

ĀTITHĒYA

School of Hospitality and Culinary Art.
The Neotia University

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COMMERCIALIZATION OF FESTIVALS: IS THE SPIRIT BEING LOST?



FROM THE DESK OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR



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Festivals are an integral part of our social and cultural fabric, symbolizing joy, gratitude, faith, and unity. They have traditionally served as moments of reflection and collective celebration, transcending economic and social boundaries. In the contemporary world, however, the growing commercialization of festivals invites serious introspection.

What were once community-centered observances are increasingly shaped by market forces. Lavish advertising, branded celebrations, and consumer-driven expectations often dominate the narrative. While such commercialization contributes to economic growth and employment, it also risks reducing festivals to commodities. The deeper meanings spiritual renewal, cultural continuity, and human connection can become secondary to profit and spectacle.

As educators and leaders, it is our responsibility to encourage a more conscious engagement with festivals. Universities must nurture socially aware individuals who appreciate tradition while questioning excess. Students should be encouraged to celebrate responsibly, embracing simplicity, inclusivity, and sustainability. Festivals, after all, are not measured by expenditure, but by the values they reinforce.

The way forward lies in mindful balance. By reclaiming purpose over pomp, we can ensure that festivals continue to inspire harmony, compassion, and shared identity in an ever-evolving world.

EMERGING MINDS



Sattik Sadhu

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Festivals have always formed an integral part of human civilization and signify joy, unity, gratitude, and identity of culture. Each occasion traditionally carried a sense of purpose honouring deities, celebrating seasonal changes, and reinforcing social bonds in India, where festivals are celebrated with unmatched enthusiasm. However, over these last few years, the rising commercialization of festivals has started to make many think if the actual spirit of celebration is getting shadowed by materialism.

Today, a festival's arrival is heralded, not by spiritual preparation, but by commercial campaigns and brand advertisements, offering shopping discounts. Streets are lined with promotional banners, and social media feeds are flooded with sponsored posts, persuading people to celebrate-by-spending more. The result is that the essence of togetherness and reflection that once defined festivals has gradually been replaced by a race to keep pace with consumer trends.

The sense of giving has changed, too. Earlier, gifts were personal tokens of love: homemade sweets, handwoven fabrics, or trifles with special meaning. Now, gifting is more about price tags and brand names rather than thoughtfulness. Similarly, rituals once performed with devotion are rushed through, as people are more concerned with outward show than inner faith. Slowly, the joy of community gatherings and shared experiences is giving way to curated online posts and commercialized celebrations.

At the same time, it is not just commercialization that should be rejected completely. In some respects, it has contributed to economic development by encouraging local enterprise, artisans, and the tourism sector. During festivals, more people are employed, and there is greater cultural exposure to the world. The only disturbing factor is when the commercial motive becomes the main issue and the cultural and emotional values are relegated to the background.

The spirit of festivals can only be retained if one is conscious of striking a balance between tradition and modernity. The celebrations will continue to change, yet they should not lose their essence. Let us not forget that festivals unite people, instill gratitude, and give joy-all things that have no price tag. Ultimately, the soul of any festival does not lie in what we buy, but in what we share-moments, emotions, and love. It is to these simple truths that we need to return to rediscover the reason why we celebrate.



Rimika Nandy
Second Year
B. Sc Hospitality & Hotel Administration

Festivals once carried the fragrance of tradition, togetherness, and gratitude. There were moments when families gathered, communities bonded, and joy came not from what we bought, but from what we shared. However, in today's fast-paced world, the essence of these celebrations seems to be fading beneath layers of commercial glitter.

Shopping malls begin their "festive sales" weeks in advance, and brands compete to outshine each other with catchy advertisements and limited-edition offers. Social media adds its own pressure every post, picture, or reel becomes a silent contest for likes and validation. In this race, we often forget why festivals began in the first place: to celebrate life, culture, and connection. This commercialization isn't entirely negative it boosts the economy, provides employment, and adds color to celebrations. But when profit overshadows purpose, when gifting turns into obligation, and when spiritual reflection is replaced by consumer display, we must pause and ask ourselves: Are we celebrating, or are we just shopping? The true spirit of festivals lives not in the price tags, but in the people in laughter shared over homemade sweets, in the kindness shown to strangers, and in the stories passed down through generations. Perhaps it's time we rediscover that simplicity and bring back the soul of our celebrations.



