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Chapter One: Background of Meherpur District

Scenario of Meherpur District

Meherpur is a small but historically significant district located in the southwestern part of Bangladesh, bordering India. It's best known for its central role in the country's independence history: Meherpur hosted the first provisional government of Bangladesh on April 17, 1971, during the Liberation War. This moment, commemorated as a landmark event, gave Meherpur a lasting place in Bangladesh's journey to independence.

The district is mostly rural, with green landscapes, small rivers, and scenic villages. Its economy is based on agriculture, and it's famous for producing high-quality fruits, particularly mangoes, litchis, and bananas, along with other crops. The fertile land and favorable climate make Meherpur an agricultural hub, contributing significantly to the local economy.

Though small, Meherpur has a vibrant cultural heritage, with traditional music, festivals, and customs that are distinct to the region. Locals are known for their hospitality, welcoming visitors to experience their warm culture and way of life. The town of Meherpur itself is quite peaceful, with historic sites and a slower pace that contrasts with the bustling city life found elsewhere in Bangladesh.

In recent years, efforts have been made to improve infrastructure and promote tourism, as more people discover the historical significance and natural beauty of Meherpur. Its unique blend of history, culture, and rural charm makes Meherpur a distinctive part of Bangladesh's cultural landscape.

Portrait of Study Area

A reconnaissance survey is an initial, high-level assessment carried out to collect general information about a particular area or topic. It serves as the first phase in a research or exploration effort, focusing on identifying major features, resources, or conditions of the area being studied. This survey typically involves minimal data gathering, observation, and evaluation, providing a general overview to guide more in-depth investigations or future actions.

The study area focused on Meherpur Paurashava, starting from the Borobazar four-road intersection and covering a 250-meter buffer zone around it. The site visit took place over two days, from October 15 to October 16, 2024. The visit was conducted in three-time phases: from 9 AM to 12 PM, 2 PM to 5 PM, and from 5 PM into the evening. During the site visits, we walked through various areas, including Boro Bazar, Hotel Bazar, Kashari Para, Bose Para, Mollick Para, Gorpara, Kathuli Bus Stand, and Gor Pukur etc.

