

An Analysis of the Folk Thoughts of Zainul Abedin on Book Covers and Illustrations (বইয়ের প্রচ্ছদ ও অলংকরণে জয়নুল আবেদিনের লোকজ ভাবনার বিশ্লেষণ)

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[Abstract : Book covers and illustrations are more than just a mechanical process or a commercial endeavor; it adds a new level of artistry to the author's work. Bangla book decoration has a rich history, with the practice of ornamentation in the books of Bengali authors and periodicals of editors dating back centuries. Zainul Abedin, the pioneer of modern art in Bangladesh, painted the diverse culture of rural Bengali life and its folk traditions. While his celebrated works in painting and drawing have been widely analyzed, his contributions to book illustration remain an understudied area of his oeuvre. This paper examines how Zainul Abedin's illustrations reflect his immersion in folk culture and the thematic undercurrents of rural identity, exploring their cultural, aesthetic, and narrative significance. Therefore, the researcher visited the Zainul Abedin Museum and Central Library to gather primary data for the article. To complete the article, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been applied. This study emphasizes how folk-motif-inspired Zainul's creative works, especially book-related artworks, represent Zainul Abedin's significant efforts in the last century that stand as evidence of his commitment to raising the excellences of the art market as well as the graphic design industry, particularly book decorations of our country. This dedication has left an endless impact on the present and next generations of artists and designers. Additionally, it contributes to the continuous growth and fame of Bangla book design, solidifying its regarded position in artistic articulation.]

Keywords: Folk thought, Book cover, Illustration, Design, Folk Painting, Motif.

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1. Introduction

The decoration of book covers and illustrations was effectively established in ancient times, and the practice of creating illuminated manuscripts flourished in the Western world until the development of the printing press. Similar traditions existed in other regions of the world, including the Persian miniature tradition. The woodcut illustrations of the fifteenth century, which were promptly incorporated into early printed books and later block books, are the earliest examples of modern book design. The use of additional techniques such as engraving, etching, lithography, and various types of color printing was exploited by many artists to expand the range of creative possibilities. However, Bangla book design has an abundant legacy that has influenced literature for a long time despite its brief existence.

In the 19th century, artists in Calcutta used woodblock prints and later lithographic decoration for printed books which was known as *Puti*. Eventually, Rabindranath Tagore became interested and started sketching his own books. Under his inspiration, artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Asit Kumar Haldar, Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury, Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury, Jyotirindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Manindra Bhushan Gupta, Sukumar Ray and many others created book covers and illustrations. In addition, Muslim painter Kazi Abul Kasem and Buddhadeva Bose, known as filmmaker, producer, and screenwriter Amiya Chakravarty, were enthusiastic about their book cover design in the last decade of the century. One of their upcoming illustrators was Zainul Abedin, who made book cover designs and illustrations while attending the Calcutta Government Art School and later becoming a teacher there.

Zainul Abedin's artwork has been studied extensively, but his contributions to various fields of graphic design have not obtained enough consideration. This study intends to analyze Zainul Abedin's proficiency in utilizing the Bangla folk style in book illustration and cover design, in addition to evaluating his artwork. The main objective is to acquire a comprehensive, in-depth, and detailed understanding of the ways in which folk elements such as color, drawing, or motifs- are employed in Zainul's artwork, particularly in book decoration.

The study has adopted a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, combining historical analysis with cultural studies. The following methods are employed to complete the exploration:

- Initially, primary data is gathered from a variety of sources, such as library archives that contain books, journals, and research papers. Along with gathering data, went to the Zainul Abedin Museum and explored the

artifacts that were gathered, including paintings, books, and photographs, and analyzed the visual elements such as drawing, color, and motifs that include folk themes.

- Secondly, data about Zainul's artistic approach was gathered through interviews with Bangladeshi folk art scholars. The qualitative interactions were all recorded, verbatim transcribed (if necessary), and translated into English. Ultimately, the criteria for analysis will be adjusted and completed by the researcher based on prior research.