Pratik Pal

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The Commercialization Impact on Festivals

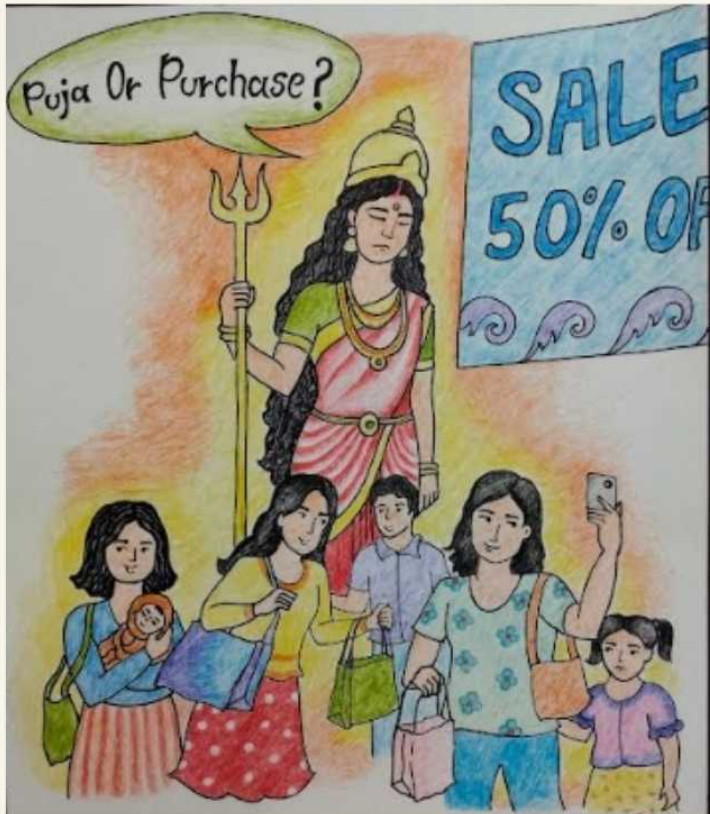


Festivals were once a time for family, friends, and communities to come together and celebrate with love, joy, and faith. They helped people forget their worries and share happiness. Whether it was Diwali, Christmas or Holi, the focus used to be on togetherness, traditions, and values. People decorated their homes, cooked special dishes, and spent time with their loved ones rather than thinking about spending money.

Today, however, festivals have become more commercial. Shopping malls, brands, and companies use them as opportunities to sell products and increase profits. Advertisements encourage people to buy expensive gifts, clothes, and gadgets. Social media also adds pressure to show off celebrations online. Because of this, many people focus more on material things and less on the real meaning of the festival.