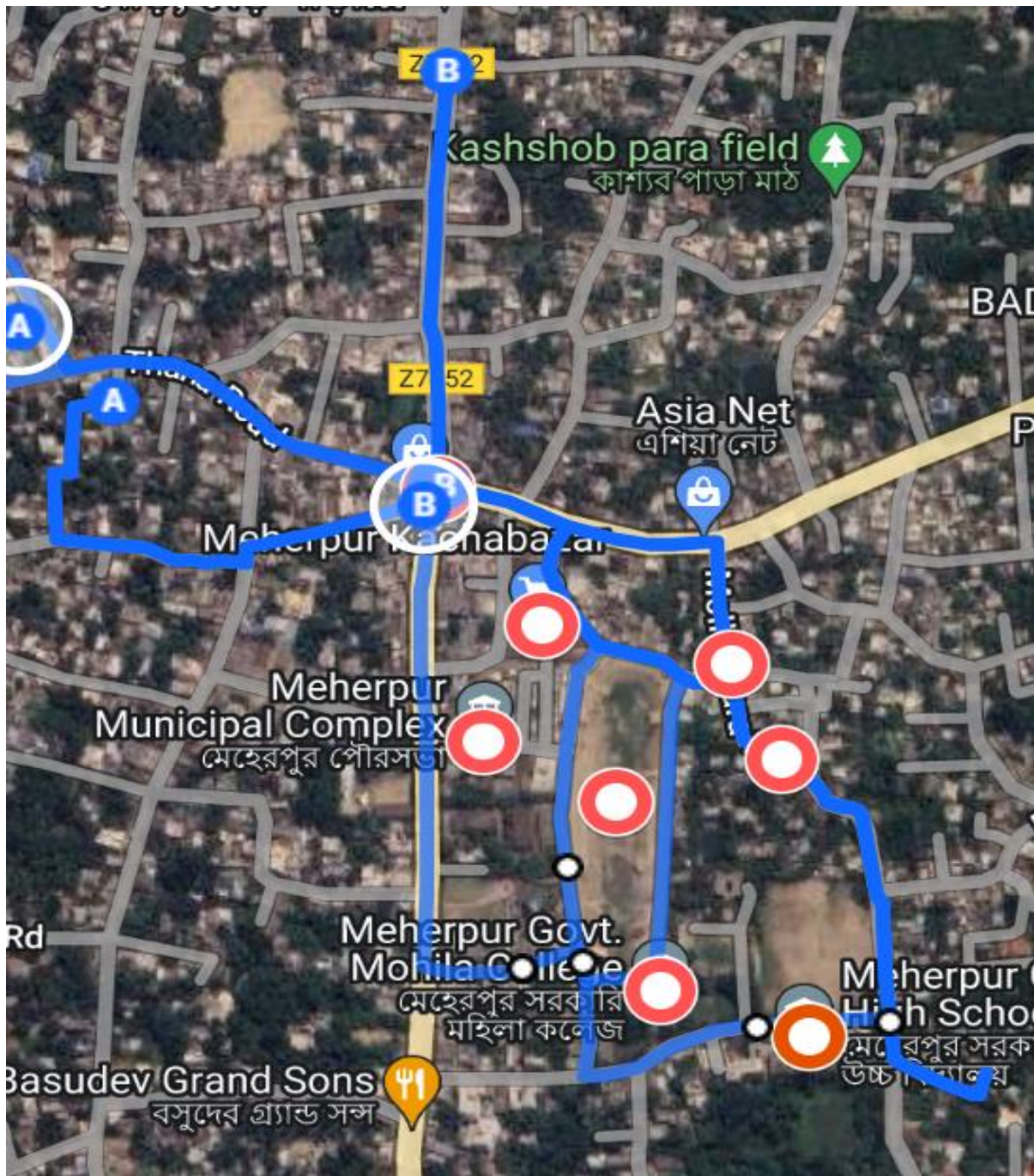


Figure: Study Area on Goggle Map

Meherpur Paurashava (250 m buffer area) Map

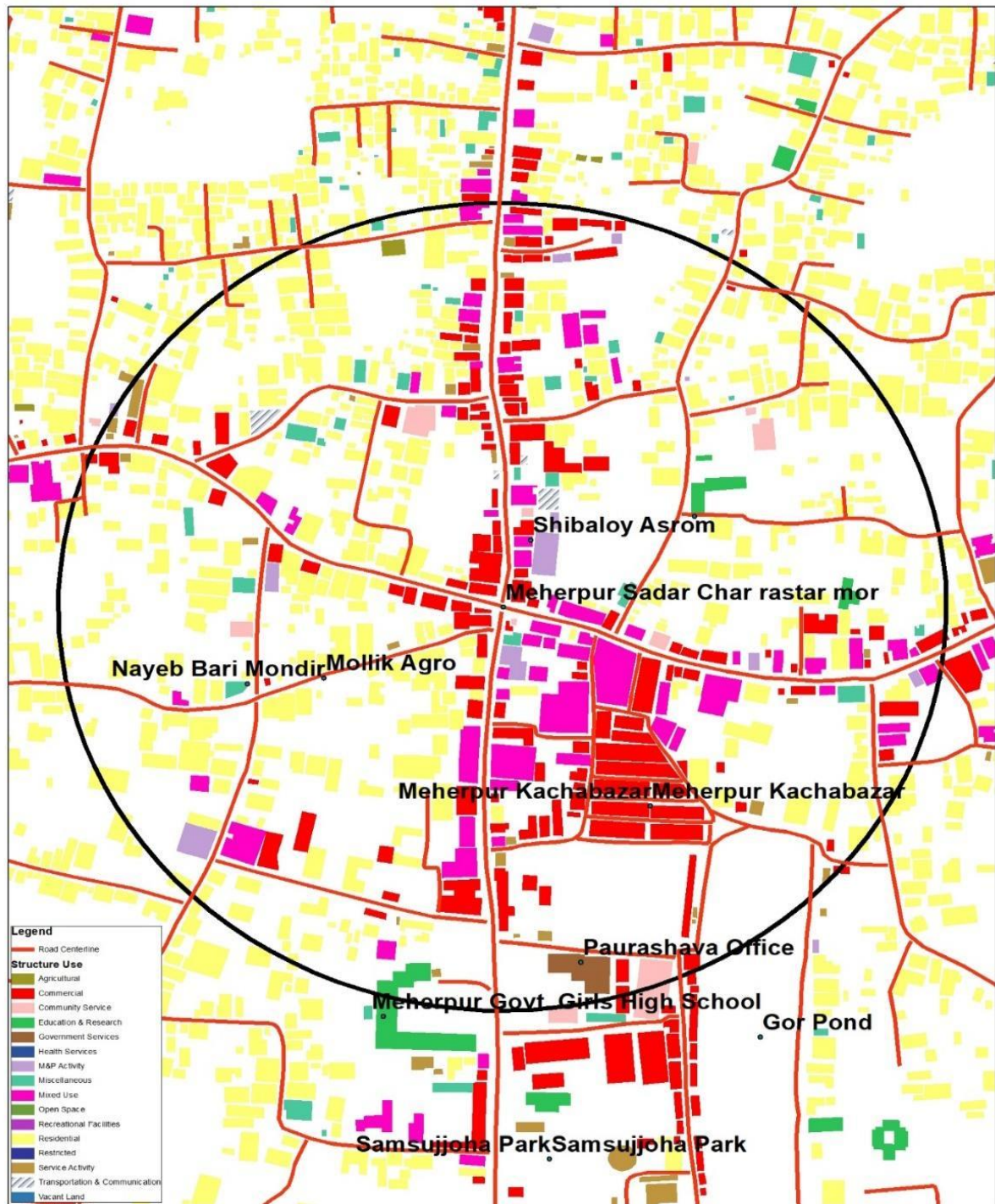


Figure: Study Area

We observed educational institution Like Meherpur Govt. Women Collage, Meherpur Govt. High School.Govt offices like Meherpur Paurashava, District Primary Education Office, Shahid Dr. Shamsujjoha Park, Meherpur Town Hall, some religious places like Mosque, temples.



Figure: Meherpur Govt. Girls Collage



Figure: Meherpur Govt High School

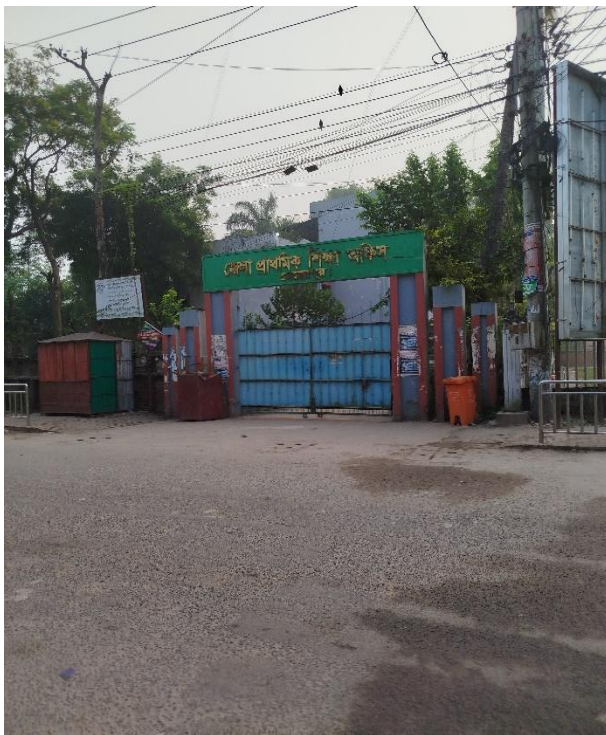


Figure: District Primary Education Office



Figure: Meherpur Paurashava



Figure: Meherpur Town Hall



Figure: Shahid Dr. Shamsujjoha Park

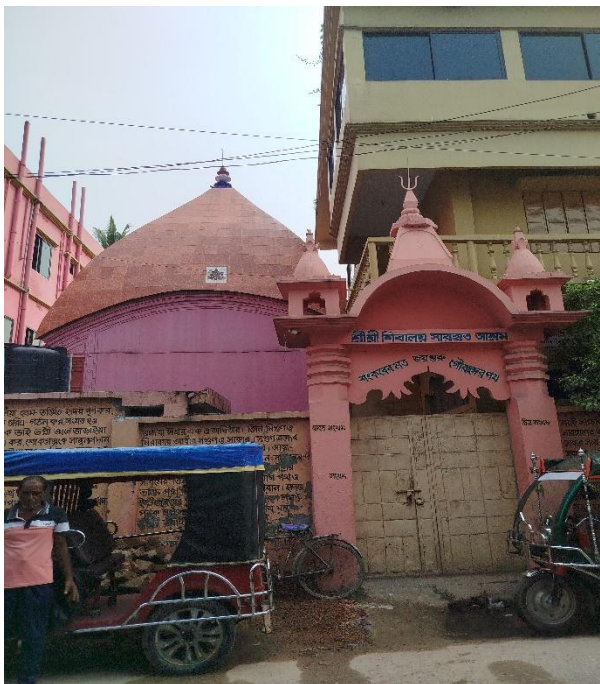


Figure: Sree Sree Shibaloy Swasoto Ashrom



Figure: Ghorpara Jame Mosque

Objective

- To collect basic information about this area.
- To observe the pattern of daily life of local people.
- To assess the physical characteristics, existing conditions and community needs of this area.