Studying the narrative of book illustration in Bangladesh is very important for a graphic designer. However, there is insufficient information available on this topic. Scholars such as Nazrul Islam and Abul Mansur Ahmed have examined Zainul's contributions to contemporary Bangladeshi art. Nevertheless, there has been limited focus on his work in design as well as book decorations, which played a significant role in spreading folk patterns in Bangla visual culture. The art and design students of our country are suffering from the lack of this. The aim of this study is to fill this gap by synthesizing existing analyses of his vernacular aesthetics and conducting a focused survey of his lesser-known published works.

The researcher highlights the critical need to explore the connection between Zainul Abedin's folk-inspired ideology and the visual language of his designs. By analyzing his book covers and illustrations, this study aims to enrich the discourse on the intersection of folk traditions and modern art. Furthermore, the researcher underscores the importance of educating artists and students about Zainul's remarkable contributions to graphic design, as his work continues to be a profound source of inspiration and influence in the field.

To initiate a discussion on the topic, it is crucial to explore Zainul Abedin's personal life and gain a greater understanding of key notion such as book cover design, illustration, and folk thought. The details are provided below:

2.1 Zainul Abedin's Early life and Education

Zainul Abedin, also known as *Shilpacharya* (Great teacher of the arts), was a prominent Bangladeshi artist. He was born in Kishoreganj on 29 December 1914, and much of his childhood was spent near the scenic banks of the Brahmaputra River. The Brahmaputra would later appear in many of his paintings and be a source of inspiration throughout his career. Many of his works framed the Brahmaputra, and a series of watercolors that Zainul Abedin did as his tribute to the river earned him the Governor's gold medal in an all-India exhibition in 1938. This recognition marked the first time he

came under the spotlight, and the award gave him the confidence to create his visual style.

In 1933, Zainul Abedin was admitted to the Government School of Art in Calcutta (now Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata, India). He spent five years there, learning the British-European academic style, and achieved the first-class distinction. Subsequently his graduation, he joined as a faculty member of the same institution. Zainul was dissatisfied with both the limitations of European and Oriental academic styles, therefore he started artistic practice towards realism. After that, he completed training for around two years at the Slade School of Fine Art in London and introduced a new style named the *Bengali style*. This approach featured his own style integrated folk forms with geometric shapes, semi-abstract representation, and the use of primary colors. He also focused on nature, rural life, and the daily struggles of people, aiming to create art that was realistic yet modern in appearance.

He became well known in 1944 through his series of paintings depicting some of the great famines in Bangladesh during its British colonial period. After the partition of the Indian subcontinent, he moved to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). In 1948, he helped establish the Institute of Arts and Crafts, now Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Dhaka. The Indian Express has described him as a legendary Bangladeshi painter and activist. Like many of his contemporaries, his paintings on the Bengal famine of 1943 are viewed as his most characteristic works. He was the pioneer of the modern art movement in Bangladesh and was rightly considered by Syed Manzoorul Islam (critic, writer and a former professor of Dhaka University) as the founding father of Bangladeshi modern arts, soon after Bangladesh earned the status of an independent republic.

2.2 Book cover

The book cover is a very important aspect of a book that draws the attention of potential readers. It is a protective cover that holds and binds a book's pages together and the processes of publishing the book for the marketplace. Book cover design is the perfect blend of typography and graphics, that supports the themes of the book. The cover design usually includes the front cover, back cover, and spine. The front cover generally incorporates the book's title, author's name, subtitle, and related graphics while embracing the publisher's logo. A book cover is a piece of art that conveys an entire manuscript into a single image. It is a responsibility taken not only by designers but also by editors, along with the marketing, sales, and production teams. Art director, Anna Billson says,

Collaboration is part of the whole design process working with different teams and illustrators outside the company, to share inspiration or unlock a problem, helps us create the best possible book covers. (Ciucci, 2023)

In the 15th century, Johannes Gutenberg (German inventor and craftsman) developed the automatic moveable-type printing press (Greenfield, 2022), which significantly increased the speed of printing. Although early book covers were embossed into leather with valuable gold, considered a luxurious legacy, after the Industrial Revolution, developments of modern printing presses have transformed customizable designs.