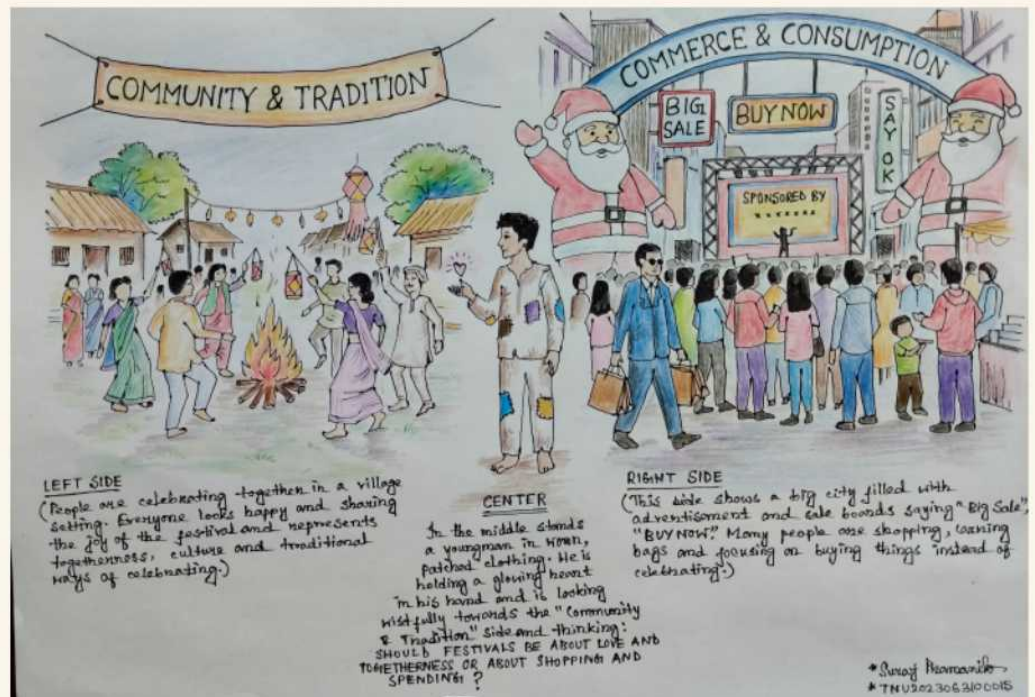
Even though commercialization has made festivals grander and more colourful, it has also reduced their simplicity and emotional connection. The true spirit of giving, caring, and celebrating together is fading behind lights, offers, and sales. We should enjoy festivals but also remember their real purpose to spread happiness, love, and unity among people, not just to spend money.



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Sagnik Sahu

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Festivals, at their heart, are meant to be pure moments of joy, sharing, and cultural celebration. They are the threads that weave our communities and families closer together. Yet, today, the true meaning of these sacred times is being diluted by a relentless wave of commercialization.

Commercialization turns tradition into a transaction. As the festive season approaches, the air fills not with the aroma of homemade sweets, but with the clamour of discount sales and flashy advertisements. Companies hijack these moments to boost their bottom lines, creating immense pressure to acquire new clothes, expensive gifts, and elaborate decorations. The focus shifts from celebrating with our hearts to spending with our wallets.

In simpler times, happiness flowed from connection, not consumption. Families gathered to cook traditional meals, create handmade decorations, and share simple, heartfelt moments. Now, social media amplifies the need for a 'grand' celebration, equating true joy with the visible display of wealth, often leading to debt and an empty feeling once the tinsel is put away.

Buying is not inherently wrong, but when the pursuit of money outshines meaning, we lose the essence of our traditions.

This is our chance to reclaim the soul of our festivals. Let's redirect our energy from luxury shopping to acts of kindness: sharing a meal with the needy, volunteering, or simply dedicating undivided time to loved ones.

Because ultimately, festivals are not measured by the size of our bills, but by the depth of the love and warmth we share. Let's celebrate the next season with open hearts, not just open wallets.



Amrita Bhujel

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B. Sc. Hospitality & Hotel Administration

This beautiful sketch of Goddess Durga serves as a reminder of the true essence of our festival's faith, togetherness, and the victory of good over evil. Unfortunately, in today's world, the real spirit of celebration is often overshadowed by commercialization. Festivals have increasingly become about shopping, advertisements, and grand decorations rather than devotion and unity.



As we celebrate Durga Puja or any other festival, we must remember that their true joy lies not in material display, but in the emotions that bind us love, faith, and harmony. Festivals are meant to connect us with our culture and with one another, reminding us that happiness cannot be bought, but felt through genuine togetherness & devotion.



Oindrila Mondal

1st Year

B. Sc. Hospitality & Hotel Administration

The commercialization of festivals has led to valid concerns that the original spirit is being lost, with the focus shifting from cultural and spiritual traditions toward consumerism and financial gain. However, the impact is complex and multifaceted, with perspectives suggesting that the spirit is not lost but evolving to meet modern realities.

