

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 since 2024. ASK is consolidating its academic pursuits with the International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements (ISVS) - ISVS14 being planned to take place in Vietnam in 2025 and the continuation of the publication of 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, Manali offers us an exquisite documentation of indigenous craftsmanship, culture and traditions of the boat making craft of Uru at the Malabar Coast, India. By providing a comprehensive documentation of the Uru boat-making craft, she contributes to a broader understanding and appreciation of the maritime heritage of the Malabar Coast. She emphasizes the need to protect and promote this unique cultural legacy for the future generations, ensuring the preservation of its invaluable tradition.

In the second paper, Imran Hossain Foishal, Kowshik Roy and Sk. Hassan Al-Tanbin examine the living conditions in resettlement housing in Bangladesh with a view to improving life in the urban vernacular settlements. They reveal a lack of attention to critical factors in one such a project: the Mandartola project in Bangladesh, despite good intentions. In conclusion, they propose guidelines to address them and improve the effectiveness of the resettlement process.

In contrast, Nandini Halder and Deepak Kumar look at the issue of reviving vernacular architecture in India. They offer insights into the indigenous building traditions there. In so doing, they identify key challenges which include policy neglect, erosion of traditional knowledge, and aspirational shifts toward industrial materials. They conclude that vernacular architecture offers a resilient, sustainable, and culturally rich alternative to dominant modern construction models.

Sukriti Setia et al. arrive from an entirely different place. They examine the manifestations of cultural and vernacular built heritage around canals, bringing insights from the Ganga Canal Route in India. Indeed, they identify and discuss tangible and intangible aspects contributing to a deeper understanding of the canal 'routes' through their vernacular 'roots'. As we know, India is full of canals.

In sharp contrast, Omkar Sadashiv Rane and Suyash Khaneja examine the opportunities for innovation and market expansion of Sawantwadi Wooden Toys in India. They thus offer insights into employing indigenous craft traditions for the contemporary world. They conclude that a sustainable approach to innovation, market diversification, strengthening artisan clusters, integrating technology, and promotion through digital and tourism channels can balance global competitiveness with the traditional values of Sawantwadi wooden toys.

Ahmad Syai et al. on the other hand, examine the issue of preserving traditional art in vernacular settlements. They offer insights from Rapa'i Geurimpheng of Aceh, Indonesia. They show that the art contains social and religious values imparted with the community. Those values are cooperation, honesty, discipline, and responsibility. They also point out that this art has a great potential to be preserved.

Paul Memmott takes us to a faraway place: Australia. He examines how making of modern vernacular architecture takes place in Aboriginal Australia. He brings great insights from the Dugalunji Camp and reveals the traditional design principles and elements underlying the contemporary construction. He demonstrates that 'architecture' can have a strong capacity in producing hybrid-built environments employing indigenous or vernacular components, lying on the periphery of the western canonical practice of 'Architecture'.

Similarly, Sara Husain Jawad Allaith examine the revival of traditional Architecture of Bahrain. She ascertains the public perceptions and their impact on contemporary projects. She reveals a strong inter-generational appreciation for traditional architecture, albeit for different reasons. While older generations emphasize cultural memory and comfort, younger generation associate it with sustainability and identity.

Pratheeksha et al. examine the role of construction methods in shaping neo-vernacular architecture, bringing insights from an architect. She looks at the works of master builder Nari Gandhi in India and provides some key aspects that could serve as a principle for architects to design spaces that are more rooted in their region and culture. She says that using certain building materials and techniques support them.

Finally, Heli Chirag Patel & Aparna examine the notion of dwelling among the semi-nomadic sheep-breeders bringing insights from Rabaris of Gujarat, 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 to bring to light the relevance of vernacular in the contemporary world.

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