2.3 Book Illustration

Book illustration is an artistic form that requires creating visual images or drawings to enhance the book content. In general, illustrations are commonly initiated in children's books as it helps to understand the story by associating words with actions and objects. It can vary extensively in style, medium, and method, from hand-drawn sketches and artwork to digital art. Illustrations help readers recognize the textual content, especially when it is hard to explain thoughts with words alone. It also can add visible appeal and make a book more memorable. The practice of illustrating manuscript books dates back to ancient times, with the subculture of illuminated manuscripts flourishing in the *West* till the appearance of printing (Bland, 1969). Similar traditions existed in different regions, which include the *Persian miniature*. Modern book illustration traces its roots to 15th-century woodcut illustrations, which were quickly adopted in early revealed books and block books. Techniques like engraving, etching, lithography, and numerous forms of color printing later broadened the creative possibilities utilized by masters, which include *Daumier*, *Doré*, and *Gavarni* (Melot, 1984).

2.4 Folk Thought

Folk thought refers to collective beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes that emerge organically inside a culture or network. These are generally surpassed informally throughout generations through oral traditions, rituals, cultures, arts, and shared experiences, in place of being codified or systematically taught (Christensen & Turner, 1993). Folk thought frequently displays the values, worldview, and social norms of a set and is clear in various cultural expressions consisting of proverbs and sayings, folktales and myths, superstitions and beliefs, customs and rituals, and ethnoscience (Adam, 2010). Folk idea serves as a lens through which a collection interprets the arena and navigates life. While it could appear informal or intuitive, it

frequently holds deep significance and affords expertise of the institution's records, demanding situations, and aspirations.

3. An Exploration of Zainul Abedin's Book Covers and Illustrations

Zainul, who came to Calcutta from Mymensingh, was admitted to an art school by the literary man Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (Journalist, Politician, and Litterateur). He was the editor of the newspaper *Daily Azade* and acting editor of the monthly magazine *Mohammadi*. He commissioned the young artist Zainul to illustrate the monthly *Mohammadi* magazine, providing Zainul with some extra income. M. Siddiq Khan said, Abu Miyan's *Prem*, illustrated by Zainul Abedin, was published in the monthly *Mohammadi* magazine in the 1340 issue. *Shawkat Osman's* novel *Bani Adam* was also illustrated by Zainul, and published in the 1946 Eid issue of *Daily Azadi* (Haque, 2015). Additionally, Zainul played a crucial role in creating book covers and illustrations for numerous pioneering writers. Below is an exploration of some of these books, accompanied by an analysis of his unique artistic style:

3.1 *Nakshi Kanthar Math* (নকশী কাঁথার মাঠ)



Fig. 01: Zainul Abedin's book cover design for *Nakshi Kanthar Math*.

Nakshi Kanthar Math (translated as *The Field of the Embroidered Quilt*) is a renowned Bengali narrative poem by Jasimuddin (a famous poet of Bangladesh). This poem was written in 1929 and first published in 1938, the poem is a poignant rural tale of love, loss, and enduring emotions, rendered in the vivid cultural and natural imagery of Bangladesh. The concept of the poem has been inspired by numerous narratives from people in the village. Numerous narratives from rural life have inspired the theme. Zainul Abedin made valuable contributions to create illustrations in this book. His artworks for this iconic Bangla poem are acknowledged for vividly portraying rural life and effectively capturing the essence of the story. His artistic style features:

- Zainul Abedin's illustration style blended realism with a strong focus on emotional depth, which aligned beautifully with the rural simplicity and profound feelings expressed in Jasimuddin's poems. His illustrations showcased fine lines, detailed expressions, and a naturalistic approach that vividly brought the village life.
- Abedin's mastery in capturing rural landscapes and their inhabitants is clearly showcased in the book cover and illustrations. The serene beauty of the countryside, the simplicity of village life, and the deep emotions of the story are intricately depicted. The cover vividly features fields, rivers, trees, fish, birds, and traditional village scenes effectively establishing the narrative in its authentic setting. These images represent traditional folk arts including *Shokher Hari*, *Nakshi kantha*, and *clay dolls*. Additionally, Zainul's unique hand-drawn typography captures the essence of folk culture and enhances the overall visual appeal of the book.
- The protagonists, Rupai and Saju, are portrayed with a raw intensity that captures their love, yearning, and sorrow. Zainul's illustrations emphasize the universal emotions of their love, loss, and nostalgia that the poem embodies.
- Zainul Abedin's deep connection with Bangla rural life is evident in his attention to detail in clothing, postures, and activities of characters (Fig.01). The *Nakshi kantha* (embroidered quilt) is often a focal point in his illustrations.
- Abedin primarily utilized ink and wash techniques, which allowed him to achieve subtle shading and create a dramatic contrast that enhanced the depth of his illustrations. His choice of monochromatic color reflects the simplicity and austerity of rural people. Moreover, he employed woodblock printing techniques for various illustrations.