How the festival spirit is diminished by commercialization

- **Emphasis on materialism:** The focus shifts from the spiritual or cultural significance of a festival to the acquisition of goods and services. Retailers heavily promote sales, equating the celebration with spending on new clothes, extravagant gifts, lavish decorations & actions, thriller, adventure or romantic kind of cinemas. This can lead to increased consumerism and peer pressure.
- **Dilution of cultural significance:** Over-commercialization can weaken the deeper meanings of a festival, replacing traditional practices with commercial events and promotions. For instance, traditional elements of festivals like Dhanteras, Dussehra or Diwali can be overshadowed by corporate sponsorships and marketing.
- **Erosion of traditional practices:** Modern conveniences, influenced by consumer culture, have replaced personal, handmade preparations. Store-bought sweets and decorations have taken the place of homemade items, & digital greetings have supplanted personal visits, diminishing the communal experience.
- **Environmental impact:** Excessive consumerism & the pursuit of grandeur can lead to negative environmental consequences. For example, large-scale idols for festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi are often made with non-biodegradable materials that can pollute water bodies upon immersion.
- **Increased social inequality:** The emphasis on expensive gifts & decorations can widen social gaps. While affluent individuals may participate in lavish celebrations, others with fewer means are left out, degrading the sense of community.

Arguments that the spirit is adapting, not lost

- **Economic benefits:** Commercialization can provide a significant boost to local & national economies. It creates jobs, generates revenue for businesses, & helps fund the large-scale events that have become part of modern festival culture.
- **Wider accessibility:** In some cases, commercialization can help preserve & promote cultural traditions by making them more accessible to a wider audience. Corporate-sponsored events & media coverage can introduce a festival to people who may not have experienced it otherwise.
 - **Evolution of tradition:** Culture is not a static concept but rather something that constantly evolves. The modern festive spirit can be seen as an adaptation to contemporary lifestyles, with new forms of celebration emerging alongside traditional ones. While some traditions may fade, the core need for celebration remains.
- **Personalized celebrations:** Many people still find deep personal meaning in traditional celebrations. How a festival is observed can be a personal matter, & the grandeur of commercialism does not necessarily detract from a spiritual or heartfelt celebration.
- **Renewed focus on heritage:** In response to consumerism, many communities are actively working to preserve the authenticity of their festivals. This includes supporting local artisans, promoting eco-friendly practices, and organizing community-focused events that reinforce traditional values.
- **Ultimately,** commercialization has a dual impact on festivals. To maintain the essence of these celebrations, a conscious effort is needed to balance economic opportunities with the preservation of cultural significance. By focusing on community engagement, cultural education, & sustainable practices, it is possible to ensure that festivals remain a source of both joy & cultural pride.



Reetam Halder

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B. Sc. Hospitality & Hotel Administration

Holi, traditionally known for 'Festival of colors' is one of India's most vibrant and joyous festivals, celebrating the arrival of spring, the victory of good over evil, and social harmony. However, in recent years, the festival has undergone significant commercialization. Big brands and entertainment industries use Holi as an opportunity to boost sales and advertise through special offers, theme events and social media campaigns. While the commercialization has increased economic activity and made Holi popular worldwide, it has also led to the loss of traditional values and environmental concerns such as wastage of water, use of harmful chemicals and excessive consumerism. While commercialization has given Holi a global platform and economic boost, it is essential to strike a balance by preserving the cultural, social and environmental essence of the festival celebrating with joy, sustainability and genuine human connection.



Gargi Halder & Ronit Das
3rd Year, B. Sc. Hospitality & Hotel
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The Grand Show: How Durga Puja Became a Mega Business

For many of us who grew up in West Bengal, the word 'Durga Puja' brings back sweet memories of simple joy new clothes, family gatherings, and the sound of the dhaak (drums). The local pandal (temporary structure) felt like a cozy extension of our neighbourhood, built with simple bamboo and cloth. Today, the scene has changed completely. The festival, which celebrates the homecoming of Goddess Durga, is still the biggest event of the year, but it has transformed into a massive economic powerhouse. What was once purely a religious and social festival is now often described as a major marketing moment, where the biggest competition isn't in devotion, but in budget and scale.