Chapter Two: Field Observation

Overview of Field Visit: The field visit for the reconnaissance survey took place from October 15 to October 16, 2024. Our journey commenced from Dhaka on October 14, 2024, where we gathered at the designated meeting point. We traveled overnight and arrived in Meherpur on October 15 at 6:30 AM. Upon reaching Meherpur, I began my survey activities at 9am the starting point was Boro Bazar Char Rastar Mor. During my field survey, I began by walking along Thana Road, Boro bazar area, Ful Bagan Para to reach Kathuli Bus Stand Mor. After completing this segment, I returned to Char Rastar Mor and then proceeded towards Wapda Road. At Zoha Chattar, I made a right turn, heading towards the renowned Gorh Pukur, Gorpara and continuing on to Boro Bazar. I concluded the first phase of the survey at 2:00 PM.



Figure: Meherpur Zero Point

The second phase commenced later that same day at 4:00 PM, with Char Rastar Mor serving as the starting point once again. This phase focused on the Bose Para area, located in the southwestern part of the study region. Primarily a residential neighborhood, Bose Para provided insights into local living conditions. After completing this section, I returned to Char Rastar Mor and made my way to the Paurashava Bhaban, where I remained until 6:30 PM.

On October 16, the third phase of the survey began early in the morning at 6:30 AM and continued until 10:30 AM. During this time, I explored the entire southeastern section of the area, starting from the Boro Bazar Center. This part of the survey allowed me to observe the morning activities and the livelihood patterns of the local residents, providing a deeper understanding of their daily lives.

The final phase started on the same day, from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM, covering the northeastern area of the study region, specifically Kasab Para. This area is also residential, and I noted that there were no significant economic activities occurring there. Through this comprehensive survey, I gathered valuable information about the community dynamics and living conditions in Meherpur District.

Framework of Life: The livelihood pattern in Meherpur Paurashava reflects a diverse range of urban and semi-urban activities. Small businesses and trade form a significant part of the economy, with many residents operating retail shops or engaging in local markets, particularly in commercial hubs like Boro Bazar. The service sector is also prominent, with employment opportunities in education, healthcare, government offices, and banking. Cottage industries, such as jute product manufacturing and traditional weaving, contribute to household incomes. Additionally, many people are involved in transportation services, working as rickshaw-pullers and van drivers, while day labor, especially in construction, supports urban development. Though primarily urban, some residents on the outskirts still practice small-scale agriculture and livestock rearing. Overall, the livelihood in Meherpur Paurashava is a blend of commerce, services, and small industries, reflecting its evolving urban character.

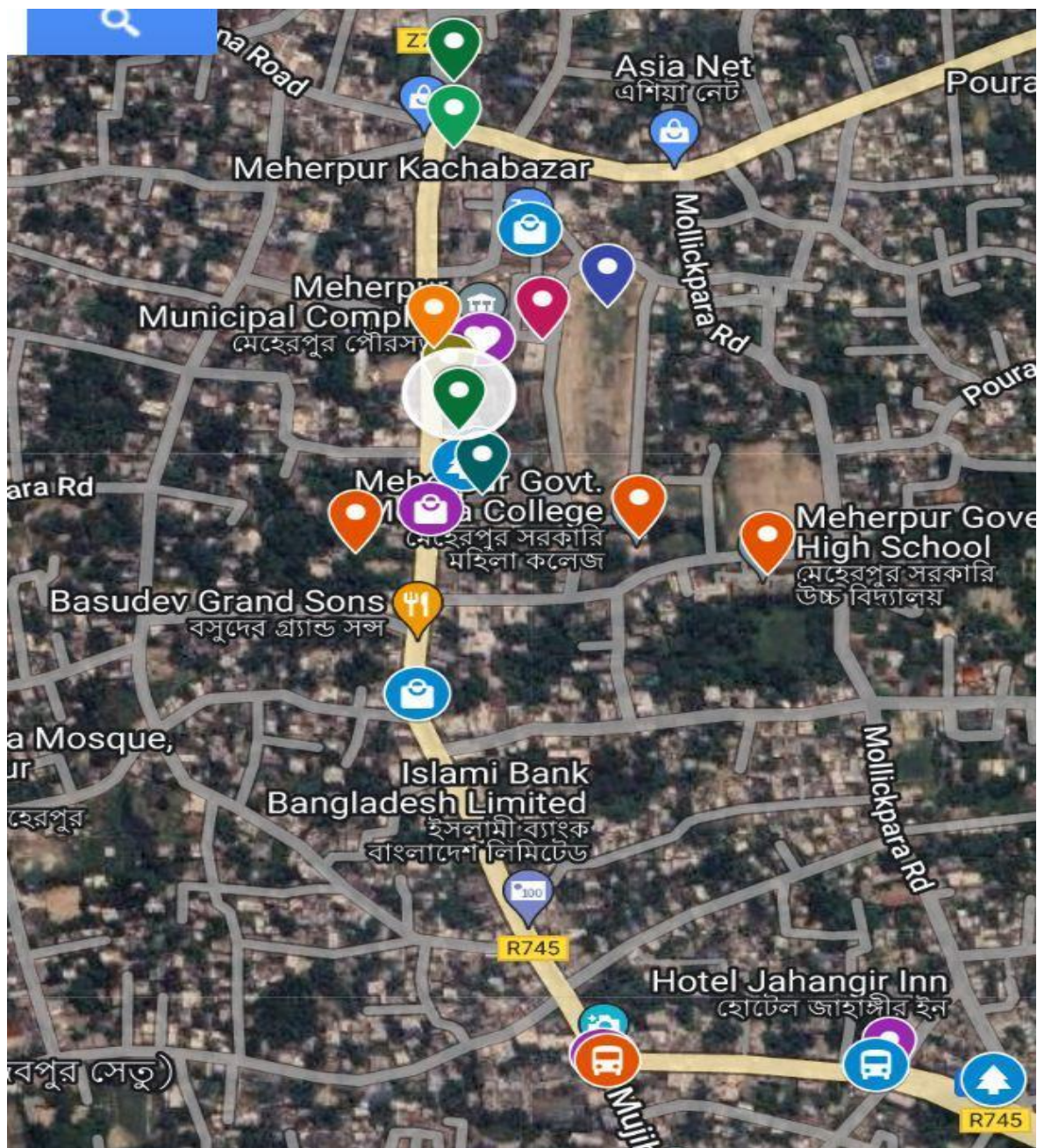


Figure: Google Map of Study area

Informal Activities:

Informal activities play a significant role in the livelihood of Meherpur Paurashava, contributing to the local economy and supporting many households. These activities typically include:

Street Vending: Many individuals engage in street vending, selling food items, vegetables, fruits, clothing, and other goods at roadside stalls or from makeshift stands. These vendors often operate in busy areas like Boro Bazar and near transportation hubs. Those shops mainly found in morning between 9Am to 2Pm.