3.2 *Beder Meye* (বেদের মেয়ে)

Jasimuddin's another book *Beder Meye* (বেদের মেয়ে) is one of the most iconic works in Bengali literature, illustrated by Zainul Abedin. The book, which

was first published in the 1930s, portrays rural life in Bangladesh and is renowned for its folkloric and romantic storytelling style. It beautifully blends the daily experiences of ordinary people.



Fig. 02: Beder Meye book cover.

- In the illustrations for *Beder Meye*, Zainul's skill in capturing human emotions and rural scenery is evident. His line drawings exhibit fluidity and intensity, creating a profound connection between the poem's concepts and the accompanying visual arts.
- Zainul Abedin's artistic approach prominently featured the use of monochromatic light and shadow, along with his striking depictions of human figures and the evocative portrayal of the simplicity of rural Bangladesh. He used watercolor and gouache to define the figures with thick, bold lines that added depth and emotion.
- The primary focus of this book is the women's struggle in the village, highlighting the author's intention to portray the ordinary rural people's daily existence. From an analytical view point, it seems that the book cover which has line-drawn portraits with brave eyes may have been inspired by *Pattachitra* (scroll painting). The calligraphic book's title emphasized his unique approach to typography and design. Zainul's picture captures an endless social misery, offering a glimpse into a social system marked by

famine, pestilence, exploitation, and deprivation. His pictures raise awareness of the double deprivation faced by the poor, poverty, and class exploitation, along with political subjugation. The illustrations remain iconic in art history of our nation, as they provide a visual representation of the cultural and social sentiments.

3.3 Krittivas *Ramayan* (কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ)

The illustrated *Krittivas Ramayan* (a rendition of the Rāmāyaṇa into Bengali) for children, presenting the main story of Ramayana, was compiled by Kalyani Dutta, a professor of Sanskrit at Basanti Devi College in Calcutta and Zainul Abedin, a teacher at Kolkata Government Art School, illustrated that book. The book was published in 1947 by Dev Kumar Bose on behalf of *Grantha-Jagat* (গ্রন্থ-জগৎ) the book gained popularity with subsequent editions in years respectively 1951, 1952, and 1955, witnessing an increase in pages from 16 to 22 (Chowdhury, 2014, p.91).

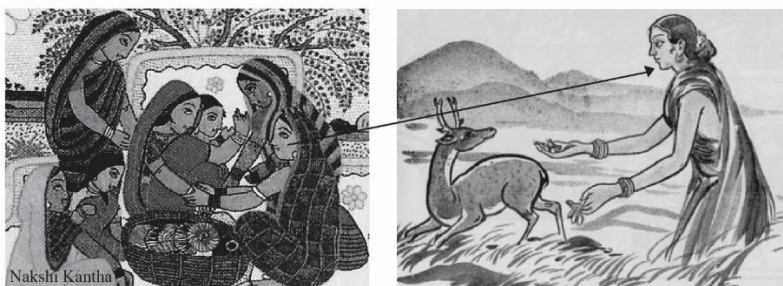


Fig. 03: Zainul Abedin's illustration for *Krittivas Ramayan* book (left).

- Zainul was given the anthology of *Ramayana* to choose the subject of the film, and he used Chinese ink on cartridge paper for the paintings. His skill of line drawing in the book illustration is observed in the pictures, reminiscent of the folk painting of our country (Fig.03). He included a total of nineteen images to accompany the story, but due to careless ink spilling on one picture, eighteen pictures had been eventually published with the book cover featuring the inner picture of *Rama Lakshman*.

It is considered a seminal work in Bengali literature, blending factors of devotion, cultural nuances, and poetic imagination. The textual content includes widespread localization of the *Ramayana* story, incorporating Bengali traditions, folklore, and regional sensibilities.

