiles?

A. Every ethnic communities has own festival. The requirements of specific textiles during particular season are there during the whole year.

Q.6 Please give your comments on the changing nature of weavers and their market in this region, which effect on their livelihood and social status in the community and outside?

A. Definitely, awareness and making market for those textiles which effect on their livelihood for its creators is certainly necessary.

Q.7 This textile making in Assam is now recognized as not only potential for improved livelihoods but also additionally having commercial value in the urban market and a strong pull for tourism in both domestic and international arena. Regarding this, what are the potentials are available in Barak Valley?

A. Barak Valley can be said as Mini Northeast within the North Eastern part of India, so both Government and policy makers should try for creating awareness, persistence and sustainability.