Figure: Floating cloth Shop in Hotel Bazar Road at 11:42am



Figure: Floating Cloths shop at hotel bazar Road at 10:18 am

Rickshaw and Van Pulling: A large number of people are employed as rickshaw-pullers and van drivers, providing affordable transportation within the Paurashava. This is a common informal occupation, especially for those with limited formal education.



Figure: Rickshaw puller



Figure: A van Puller



Figure: Van Puller



Figure: Auto Driver

Home-Based Enterprises: Many households are involved in home-based informal activities, such as small-scale food production (e.g., snacks, pickles). These products are often sold locally in Boro Bazar and Shamujjoha Park Area from Morning to night.



Figure: Fruit Seller in front of Meherpur Paurashava in morning



Figure: Street Food Seller at Boro Bazar Road in Morning



Figure: Fruit Seller at Hotel Bazar Road



Figure: Fruit seller at Hotel Bazar Road in morning



Figures: Street food carts in front of Samsujjoha Park at Evening



Figure: Lemon Juice seller

Day Labor and Construction: Informal laborers work on a daily wage basis in construction, often without formal contracts. These workers are hired for building houses, roads, and other infrastructure projects within the Paurashava. They stand at Hotel Bazar Road for work at morning 6am to 9am.



Figure: Day Labors



Figure: Waiting for work at Hotel Bazar Road at Morning 6am

Agricultural Sales: Some residents from the outskirts of the Paurashava engage in informal agricultural activities, selling surplus produce such as vegetables, fruits, or dairy products, Grass in local markets.



Figure: Thatch market At Bose Para



Figure: Fuel Wood Seller at Kashari Bazar at 10am



Figure: Vegetable seller at Boro Bazar



Figure: Leaf Seller



Figures: Fruit van



Figure: Leaf Seller

Others: We found Cobblers at Boro bazar area.



Figure: Cobbler at Boro Bazar



Wings of fire-Motorcycle: Motorcycles serve as the wings of Meherpur Paurashava, transforming the landscape of mobility and connectivity in the region. These two-wheeled vehicles have become essential for locals, offering a swift and efficient means of transportation that bridges the gap between urban and rural areas. With the ability to navigate narrow roads and congested streets easily, motorcycles enable residents to commute to work, run errands, and engage in social activities with remarkable convenience.

Moreover, motorcycles have significantly contributed to the local economy by facilitating trade and commerce. They allow vendors to transport goods quickly to markets, enhancing the availability of products and services. For many young people in Meherpur, owning a motorcycle symbolizes freedom and independence, empowering them to explore opportunities beyond their immediate surroundings.



Figure: Motorcycle at Meherpur

However, the rise of motorcycle usage also brings challenges, such as the need for road safety awareness and infrastructure improvements to accommodate increasing traffic. Despite these issues, motorcycles undeniably play a crucial role in shaping the daily lives of people in Meherpur Paurashava, effectively giving them wings to soar through their day-to-day activities.



Figure: Motorcycle Accident at Meherpur sadar upazila (Source: Internet)

Social hubs: Meherpur Paurashava is home to several key gathering places that are central to community life, social gatherings, and cultural activities. These include public parks, marketplaces, community centers, and religious sites, where people convene for a variety of purposes. Here's a summary of the primary gathering spots in Meherpur Paurashava:



Figure: Young people gossiping at Gor Pukur



Figure: Peoples Gathering at Meherpur Kachabazar



Figure: People at tea stall



Figure: People Gossiping at Tea Stall

Cultural and Religious Practices: Cultural practices in Meherpur Paurashava reflect a blend of traditional Bengali customs, religious observances, and local community activities. There are Muslim and Hindu peoples, along with their respective religious places and practices.



Figure: Gorpora Jame Mosque



Figure: Sree sree Shibalay Ashrom, Boro Bazar



Figure: Radha Madhob Mondir, Mukharjipara



Figure: Sree sree Siddheshwari Mondir Boro bazar

Mobility system: The transportation system in Meherpur District primarily relies on road networks, with regional buses connecting the district to nearby cities like Dhaka, Chuadanga, and Kushtia. Locally, Bicycle, auto-rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, and motorbikes are the most common modes of transport in Meherpur Paurashava. Motorcycle is mainly used for easy moving. Vans and carts are used to transport goods, particularly agricultural produce. Long-distance buses and trucks play a key role in inter-district travel and the transportation of goods. Most of the roads was Pacca and well maintained in Paurashava area.



Figure: Motorcycle rider



Figure: Motorcycle rider



Figure: Rickshaw



Figure: Bicycle user



Figure: Bicycle



Figure: A young Motorcycle rider



Figure: Engine Van



Figure: Pickup van



Figure: Choi Van



Figure: Choi Van



Figure: Auto Rickshaw at Mohila College
More at morning



Figure: Different Type of transportation at
Boro bazar more at morning

Settlement pattern: The housing pattern in Meherpur Paurashava showcases a blend of traditional and modern designs, shaped by the differences between rural and urban areas, economic conditions, and local cultural practices. There are found Pucca, Semi pucca, Katcha, traditional houses in Paurashava Areas.

Traditional House: Those houses are built using locally available materials like mud, bamboo, and thatch. The roofs are typically made of tin or thatch, and walls are made of mud or clay.



Figure: Traditional House

Semi-Urban Apartments: With urbanization, there is a rise in low-rise apartment complexes, especially near commercial and administrative areas. These buildings cater to middle-income families and typically include basic amenities but often lack the elaborate facilities found in larger urban apartment complexes.



Figure: House at Boro Bazar Area

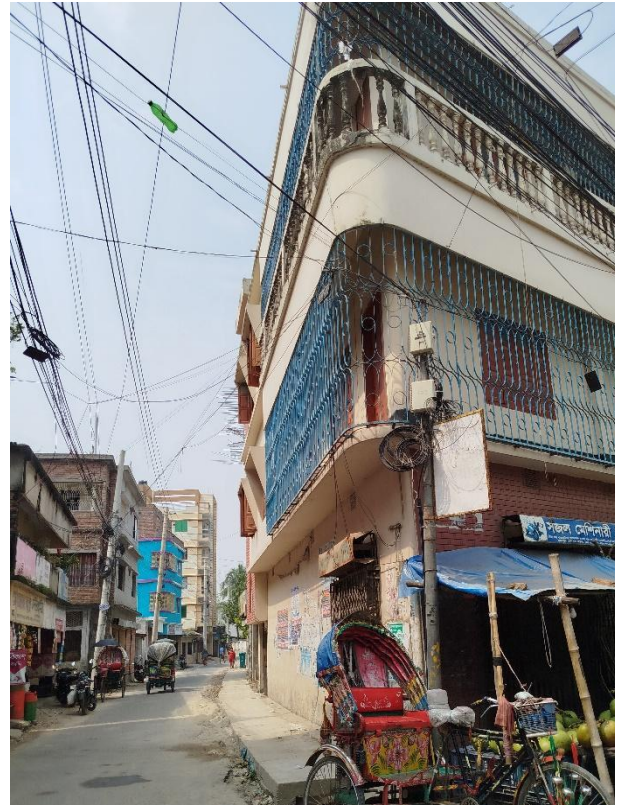


Figure: House at Hotel Bazar Area

Mixed-Use Buildings: Along commercial streets, many buildings have shops or small businesses on the ground floor with residential units above. This mixed-use approach is common in urban areas where space is limited, allowing residents to run businesses close to home.