- The instance contemplated rhythmic lines, striking realism, and profound emotional depth, rendered in a charming line drawing layout. These artistic endeavors powerfully captured the core issues of Hinduism, and divine

intervention, resonating deeply with viewers and welcoming them to discover those timeless narratives. It is observable that the female figure (Fig.03) inside the illustration becomes stimulated by the traditional *Nakshi Kantha* style.

An important fact is that Zainul Abedin did not accept any honorarium for drawing this book, and his paintings were highly appreciated at that time. Premendra Mitra praised Zainul's work in a literary chat about this illustration, with Bhabani Mukhopadhyay, Anil Bhattacharya, and other artists. Dev Kumar presented a copy of the children's illustrated book to Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, who was also very happy to see the pictures, commenting that, "The story of *Ramayana* has been beautifully revealed through the pictures" (Chowdhury, 2014).

3.4 *Kashbaner Konya* (কাশবনের কন্যা)

The novel *Kashbaner Konya* by Abul Kalam Shamsuddin was published in 1954. It delves into the lives, joys, and aspirations of the common folk in rural Bengal. The plot of the novel is relatively straightforward, revolving around nearly parallel tales of couples.



Fig 04: Zainul's book cover design of *Kashwaner Konna*.

- It is observable, that the book cover design is truly distinctive, with Zainul drawing inspiration from the traditional *Tepa Putul* (a clay folk doll from Bangladesh), to portray the female figure. His colorful, opaque line drawings exude fluidity and dynamism, growing a powerful connection between the book's issues and its visual illustration. The minimalist natural background inside a frame adds intensity, reflecting the folk *Nakshi kantha* style of composition.

The cover design of *Kashbaner Kanya* showcases Zainul Abedin's uniquely creative style, characterized by the aid of simple yet impactful traces, strong contrasts, and a deep emotional resonance. His works are profoundly influenced by the tradition and environment of Bangladesh, which possibly informs the design of this book cover as well. Qayyum Chowdhury commented on Zainul's cover design for *Kashbaner Kanya*:

Shamsuddin Abul Kalam's novel Kashwaner Konna I think is a direction in publishing. In Zainul Abedin's illustrated cover, his calligraphy and illustrations are still unique. (Iqbal, 2019)

5. Discussion

Zainul's engagement with folk thoughts in his painting in addition design reflects a broader artistic mission: *to democratize art by making it accessible and relevant to the masses*. During a transformative segment of the post-colonial era, Zainul Abedin drew profound inspiration from his surroundings and the socio-political weather of his time. His artwork vividly portrayed the poverty, famine, and struggles endured by those affected by war. Specializing in realism, a hallmark of modern European art, Zainul emerged as a pioneer in the discipline. His distinctive style, marked by bold pencil strokes and dark ink outlines, reflected Western artistic influences while showcasing his unique creative identity across mediums such as paintings, book covers, as well as illustrations.

Zainu's design scene was driven by his deep empathy, pleasure, and concern for the underprivileged. He brought to life the hardships of the poor, the suffering, and even neglected animals, giving them expressive and evocative forms in his illustrations.

5.1 Zainul Abedin's Artistic Philosophy and Folk Influence

Zainul Abedin was significantly influenced by traditional Bengali techniques and Islamic art throughout his life. He first encountered Islamic artwork at some stage in his research of Iranian art at the same time as visiting London in 1937. Zainul recognized the impact of Persian art on his works from the mid-forties to the mid-fifties; however, he believed this had

an impact on changes merely outside. His interest in the traditional techniques of Bengal's distant past became revitalized after he participated in the excavation of *Mahasthangarh* in 1947.

After that, Zainul's artistic philosophy became deeply tied to his study of rural Bengal. His childhood in Kishoreganj, a region marked by scenic riverine landscapes and vibrant village life, significantly shaped his worldview. Folk traditions, characterized by simplicity, spontaneity, and emotional depth, have been intrinsic to his innovative output. In his book cover designs and illustrations, Zainul frequently employed visible elements reminiscent of *Pattachitra* (traditional scroll painting), motifs from *Nakshi Kantha* embroidery, and *Terracotta* reliefs. These influences manifested in the stylized human figures, naturalistic depictions of flora and fauna, and rhythmic compositions that often-accompanied literary works.