The Pandal as a Profitable Business

The local pandal committee has evolved into a corporate entity. The goal is no longer just to worship the Goddess it is to attract the maximum number of people. Why? Because more visitors mean more advertising revenue.

The most significant shift in the Puja's identity is financial. In the mid-20th century, a local para (neighbourhood) puja committee primarily relied on chanda (small, mandatory donations collected door-to-door). Today, while chanda still exists, the operational budgets of major Kolkata pujas have skyrocketed, with top-tier committees spending well over ₹1 crore annually. This astronomical budget is not covered by community donations it is almost entirely underwritten by corporate sponsorship.

Companies ranging from telecom giants and banks to fast-food chains and textile houses recognize the unparalleled captive audience. For them, Durga Puja is the ultimate high-footfall marketing carnival. Sponsorship can constitute up to 70% of a major pandal's budget, turning the sacred grounds into prime advertising real estate.

The Rise of Theme Pujas

This pursuit of popularity has led to the craze of "Theme Pujas." Instead of sticking to a traditional look, pandals now try to recreate everything from famous global structures like local issues like Difficulties faced by Bengali Migrant Worker in other states, Acid Attack Survivors, Mental Struggles, Plastic Pollution.

While these themes often result in breathtaking art and sometimes convey important social messages, they often mean that the traditional look of the Goddess and the original spirit of the festival are less authentic. The focus shifts from the idol itself to the spectacular setting around it. The priority is to create something "viral" and eye-catching that will draw crowds and win awards.



For Example, the pandal which you can see in this picture is The Dakshin Dari Puja Pandal theme, Dahan (The Burning), is a powerful social statement focused on the suffering and resilience of women, especially acid attack survivors. It uses symbolic art and installations, often featuring survivors themselves, to confront visitors with the reality of gender-based violence and inspire societal change.)

Festival as a Consumption Hub

Adding to the commercial atmosphere is the integration of shops and melas (fairs) around the pandals. The surrounding area is packed with food stalls, quick-service restaurants, and brand activation booths.

These areas are designed not just for fun, but for consumer engagement and sales. For brands, the festival is a golden opportunity to interact directly with millions of shoppers. The entire zone becomes a large, festive marketplace where shopping, eating, and entertainment are as important if not more important than the prayers.

- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Look closely at any famous pandal, and you will see massive banners for banks, mobile phone companies, and jewellery brands. This corporate money dominates, turning the pandals into huge, temporary advertising spaces. This is where the concept of the "Festival Economy" comes in it generates Lakh of rupees, fuelling jobs for artisans, electricians, and food vendors.

- **The Retail Rush:** The festival triggers massive seasonal surges in consumer spending. Purchasing new clothes (Pujar shopping), electronics, and gifts is considered integral to the celebration, further entrenching the event within market cycles.

- **The Food Carnival:** The areas surrounding the theme pujas become huge food melas (fairs). While traditional Puja food is served, multinational chains and local entrepreneurs set up pop-up stalls, monetizing the massive crowds that roam the city late into the night.



Banners at outside of Pandal for promoting their products



Food Mela & Shops

In conclusion, Durga Puja remains deeply important to the Bengali heart, but it has certainly put on a glittering, modern coat. It is now a grand show where culture, art, and commerce merge, making it a spectacular festival, even if it feels far removed from the simple pujas of our childhood.

The Changing Face of Diwali: Between Celebration and Commercialization

Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is one of the most important festivals in India. It is celebrated with great joy and excitement by people of all religions and communities. Traditionally, Diwali marks the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. Families clean and decorate their homes, light diyas (oil lamps), make sweets, and worship Goddess Lakshmi for wealth and happiness. It is a time for togetherness, love, and spiritual renewal.

However, in recent years, Diwali has also become a highly commercialized festival. Commercialization means when a festival or tradition is used for making money rather than celebrating its true meaning. Big companies, shops, and brands use Diwali as a chance to sell more products and make profits.