Figure: Mixed Used Building at Bus stand area



Figure: Mixed Use Building at Hotel Bazar area

Other Civic facilities: In the Paurashava area, civic facilities such as healthcare, educational institutions, public parks, and recreational spaces are inadequate. Meherpur Paurashava, the municipal area of Meherpur, is home to several lively markets that are central to the local economy and daily life. Among the busiest is Meherpur Bazar, the main marketplace, where vendors sell fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, spices, and everyday essentials. The paurashava has one government hospital along with several private clinics and diagnostic centers. Notable educational establishments include Meherpur Government High School, Meherpur Govt Girls School, Meherpur Government Mohila College. Recreational options are limited, with only Dr. Shamsujjoha Park and one children's park available. Additionally, the area suffers from a lack of sufficient recreational spaces. The waste management system is also poor, and the drainage system is poorly maintained, contributing to the overall deficiency in civic infrastructure.



Figure: Meherpur Govt women's Collage



Figure: Meherpur Govt Boys School



Figure: Wastes at Gorpukur



Figure: Waste disposal at Gorpara



Figure: Dumping point



Figure: Dumping point



Figure: Dental care at Hotel Bazar



Figure: Diagnostic center



Figure: Shamsujjoha Park



Figure: Sishu Park at Bus Stand Area



Figure: Meherpur Kacha Bazar at 7am



Figure: Meherpur Kacha Bazar at 7am



Figure: An NGO at Gorpara Area

Chapter Three: Third Eye view

Whispering of the heart: The field visit to Meherpur brought up many feelings, showing both the strengths and needs of the area. Meherpur is a calm and quiet town, providing a peaceful atmosphere that many people enjoy. The slow pace of life allows residents to appreciate their surroundings, with the sounds of nature adding to the relaxing environment. Seeing the community's warmth and resilience was inspiring.

Peaceful, Silent Meherpur at early morning:



Figure: Boro Bazar at Morning



Figure: Mohila Collage Road at morning



Figure: Bus stand area at morning



Figure: Hotel Bazar area at Morning



Figure: Gor pukur at morning

In the morning Meherpur Paurashava is so pleasant and peaceful to walk. I walked through the road to court para to Boro bazar. I saw people walking in the road, taking preparation for their busy daily life. However, during peak hours, the narrow roads become highly congested with excessive traffic, including auto-rickshaws and motorcycles, illegal parking, less traffic rules, regulation and monitoring making the experience frustrating. Although Meherpur is a small, less dense town, the situation worsens when everyone is out, causing significant traffic issues. Boro Bazar, the central business district of Meherpur, becomes especially crowded during peak hours. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and evening to night the area's narrow roads, large commercial buildings, and various informal activities turn it into a chaotic and unpleasant space. Other areas, such as Bose Para, Gorpara, and Keshobpara, which are primarily residential, remain peaceful and quiet most of the time.



Figure: Borobazar Area at Peak hour



Figure: Borobazar Area at Peak hour



Figure: Illegal parking on Boro bazar Road



Figure: Boro Bazar Char Rasta More at peak hour



Figure: Hotel Bazar Area At peak hour



Figure: Food carts in front of Paurashava at night

Color of City: Change of Emotion by Time

In the Morning (6:30 am to 10:30am): In the early morning, Meherpur Paurashava comes to life with a gentle charm. The soft light of dawn illuminates the quiet streets, casting a warm glow on the town. From 6:30 am to 10:30 am, the area is filled with a peaceful blend of activities as local vendors set up stalls, shop owners open doors, and the scent of fresh produce and street food begins to fill the air. Morning commuters, students, and early risers add to the gentle hum of life, creating a vibrant yet serene atmosphere unique to Meherpur. In morning the whole city Is **silent and peaceful**.