- **Use of folk symbol**

Zainul Abedin applied symbolic imagery to focus on the struggles of the human beings of Bangladesh and their environment, aiming to expose oppression. He once stated, "I have found Bangla prakritriti in the distress of the people". In his book covers and decorative art, Zainul included numerous animal illustrations, each representing a different facet of Bengali life. For instance, his bird illustrations in the *Nakshi Kanthar Math* book express the Bengali people's yearning for freedom. Fish, a prevalent symbol in much of Zainul's artwork, frequently constitute fertility and peace.

- **Dynamic Line Work**

Zainul's illustrations are distinguished by their bold, rhythmic lines, which echo the fluidity discovered in traditional *Pattachitra*. A typical *Pattachitra* painting is known for its intricate and highly unique patterns, regularly depicting mythological memories, spiritual issues, or folk stories. Zainul's drawing style also added movement and life to his compositions, creating an immersive experience for readers. The style is exemplified by book covers and illustrations of Jasimuddin's *Beder Meye* (বেদের মেয়ে), *Nakshi Kanthar Math* (নকসী কাঁথার মঠ), Farrukh Ahmad's *Shat Shagorer Majhee* (সাত সাগরের মাঝি), Waliullah's *Lalsalu* (লালসালু).

- **Integration of Human Figures**

Zainul's illustrations book depict farmers, fishermen, and daily workers engaged in their work, showcasing his deep connection to

rural Bengal for example in the book *Nakshi Kanthar Math*. His portrayal of human figures reflects the dignity and simplicity of rural life, highlighting the roles of farmers, women, and fishermen and their ties to the land and cultural heritage. His artistic style combines realism with a hint of abstraction, transforming figures into symbols of universal human struggles. The idea of the story and his drawings blend together seamlessly.

- **Cultural Significance**

Zainul's influence on graphic design in Bangladesh is significant and a long way-achieving. Although he became an artist, he performed a crucial role in developing art institutions in the country and was a pioneer in promoting folk art. In 1948, he helped establish the Government Institute of Arts and Crafts, which is now a part of the University of Dhaka. Zainul was instrumental in promoting modernist styles in Bangladesh.

His work in book decoration blends a modern realist style with a vivid representation of local themes, serving as a model for successive generations of Bangladeshi artists. This approach reflects a broader rejection of European academic traditions in favor of a distinctive and modern national art. Additionally, Abedin gathered a wide variety of folk relics, such as rare Bengali manuscripts, masks, and *Nakshi Kantha* from earlier times. His book design work was inspired by these folk forms, which enhanced the cultural story of his artwork.

In the second half of the 20th century, Zainul Abedin helped to shape Bangladeshi art. However, many of his works have now not been adequately preserved. The researcher have observed that the dearth of data presents a major obstacle, limiting our investigation to a specific concentration like book design. Therefore, it is essential to explore not only Zainul's paintings but also his contributions to other fields of fine arts, such as graphic design, to preserve his remarkable artistic work. He raised awareness of poverty, human problems, and societal injustices via his paintings. This ought to teach young artists the value of using art as a platform for advocacy and social alternatives. In his work, he combined classic and modern forms by introducing new materials and strategies. His creative method evokes budding artists to attempt new things and broaden even as being dependable to their origins. Therefore, the researcher advises all designers and artists to explore his lifestyle, methods, and folk philosophy.

6. Conclusion

Since the beginning of his artistic practice, Zainul Abedin has expressed the life and nature of the common people of Bengal, as well as explored the folk traditions mixed with the lifestyle of the people. As a result, he established the Folk-Art Museum in Sonargaon, aimed to preserve the country's heritage and folk art. These folk themes became the inspiration for his artwork such as painting or design, illustration or cover design. Which is an attempt to describe in the above discussion. Renowned art critic Shovan Som's comment about Zainul,

Famous artists of Bengal have also joined the illustration of the magazine. The so-called distinction between commercial art and fine art cannot be seen. (Iqbal, 2020)

In the context of Bangladesh, there is a noticeable lack of discussion, research, and documentation regarding the design work of artists, despite graphic design being a recognized medium of art. This gap is particularly evident in the case of pioneer Zainul Abedin and his contributions to the design industry in Bangladesh. Many examples of Zainul's work in the prominent fields of graphic design and publishing are now nearly forgotten. However, the information and data collected in this study indicate that Zainul style in book cover design and decorations often showcased folk themes and that was truly extraordinary.

