

The jatiyo sangshad bhaban building essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The National Assembly Building, also known as the Jatiyo Sanghsad Bhaban Building, in Dhaka, Bangladesh is a world-famous example of Modernist architecture by Louis I. Kahn. It is both loved and hated by architectural critics, historians, and the public, who have variously described the building as “ iconic, monumental, symbolic, transcendental, and a white elephant” (Kanekar 904). Completed in 1982, this 200 acre building is divided into a main plaza, a south plaza, and a presidential plaza with Parliamentary hostels stretching from its outskirts and is surrounded by an artificial lake (Kanekar 903). Its key architectural feature is the inclusion of huge regular geometrically-shaped porticos on the exterior which give the building a distinctive visual impact. The building received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1989 (Kanekar 904).

Louis I. Kahn received the commission to design the new assembly building for East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1962. The complex was originally intended to serve as a sub-office of the government in Islamabad, and act as the administrative capital of the East Pakistan region. In 1971, a civil war erupted between Pakistan and East Pakistan, and Kahn’s contract was cancelled. Despite this disruption, he continued his work on the project and after the end of the civil war, when East Pakistan declared its independence and formed the state of Bangladesh, it decided to continue with Kahn’s design and use the complex as its own national capitol (Wendover 129).

In his design for the National Assembly Building, Kahn wanted to create a building that would portray an “ idealized representation” of what a national assembly should be (Wendover 129). As Kahn himself put it, “ the acts of the assembly are really the making or the establishment of the institutions of

man,” and this had to be reflected in the design of the building (Kahn 180). The fact that he chose an Modernist design for the building may have been what saved Louis I. Kahn’s commission after the civil war: because of its abstraction, the people of Bangladesh were able to forget the building’s association with Pakistani rule (Wendover 129). This modern design has had some negative effects, too. For example, since it was finished, some Bangladeshis have complained that the building seemed too “ foreign” (Kanekar 904). The Aga Khan jury report, however, emphasized that the National Assembly Building “ while universal in its sources of forms, aesthetics, and technologies, could be in no other place” and that it “ assimilated both the vernacular and monumental archetypes of the region, and abstracted and transformed, to a degree of utter purity, lasting architectural ideas from many eras and civilizations” (Kanekar 904).

The impact of the Jatiyo Sangshad Bhaban Building has been very large. For Bangladeshis, it has become “ emblematic of the future,” and “ symbolic of Bangladesh’s independence and an iconic beginning of a new architecture in the region” (Kanekar 904). For the rest of the world, it has put Dhaka on the architectural map in a way that it had never been before.

Works Cited

Kahn, Louis. “ Lecture at a Conference on ‘ Medicine in the Year 2000’.” *Louis Khan: Essential Texts* . Ed. Robert Twombly. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003. 169-184.

Kanekar, Aarati, " National Assembly Builindg, Sher-E-Banglanagar, Dhaka." *Encyclopedia of 20th-Century Architecture* . Ed. R. Stephen Sennott. New York: Routledge, 2003. 902-904.

Wendover, Jess. " A Space for the Nation: The Capitol Center in the National Imagination." *Shifting Infrastructures* 6 (2004): 124-131.