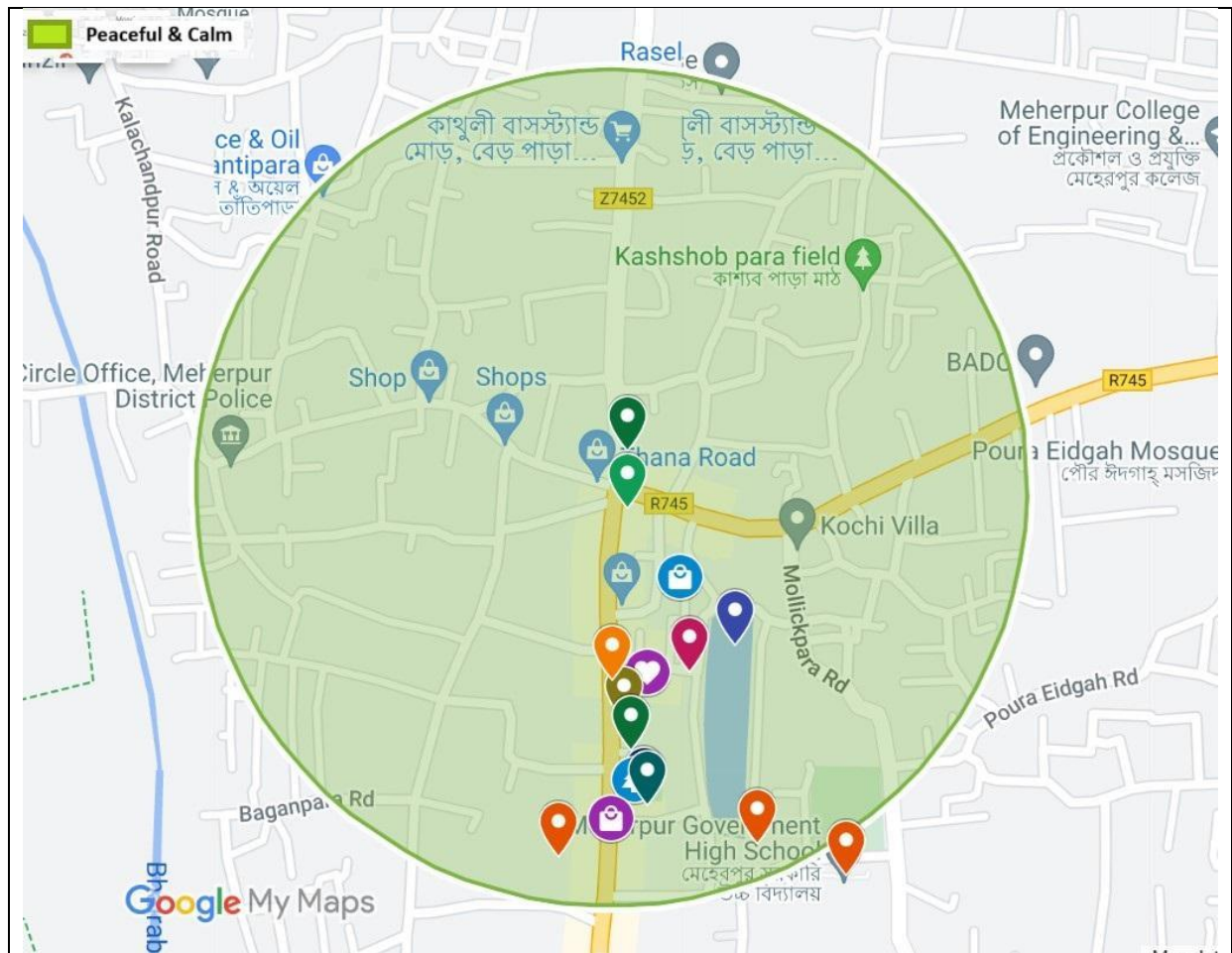


Figure: Peaceful Zone

Late morning to noon (10:30am to 2:00pm)

From late morning to noon, Meherpur Paurashava gets busier, with more people out shopping, working and various work at Boro bazar, Hotel bazar area. The shops and markets are crowded with people. However, traffic become a problem at this time, with rickshaws, motorbikes, and autorickshaw, all trying to pass through the narrow streets. This causes traffic jams, making it hard for people to move quickly, and the noise from honking can get annoying. In this time everything become **noisy and crowded**.

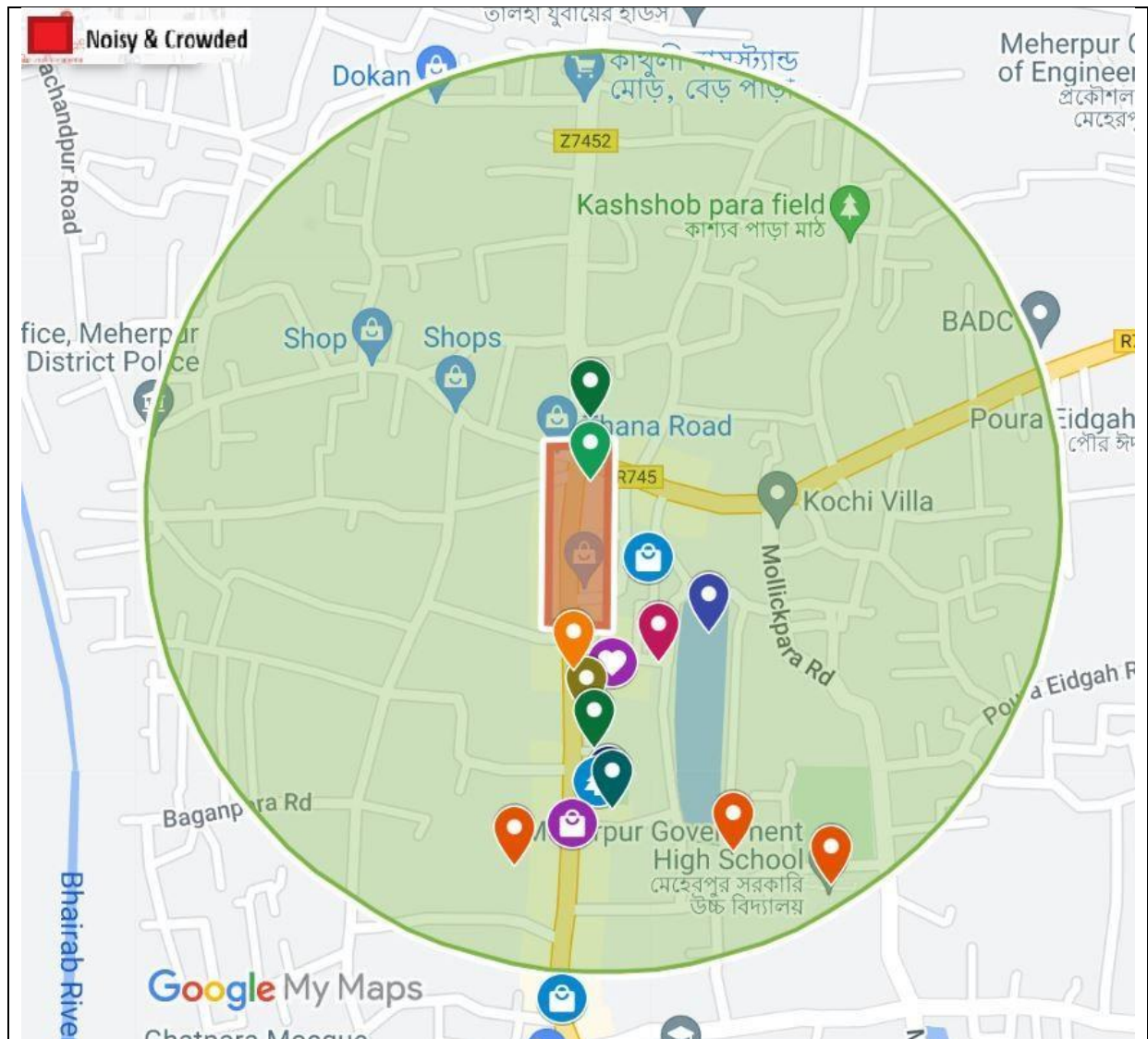


Figure: Crowded Zone

Late Noon to Afternoon (4:30pm to 6:30): In the late afternoon, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, Meherpur Paurashava takes on a relaxed yet lively vibe. The heat of the day softens, and people come out to enjoy the cooler breeze. Streets fill up with families, friends, and students returning home, while markets and tea stalls become gathering spots where people chat and unwind. Local vendors set up food carts, attracting crowds with the smell of fresh snacks from Municipality complex to Meherpur Hall. The occasional traffic jam still slows things down, but there's a calm, friendly, **Lively and enjoyable** atmosphere as the town settles into the evening.