Book design serves as an artistic medium through which artists can reach people's homes. Zainul Abedin approached this endeavor with great care and intention, effectively creating an art market in Bangladesh. As a result, the artist community, researchers, and the rich tradition of folk art in Bengal have gained worldwide appreciation. Thus, exploration like that is critical, imparting a foundation and steering for the inventive hobbies of future generations. The reputation that Bangladeshi painting and design today enjoys is largely due to Zainul Abedin's unmatched accomplishments, which have cemented his place in the design and art history.

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[সার-সংক্ষেপ: বইয়ের প্রচ্ছদ এবং অলংকরণ কেবল একটি যান্ত্রিক প্রক্রিয়া বা শুধু বাণিজ্যিক প্রয়াস নয়; শিল্পীর তুলির ছোঁয়া লেখকের রচনাকে নতুন মাত্রায় শিল্পসুষমা দান করে। বাংলা বইপত্রের অলংকরণের ইতিবৃত্ত নাতিদীর্ঘ। বাঙালি লেখকদের বইয়ে কিংবা সম্পাদকদের সাময়িকপত্রে অলংকরণ শতবর্ষ আগে থেকে প্রচলিত। আমাদের গ্রন্থ চিত্রণের ইতিহাসে জয়নুল আবেদিনের নাম শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে উচ্চারিত। বাংলাদেশের আধুনিক শিল্পের পথিকৃৎ জয়নুল আবেদীন। লোকজ জীবন ও সংস্কৃতি ছিল তাঁর শিল্পচর্চার প্রেরণার এক প্রধান

উৎস। যদিও তাঁর বিখ্যাত চিত্রকর্মগুলি নিয়ে ব্যাপকভাবে গবেষণা করা হয়েছে, কিন্তু পুস্তক বা বইয়ের অলংকরণে তাঁর অবদানগুলি একটি অধ্যয়নযোগ্য ক্ষেত্র হিসাবে রয়ে গিয়েছে। এই প্রবন্ধে, জয়নুল আবেদিন কর্তৃক নির্মিত বইয়ের প্রচ্ছদ এবং অলংকরণ অন্বেষণপূর্বক লোকজ সংস্কৃতি এবং বিষয়ের প্রতি তাঁর গভীর আকর্ষণ, এবং এগুলোর সাংস্কৃতিক, নান্দনিক ও কাহিনীগত গুরুত্ব বিশ্লেষণ করার প্রয়াস রয়েছে। প্রবন্ধটির প্রাথমিক তথ্য সংগ্রহের জন্য জয়নুল আবেদিন যাদুঘর (ময়মনসিংহ) এবং কেন্দ্রীয় গ্রন্থাগার (ঢাকা) পরিদর্শন করা হয়েছে। নিবন্ধটি সম্পূর্ণ করার জন্য, গুণগত এবং পরিমাণগত উভয় গবেষণা পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগ করা হয়েছে। এই অধ্যয়নটি জোর দেয় যে কীভাবে লোকজ মোটিফ দ্বারা অনুপ্রাণিত জয়নুল আবেদীনের সৃজনশীল কর্ম, বিশেষ করে বই-সম্পর্কিত শিল্পকর্ম, গত শতাব্দীতে শিল্পের বাজারের পাশাপাশি গ্রাফিক ডিজাইন শিল্প, বিশেষত আমাদের দেশের বই অলংকরণের মানোন্নয়নে অঙ্গীকারের প্রমাণ হিসেবে বিবেচিত হয়। এই নিবেদন বর্তমান ও পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের শিল্পী ও ডিজাইনারদের উপর এক অনন্ত প্রভাব ফেলেছে। পাশাপাশি, এটি বাংলা বই ডিজাইনের ক্রমবর্ধমান উন্নতি ও খ্যাতিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখছে এবং শিল্পসৌন্দর্যের প্রকাশে এর মর্যাদাপূর্ণ অবস্থানকে আরও সূদৃঢ় করেছে।]