

EDITORIAL

We are delighted to bring to you this issue of the ISVS e-journal published by the Asian School of Knowledge (ASK) jointly with the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. ASK established in 2024 has consolidated its presence and association with the ISVS taking forward both the International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements (ISVS) and the ISVS e-journal.

This issue of the ISVS e-journal has ten papers in keeping with the scale-down approach which the ISVS e-journal is following since the beginning of 2025. In the first paper of this issue, Shweta Suhane & Zankhna Pathan examine the vernacular traditions, culture, rituals & architecture. They focus on the symbiotic relationship between the built environment and the social practices in the old Pol City of Ahmedabad, India. It concludes that the built environment of the Pol houses in Ahmedabad plays a central role in shaping and supporting vernacular traditions, rituals, and everyday social practices.

In the second paper, Guechi Imen & Bouaziz Samia examine the ways of employing digital models for determining the value of heritage: They particularly carry out an evaluation of the industrial area of Algiers, in Algeria using a Fuzzy DEMATEL-ANP-GIS model. They conclude that industrial buildings in the El Hamma district of Algiers should be prioritised for conservation due to their high heritage values, historical importance, architectural integrity and development potentials. Towards evaluating them, the model has been useful.

In contrast, Fatima Jalal Khalaf look at the issue of the demolition of the historical residence Bait Al O'oud, in Manama, Bahrain. She argues that this has resulted from the general negligence of traditional heritage buildings, prevailing in Bahrain at that time. In so doing, she points out that there is an urgent need for comprehensive conservation policies that extend beyond tourism-driven preservation and recognize the importance of vernacular architecture in shaping cultural continuity by itself.

Nurulin Timur arrives from an entirely different place. She examines the hugely complex issue of identifying the purpose of the cross-shaped buildings of Kangju in Uzbekistan, which had baffled the researchers for quite some time. To resolve the issue, an interpretation based on the cult character of the architecture of Shashtepa and Mingurik Monuments in Uzbekistan is offered. The research concludes that these buildings have essentially had a cult purpose rather than anything else.

In sharp contrast, Risa Lisdariani et al. examine how tribes in Indonesia build local values and religious beliefs through traditional poetry. They thus offer insights from Pantun Baantaran of the Banjar People in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. They conclude that this tribal activity illustrates how the Banjar people harmoniously blend religious devotion with cultural practices, adapting traditional art forms in ways that both preserve heritage and reflect contemporary religious values.

Hassan Gbran et al. on the other hand, examine a hybrid framework employing deep learning for 3D decay segmentation and adaptive mapping of heritage structures. They offer insights from an experiment, and argue that the proposed diagnostic framework lies in its adaptability across different building typologies and materials, including brick, plaster, and limestone. Its seamless integration with existing photogrammetric workflows and reliance on chromatic attributes make it especially valuable for heritage institutions with limited access to machine learning expertise.

Md. Irfan Hossain takes us to Bangladesh. He examines how people there are struggling to find an affordable place to live. He offers insights into socio-economic challenges of middle-income communities in Khulna, Bangladesh in doing so.

Similarly, Jamiatul Hamidah et al. examine the innovations needed to strengthen national identity in Indonesia. They argue that promoting literacy acquisition through culture-based education has great potential. They demonstrate that innovations in literacy education through culturally responsive methods is a powerful tool for educating informed, culturally-aware and empowered citizens.

Klara Puspa Indrawati examines the issue of sea as a critical threshold for economic, ecological and cultural survival. She looks at the vernacular community in the area around Alor Kecil in Makassar, Indonesia, and points out that local people show a tolerant attitude to the changes that come from outside. This attitude enriches their knowledge and experience to live together with the natural system of the coastal habitat.

Finally, Maitri Shah & Sandeep Virmani examine the idea of poetics of dwelling as it manifests in the vernacular settlements. They articulate insights from the Baiga Tribe of Madhya Pradesh, India.

Undeniably, these papers divulge the nuances of the manifestations of culture, traditions and the unique practices that exist in the human settlements: both rural and urban, bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are grateful to the authors for the insights shared. We look forward to their active contributions in the future too.

Dr. Ranjith Dayaratne
Editor-in-Chief