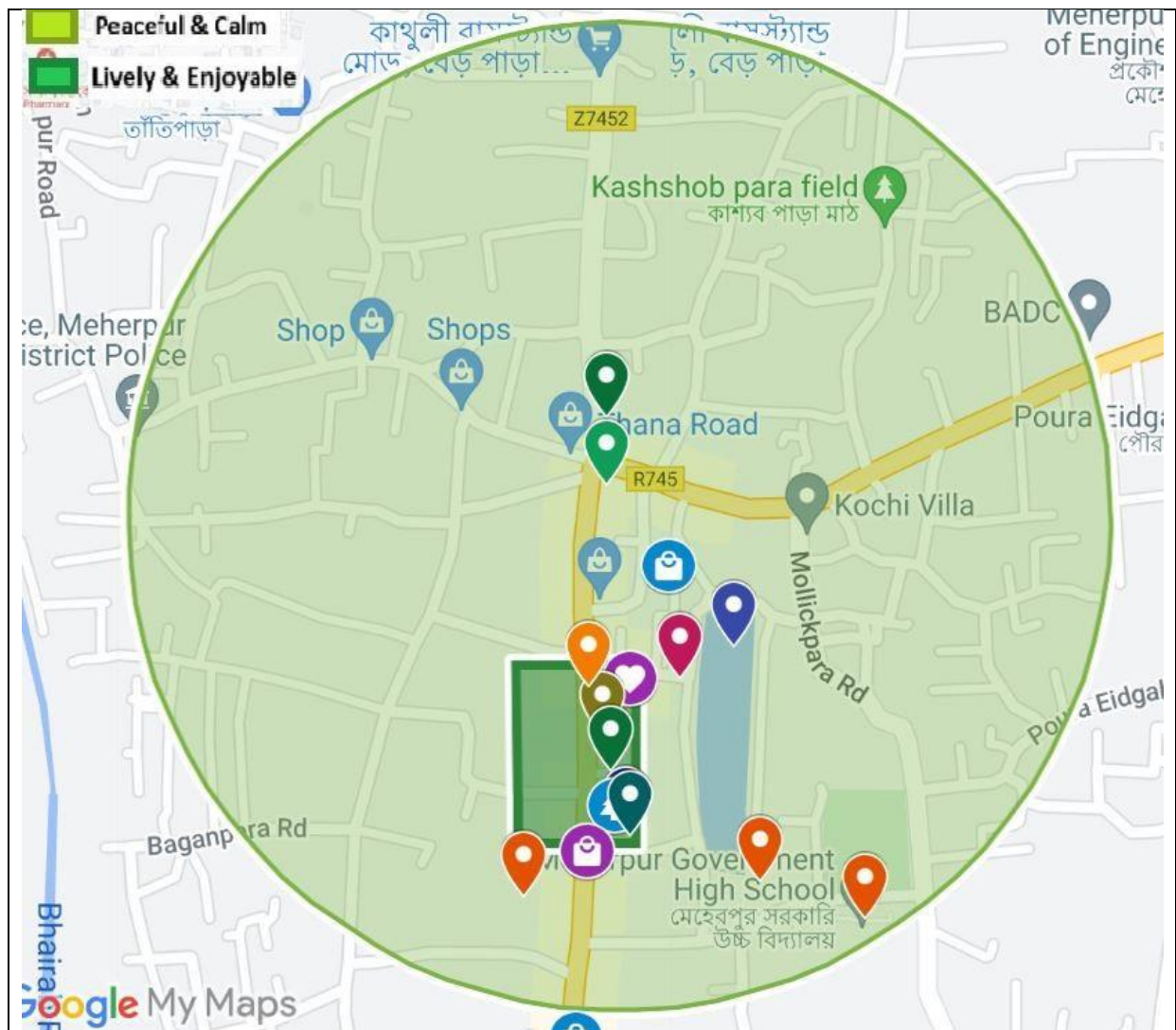


Figure: Lively Zone

Reality Vs Imagination:

After my field visit, I created a mental map to capture and think about what I observed, experienced, and how different parts of the area were arranged. This map provides a simple overview of the site, helping me remember important landmarks, paths, and the general layout from my own experience. The map includes key spots that caught my attention during the visit, as well as the distances and connections between them. In my field visit I observed Meherpur Paurashava, roads, paths, buildings and many things. But my subconscious mind adopted the best things what I saw in my visits.

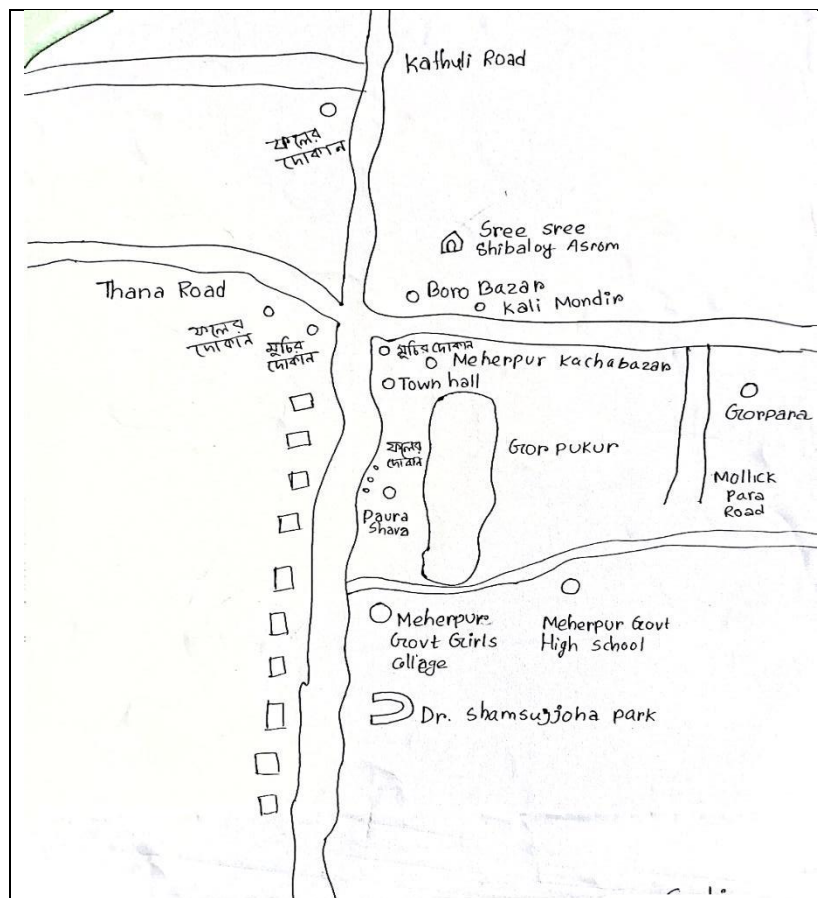


Figure: Mental Map

Rhythm Of Emotion

I walked through Meherpur Paurashava, I captured the true scenario of the city, photographing scenes from every corner to show both the energy of daily life and the challenges its people face. Each photo tells a story, showing a range of emotions—from the warmth and pride felt in moments of happiness to the sadness and frustration that come with the city's struggles. This series of images paints a picture of a community full of close connections and resilience, revealing everyday activities, social gatherings, and the natural flow of life. At the same time, some photos show a more serious side, highlighting the city's ongoing challenges, which make us feel empathy and think about ways to improve. Together, these images create a colorful view of Meherpur.