One major effect of commercialization is excessive shopping. Weeks before Diwali, markets and malls are filled with advertisements and sales like “Diwali Dhamaka Offer” or “Festival Discount.” People buy new clothes, jewellery, home appliances, and gifts sometimes even things they don’t really need. While shopping brings happiness to many, it also increases unnecessary spending and financial pressure on some families who try to keep up with others.

Another effect is the loss of traditional values. Earlier, Diwali was celebrated with simple diyas, homemade sweets, and small family gatherings. Now, electric lights, expensive decorations, and store-bought sweets have taken over. The focus has shifted from spiritual and family bonding to showing off wealth and luxury. The true meaning of Diwali spreading light, kindness, and positivity often gets lost.

Commercialization has also led to environmental problems. Many companies promote firecrackers during Diwali, which causes air and noise pollution. The smoke harms both humans and animals and increases health issues like asthma and breathing problems. Plastic decorations and packaging also add to waste, harming the environment even more.

On the positive side, commercialization has helped the economy. During Diwali, business activity increases, giving jobs and income to many people. Local markets, craftsmen, sweet makers, and decorators earn more during this time. Tourism also grows, as many people travel to celebrate with family or visit famous places.

However, it is important to balance celebration and commercialization. People should try to buy local and eco-friendly products instead of expensive, harmful ones. We can support small businesses and handmade goods rather than large companies. Instead of bursting crackers, lighting diyas or candles can keep the festival bright without harming the planet. Sharing food, gifts, and happiness with the poor can make Diwali more meaningful.

In conclusion, commercialization has changed the way Diwali is celebrated. While it brings economic benefits, it also reduces the true spirit of the festival. Diwali should be a time of love, light, peace, and togetherness not just spending and showing off. By celebrating in simple, thoughtful ways, we can keep the real meaning of Diwali alive and make it joyful for everyone.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

CAKE MIXING CEREMONY



On 27th November 2025, School of Hospitality and Culinary Art organized a traditional Cake Mixing event to celebrate the spirit of togetherness and festivity. Faculty members, students, and esteemed dignitaries of The Neotia University came together to blend dry fruits, nuts, spices, and spirits, creating an atmosphere filled with warmth and enthusiasm. The event symbolized unity, teamwork, and shared celebration, while offering students a hands-on experience rooted in culinary tradition and festive hospitality.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

RASONAAY BASONA



On 19th November 2025, School of Hospitality & Culinary Art proudly organized “Rasonaay Basona”, a Bengali theme fine dining experience that beautifully celebrated the richness of Bengal’s culinary heritage. The event showcased an elegant fusion of traditional flavors and modern presentation, reflecting the cultural essence, warmth, and sophistication of Bengali cuisine. Curated and executed by the students, the experience highlighted their culinary skills, service finesse, and deep respect for regional gastronomy, making the day a memorable celebration of taste, tradition, and hospitality.

