

Format for submitting projects under Project Varanasi. (Do not change the serial no and headings of the items. If the headings are not relevant to your project then say so. The proposal document must not exceed 5 pages.)

1	Project type (Strike off those not applicable, refer to the policy document for project types)	(i) Technology Development or Prototype Development. (ii) Faculty Projects (Innovation and Application Projects) (iii) Project (Student Nurturing)
2	Title of the Project	World Famous Ramlila of Ramnagar: The Cultural Heritage of Varanasi
3	Duration of the project	Two Years
4	Total Cost	
5	Name address and phone numbers of PIs and Co-PI's	Prof. P.K. Mishra, Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT (BHU) Varanasi, pkmishra.che@itbhu.ac.in , 09415301462

6. General Description of the project: The collection and documentation of every important aspect of human life is required to keep a record for the posterity with a view to enrich the human civilization.

Varanasi being the cultural capital of the country is seat of various important cultural events. More than 200 years old famous Ramlila of Ramnagar is one of them. Why this is supposed to be unique, when every nook and corner of the country is witnessing the Ramlilas during Dussehra? This is a matter of serious research. When every cultural event is being increasingly dependent on modern equipment of sound and light, Ramlila of Ramnagar hasn't changed in the last century. Even today the theatrical presentation of Ramcharitmanas is performed in exactly the same way as it was being performed during our great grandfather's time.

In majority of Ramlilas throughout the country on a single stage event of Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Janakpur and even Lanka are being enacted, whereas this Lila does have different and fixed location for different places like Ayodhya, Lanka etc. The Stage of Ramnagar Ramlila is at least 30 square kilometers large, encompassing whole of the Ramnagar area.

Keeping in mind the uniqueness of this event and its important place in the cultural heritage of Varanasi, the present project aims to carryout in depth research on every aspect of this Ramlila. This research will result in to publication of a book comprising every aspect, right from the selection procedure of "Patra" (Actors/Characters), "Shodhan"(Purification) of Places, training of the selected artists, lifestyle of these characters during Lila period, and theatrical presentation of different acts. There is even lineage of viewers for this Ramlila. There are families who are viewers of this Ramlila since generations and for whole of one month they leave everything aside even their business for this. A detailed interview of this kind of personalities will also be carried out during the investigation to understand their psyche. Interview of Kashi Naresh, the earstwhile ruler of Varanasi will also be conducted to understand his views regarding this great act, which is being witnessed by him and his family members right from its start. This first family of Varanasi is always there and even Ramlila starts with his presence every day.

The Ramlila of Ramnagar is in fact an important segment of Varanasi's Cultural Heritage as it encompasses history, religion, philosophy, conduct, folk-tradition, community feeling and regional traditions. Due to these important aspects, this Ramlila has become a matter of serious investigation, research, documentation and even a learning medium to improve human relations.

7. General Description of experience/ expertise of team on such/ similar projects:

The team has undertaken similar projects for Varanasi. The most prominent of them is a detailed e-encyclopedia being developed on Varanasi www.kashikatha.com. The Hindi version of the website is nearly complete but English version is still incomplete and we are trying to complete this as soon as possible. Being the Secretary of the Manishi Parishad Kashi the PI organizes every year the Madhumangal Mahotsav, the cultural event to mark the Hindu New Year at Sagun Lawn, Mahmoorganj since 2004. The PI is also editing "Manisha", the magazine of Manishi Parishad Kaashi. We under the aegis of Kashikatha continuously organize events to conserve the cultural heritage of Varanasi. We are doing extensive activities for preservation of Kund, Ponds and Wells of Varanasi. As early as 2006, we have organized a seminar in collaboration with Indian Medical Association, Varanasi on the topic, Varanasi ka Paryvarniya Prabandhan. The event was graced by the then Minister of Religious Affair of UP, Vice Chancellor, BHU and Commissioner Varanasi Division. Following is the list of conferences/seminars/meetings organized by the group on the topics relevant to the city Varanasi in recent past. **(Appendix-I)**

Date	Venue	Topics	Important Speakers
08.08.2013	Kanhya Lal Smirti Auditorium, Rathyatra	Varanasi: Past, present& future	Prof. Achyutanand Mishra, Kuvanr Ji Agrawal, Rajeshwar Acharya, Dr. Jitendra Nath Mishra
22.12.2013	E-Hall, IIT (BHU)	Kashi ka Sanskritik Mahatva	Prof. K.D. Tripathi, Prof. S.N. Upadhyay
05.01.2014	Madhuvan, near Ramnagar Durga Temple	Bahari Alang	Prof. Rajeshwar Acharya,
28.02.2014	E-Hall, IIT (BHU)	Discussion on www.kashikatha.com	Dr. Atri Bhardwaj, Prof. P.N. Singh, Ajay Ratan Benerjee, T.K. Ghosh
06.04.2014	E-Hall, IIT (BHU)	Islam in Kashi	Maulana Batin Nomani
22.06.2014	E-Hall, IIT (BHU)	Kashi & Bhojpuri	Dr. Hariram Dwivedi, Prof. Sadanad Shahi

8. Deliverables (The deliverables are to be described in each section. If there is no deliverable in a particular section then say the same clearly.):

(a) Prototype: No

(b) Process Prototype: No

(c) Design/ Technical Document: No

(d) Software: No

(e) Document (audio, visual, write ups, web sites etc):

A complete book in Hindi and English with supporting photographs dealing with every aspect of Ramlila of Ramnagar as described earlier, a web page on this Ramlila will also be hosted along with www.kashikatha.com. Attempt will also be made to present a documentary on the Ramlila of Ramnagar.