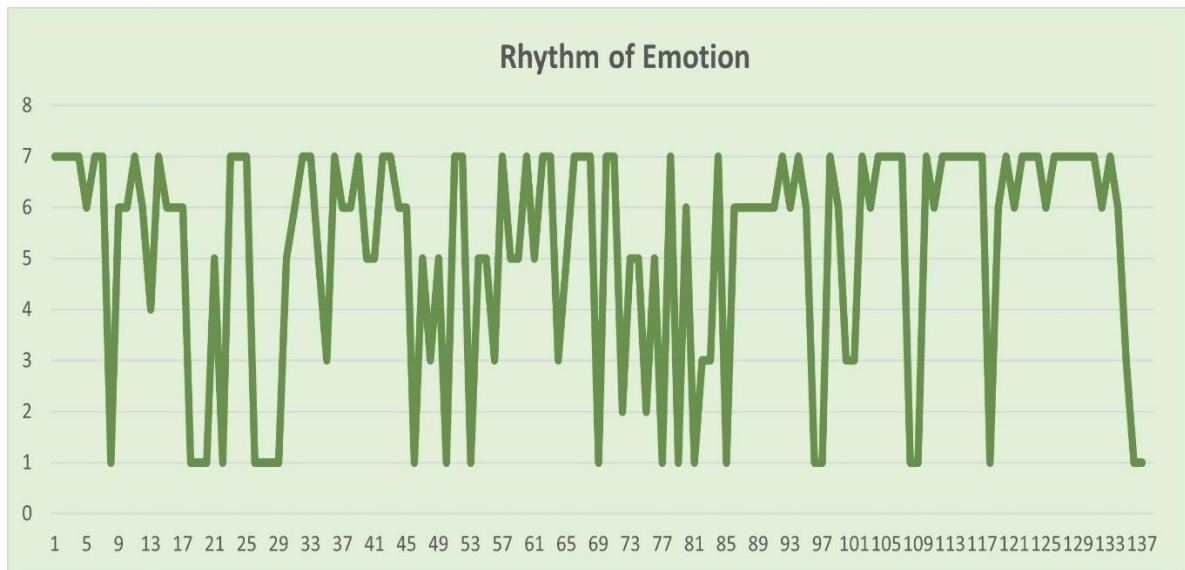


Figure: Rhythmic Pattern of Meherpur Paurashava

In the diagram above, 1 through 7 represent the emotions of disgust, fear, sadness, anger, surprise, happiness, and love, in that order.

Chapter Four: Stories of peoples

Case Studies 01: A Banana Seller

On October 15th, during my field visit, I met a banana vendor named Abdus Salam, who was set up on the left side of Boro Bazar along Kathuli Road, just a short walk from the Sri Sri Shibaloi Ashram. Abdus Salam is around 40 years old and comes from a village in the Kathuli Union, close to the Paurashava. When I asked him about his daily routine and how he runs his banana business, he told me that he sets up his stall every day at 9:00 AM and stays until noon, selling all his bananas. He gets his bananas from nearby villages in the paurashava, including the well-known “Rong Kola” and “Chapa Kola.



Figure: Banana Seller

Case Studies 02: A cobbler

On the evening of October 15, we met a cobbler named Shuvash at Boro Bazar Char Rastar Mor. He opened up about his life and shared that he has been in this job for 22 years. Shuvash felt nostalgic about the place because both his father and older brother were also cobblers here. Every day, he arrives at this spot around 8 or 9 AM and works until 9 PM. When we asked him why he hasn't switched jobs for better economic stability, he smiled and said he is happy with his work because it has been in his family for generations.

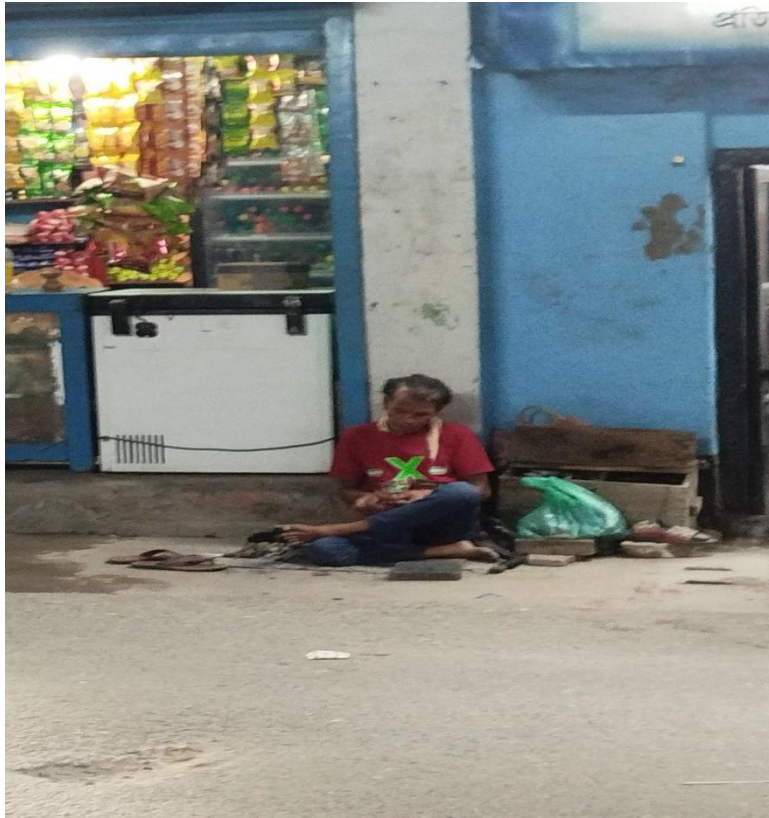


Figure: A cobbler

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The visit to Meherpur Paurashava highlighted both the potential and challenges faced by the community. While there are essential civic facilities, including educational institutions and healthcare services, significant gaps remain in recreational spaces and infrastructure. The limited availability of public parks and a well-maintained waste management and drainage system indicates a need for improvement to enhance the quality of life for residents. Addressing these issues would not only provide better services for the community but also foster a healthier and more engaging environment. The visit to Meherpur Paurashava provided valuable insights into the area's layout, infrastructure, and community environment. Observing the roads, pathways, buildings, and other features firsthand gave a clearer understanding of both the strengths and challenges within the Paurashava. Key observations included the connectivity between various parts of the area, the quality of public spaces, and how people interact with their surroundings. Overall, this experience highlighted the unique characteristics of Meherpur Paurashava and offered a solid foundation for further analysis and planning. Overall, Meherpur Paurashava has the foundation to grow, but concerted efforts are required to fully realize its potential and ensure the well-being of its citizens.