The triennial Aga Khan Award for Architecture had been instituted, and already completed two cycles. The award aimed to reward concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of Islamic societies in contemporary design, social housing, community development and improvement, restoration, reuse and area conservation, as well as landscape design and environmental improvement projects. It brought to our attention such projects as Ali Qapu, Chehel Sutun and Hasht Behesht (I had a chance to see all three projects in Isfahan), Kampung Improvement, Rüstem Pasa Caravanserai, Hafsia Quarter and Sidi Bou Saïd (Tunis), Darb Qirmiz Quarter (Cairo), Mali Medical Centre and Great Mosque, Nianing Agricultural Training Centre, Šerefudin's White Mosque (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Shah Rukn-i-'Alam Mazaar (Multan), Ramses Wissa Wassef Arts Centre (Giza), Tanjong Jara Beach Hotel and Rantau Abang Visitors' Centre (Malaysia), and many traditional houses in Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, etc., which were often ordinary and yet unique.

In the 1990s there were few other studies undertaken with small budgets often under personal initiative, for example at the Khulna University which had opened an architecture discipline then. A great scope arrived with the re-organisation of the BUET curricula in 1991-93 to introduce semester system based on credit hour.

The event was the greatest ever constellation of world architectural luminaries; it took another 18 years before we could do something close to it while organising ArcAsia Congress in the same venue. Coincidentally I worked as the Repertoire at both the events; in the first one as the junior-most academic since nobody else would take the (boring) responsibility, and in the other one as a fresh returnee teaching few years abroad, unemployed finding no other profitable engagement, and as nobody else could do it. During the 1985 event, we were literally brushing our shoulders with such world renowned architects as Bawa, Correa, Doshi and Rudolph, Uttam Jain, Raj Rewal, Khambatta and Khosla, Habib Ali and Kamil Mumtaz, journalist and critic as Mulk Raj Anand, WJR Curtis and Mildred Schmertz, academic and thinker as Arkoun, Frampton and Grabar. It gave an opportunity for the region's architects to interact and debate on pertinent issues, and come across recent works of leading architects addressing the respective tradition, culture and environment. The presence of such international personalities exposed the architects of Bangladesh to debates contemporary elsewhere.

Just to sustain the enthusiasm that was generated by the above seminar, the same group of organisers three years later came together to hold a workshop on architectural and urban conservation in the Islamic world, that brought in leading conservationists like Ronald Lewcock, Sherban Cantacuzzino, Brigitte Dessau, Corneille Jest, Ammar Khammash, Michael Sorkin and Reza Ali. The participants were various building professionals, mainly architects, from both government, academic and private practice, who were split into four groups to study as an exercise in conservation plan preparation on three sites in Dhaka and Painamnagaar. Because of some complications of my study in the UK, I couldn't come and participate in the largely successful workshop.

However though expected but it couldn't leave a lasting impact on the participants except few. One of them who studied architecture with me, with the help of others who were with him in the study circle mentioned earlier, undertook a mammoth endeavour to document heritage buildings of Bangladesh over several years, held a measured drawing exhibition on 50 some buildings, and record them in a book named 'Pundranagar to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar'.

Little later at BUET architecture department another study underwent financed by the Ford Foundation that aimed to prepare a baseline data of the historic structures in old Dhaka, document resources with heritage value, provide listing and criteria for selection to the Government, and promote awareness among professionals and students of related subjects, and laymen. I was lucky to be part of the project with few other senior colleagues of mine, and learned a lot. I organised a students' Measured Drawing Competition; conducted Walking Tours in old Dhaka, made few publications, gave lectures, attended international and national seminars, and organised an International Seminar. Yet I am not sure about the actual outcome as nothing substantial has been published, and I myself cannot retrieve any drawing of buildings, even of those that were prepared under my supervision!

In the 1990s there were few other studies undertaken with small budgets often under personal initiative, for example at the Khulna University which had opened an architecture discipline then. A great scope arrived with the re-organisation of the BUET curricula in 1991-93 to introduce semester system based on credit hour. A course on architectural conservation was integrated though as an elective for the first time; however as there was little expertise in relevant area available it couldn't be offered till the late 1990s. As many of the private universities to have introduced architecture programs since 1995 were following the BUET curricula they too kept a course, though were not regular in offering it. Yet this is a beginning. Architecture students are more often undertaking exercises within historic setting that entails decisions regarding old historic buildings or examples of traditional architecture; they are making conscious and informed choices (to retain our historic patrimony, preserve something which were given to us to pass on to our future generation).

Two of the distinguished and unusual buildings I documented for the study at BUET. 1704 Kartalab Kha Mosque at Begumbazaar, recently defaced by the Archaeology Department, and ornately decorated 1912 Kashaituli Mosque.