

# CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT

1 To establish rapport and provide mental support to the elderly members of the Baul communities and assist them at the right direction in getting proper health care.

2 To make aware and guide the elderly members of the Baul communities to avail the support services and care from the proposed Ashram / shelter.

3 To incubate, nurture and promote the next-generation Bauls with the right attitude to life and cultivation of a deeper culture.

4 To make aware the other community members such as local villagers and village dwellers / tribal people about the different tier of educational training, adult literacy and continuing education program health care system and facilities are available at a subsidized / discounted cost.



Baul Village at Bolpur, Birbhum, A Conceptual Plan

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Birbhum, West Bengal

A part of "Giving Back to Bengal" initiative  
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“ I believe in a spiritual world – not as anything separate from this world – but as its innermost truth. With the breath we draw we must always feel this truth that we are living in God. Born in this great world, full of the mystery of the infinite, we cannot accept our existence as a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere. ”

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore  
‘Santiniketan’

## THE IDEAL

Respecting and recovering Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's vision for village upliftment, i.e., to employ his humane holistic approach and notion of self-reliance in order to make the ashram self-sustaining, the US alumni network of IIT Kharagpur have taken a bold and a heart-felt step to 'give back to the soul of Bengal' – by providing shelters with holistic coverage in form a retreat home for elderly destitute Bauls having all-round facilities of nature-exploration, deep cultural rejuvenation and people's participation. The Ashram will provide a range of essential services including health care for elderly Bauls as the prime objective.

The retreat will also target youngsters to aspire 'in the Baul Maramiya way' to arrive at a balanced view of life, living and livability. The Ashram will also forward and implement a cycle of self-reliance to implement Tagore's ideals of cultural development, agriculture, crafts and industries, ashram welfare and education and forward a 'Business plan' to revive and reposition the Creative Art-Folk-Ecology based economy of Birbhum and Bengal, as a whole in the global perspective. The ultimate aim is to revive an all-round spiritual life not as anything detached from the material world, but as its innermost truth reflected as the 'Divinity in everything'.

## CONCEPT NOTE

The net land of the Ashram will be around 30 acres. Peripheral buffer green land has to around additional 15 acres, so that the development has a green transition in case different order of growth takes place in the future. The Spaces are classified in three groups (Please see CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT)

### 1. INTRINSIC FUNCTIONS (ASHRAMIC SPACES)

- A sensitively designed Elderly Baul Ashram with the '*maramiya*' touch – forwarding the deep Lalan-Nitai-Abdhut traditions of Birbhum
- A small outhouse complex with transit quarters favoring 'people-mind-folk' looking to research the inner esoteric ways of the Bauls - and forward the way of life, inspiring younger generations to imbibe the truth from the Elders and maintain deep cultural continuity.

### 2. PUBLIC FUNCTIONS (PARTICIPATORY & EXPLORATORY SPACES)

- Arts and Participatory Center run by organizations, CBOs, NGOs, who all shall oversee and continuously inspire the movement. The Center will also have a Cultural Anthropological exploration center with the Tribal dimension - like 'Pearson Palli' of Rabindranath.
- A Theatrical 'Gramin' Open Air Yatra type of space for accommodating occasional displays

and '*sahajiya*' performances with a formal 300 capacity Auditorium unit.

### 3. SUPPORT / ANCILLIARY FUNCTIONS

- A micro outreach and E-information Center in tune with the 'spirit of outreach' that Jyotirendranath-Rabindranath - Abanindranath - Gaganendranath - Suren Kar had preached covering ideals of cultural development, agriculture, crafts and industries, ashram welfare and education: the center will have an E-dissemination UNIT having adequate recording and multi-media facility allied to SWAYAM initiative of MHRD, the Government of India.
- A Creative Economic Regeneration Unit with 'the Idea of Franchise' – promoting self-help incubation groups / new NGOs and CBOs promoted by the Alumni Group, US – covering various micro Green Engineering solutions based on local watershed and construction materials, local weaving, indigenous arts and terracota systems will be augmented here –addressing areas / domains that Rathindranath and Abanindranath adored shall be nurtured here. The unit will be allied to YUKTI program of Government of India.
- An additional Health care and SOS unit as an add-on to organize informal green spaces, kunjās, viharas, and bithis.
- A 100 capacity International Guest House with a Retail outlet centre (part of Viswa-Bangla program)

“ Who enjoys the picture, the seller or the seer? The seller is busy with his accounts, computing what his gain will be, how much profit he will realize on the picture. His brain is full of that.....that man is enjoying the picture who has gone there without any intention of buying and selling and these foolish ideas of possession will be ended. The money-lender gone, the buyer gone, the seller gone, this world remains the picture, a beautiful painting.

I never read of any more beautiful conception of God than the following:

“He is the great Poet, the Ancient Poet: the whole universe is His poem, coming in verses and rhymes and rhythms written in infinite bliss. ”

Swami Vivekananda  
God in Everything