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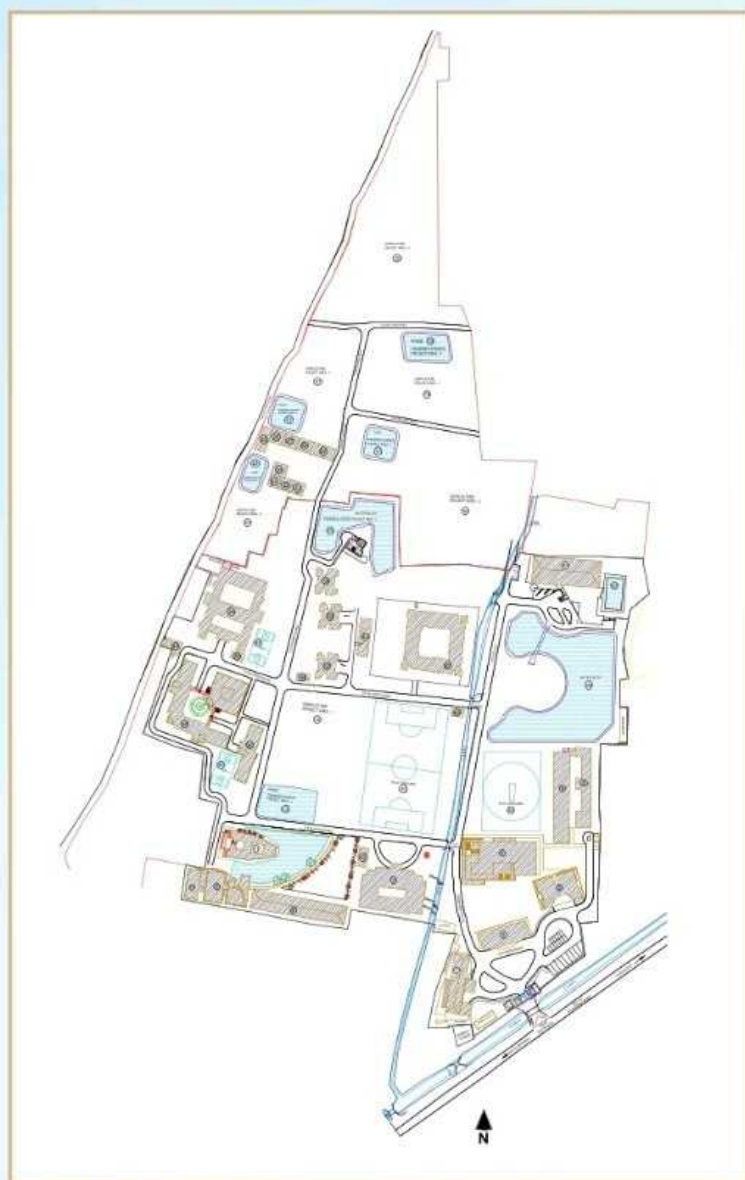
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LEGEND- BUILDING

A. ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCK

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING (G + V)

B. ACADEMICS BLOCK

2. SCHOLASTIC BUILDING - 1 (G + III)
3. SCHOLASTIC BUILDING - 2 (G + II)
4. SCHOLASTIC BUILDING - 3 (G + III)
5. SCHOLASTIC BUILDING - 4 (G + III)
6. SCHOLASTIC BUILDING - 5 (G + III)
7. WORKSHOP BUILDING
8. NEW WORKSHOP BUILDING
9. NEW PHARMACY BUILDING (G + III)
10. PHARMACY BUILDING (G + III)
11. SHIP IN CAMPUS (G + III)

C. AGRICULTURE & FISHERY SCIENCE BLOCK

12. POLY HOUSE & NET HOUSE
13. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 1
14. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 1
15. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 2
16. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 2
17. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 3
18. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 3
19. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 4
20. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 4
21. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 5
22. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 5
23. FISHERY SCIENCE PROJECT AREA - 6
24. AGRICULTURE PROJECT AREA - 6
25. MUSHROOM UNIT
26. FIELD LAB
27. STORE HOUSE
28. SERICULTURE UNIT
29. THRESHING FLOOR
30. BIO GAS PLANT
31. CATTLE SHED
32. VERMI COMPOST PIT
33. BIO FERTILIZER PLANT

D. RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

34. BOY'S HOSTEL - 1 & 2 (G + III)
35. BOY'S HOSTEL - 1 & 2 (G + III)
36. BOY'S HOSTEL - 1 & 2 (G + III)
37. OLD STAFF QUARTERS (G + III)
38. NEW STAFF QUARTERS (G + III)
39. NEW STAFF QUARTERS (G + III)
40. DIRECTOR'S RESIDENCE (G + I)
41. OLD STAFF QUARTERS (G + III)
42. GIRL'S HOSTEL - 3 (G + II)

E. UTILITY & SERVICES BLOCK

43. ELECTRICAL ROOM
44. PUMP ROOM

F. RECREATIONAL BLOCK

45. FOOTBALL GROUND
46. CRICKET GROUND
47. SWIMMING POOL
48. MULTI PURPOSE HALL
49. BASKETBALL COURT (3 NOS.)

G. HEALTH BLOCK

50. MEDICAL UNIT