(f) Any other

9. Method/ Technology to reach the deliverable. (A detailed description of method or technology may be described):

To understand the philosophical & cultural importance of this Ramlila along with its tradition and history stage wise activities will be performed as described below:

- i. **History of Ramlila:** Detailed investigations through different sources, references and literatures.
- ii. **Important Places Associated with Ramlila:** Total area, Photography of individual places, development of detailed map of all the places associated with this lila, purification processes of the places, initial puja before start of lila. Detailed coverage of temples, ponds, wells, hills & hermitage associated with the changing theme of Ramlila.
- iii. **Grand Tradition:** The past, present, contribution of Kashi Raj family and involvement of local people.
- iv. **Preparation Prior to Main Event:** Selection & training of artists, Ganesh Pujan, Ramayani, rehearsal, preparation related to places, clothes, chariots, effigies, arms & ammunitions (Swords, spears, gada, tops etc.)
- v. **Artists:** Photographs, details of their life and profession, attire, history of their relation with Ramlila, Family involvement etc.
- vi. **Direction:** The role of Vyas Ji, Ramaynis, the collaboration between Ramaynis and artiste in regard to dialogue delivery, training associated with dialogue delivery, discipline.
- vii. **Ramaynis:** Photographs, condensed life-sketch, history of association, family association, their profession, style of delivery of dialogue, pothi & writings etc.
- viii. **Dialogue:** Language, dialogue delivery, style, specialization in dialogue writing such as Prose& Poetry, Folk music and Classical music
- ix. **Sage/Saint, Nemi/Premi:** Dress, special preparation, dedication to Ram and Ramayana, special presence, tradition down the ages in families, profile of selected Nemis with photographs & profession etc. Similar sketches of sages/saints and special guests.
- x. **Business & Livelihood Associated with Ramlila:** A chapter dedicated to the various businesses and livelihoods associated with the Ramlila such as Paan, sweets, chaats, Chandan, Itra, Dhoti & Danda (Stick) etc.
- xi. **Important Days of Lila & Aarti:** Complete reporting of every aspect associated to that specific day.
- xii. **Details of the Town-area Ramnagar:** History, geography, important places, Royal family, Tank, Ponds & Town planning.

- xiii. **Behind the Stage:** Torch Bearer (Mashalchi), Flower Decorator, Panchlight, Effigies, Musical Instruments, Mahtabi, Coordinator, Editor etc.

Prior work in this respect has already started during this year Ramlila, which can also be seen at www.kashikatha.com. **(Appendix-II)**

The complete coverage in terms of photograph, interview etc will be done during the Ramlila of 2015. After the event all other supporting activities will be performed together with writing of the first draft.

After completing the task and preparing first draft of the book it will be sent for review and comments to eminent personalities, who understand the Varanasi and its culture before the next addition of the Ramlila in 2016. If any shortcoming is found out by the expert committee that will be corrected in 2016 edition of Ramlila and book will be printed within three months for release.

10. Time Line / Mile Stones for Achieving the Deliverables:

- i. Initial survey: Already started during this year Ramlila (September-October, 2014), will be completed in next three months, Jan, 2015.
- ii. Detailed Survey: Detailed literature survey will be performed and all the living luminaries will be contacted to get their views and information associated with Ramlila of Ramnagar by taking interviews and visiting people and places. This work will continue till the beginning of the 2015 edition of the Ramlila.
- iii. All the important tasks associated with the Book on Ramlila as described in earlier section of Method will be completed during 2015 edition of the Ramlila.
- iv. Writing & Draft finalization with finalization of interviews etc will be done prior to 2015 edition of Ramlila. After finalization of draft comments will be invited by eminent personalities and modification will be incorporated.
- v. Any omissions in terms of coverage and descriptions will be completed during 2016 edition of Ramlila and after finishing this task book will be published.

Date: 15th October, 2014

Place: IIT (BHU) Varanasi

(P.K. Mishra)

Note: A core team comprising of the following will be working for the realization of the objective set for the project:

1. Prof. Achyutanand Mishra, Former Vice Chancellor, Makhan Lal Chaturvedi University, Bhopal
2. Prof. Rajeshwar Acharya, Ex. HOD, Performing & Visual Arts, Gorkhpur University

3. Prof. S.N. Upadhyay, Former Director, IT, BHU, Varanasi
4. Prof Sadanand Shahi, Coordinator, Bhojpuri Adhyayn Kendra, BHU
5. Mr. Ajay Ratan Banerjee, Coordinator, INTACH Varanasi Chapter