

EDITORIAL

The ISVS-13 seminar has been successfully concluded at the University of Moratuwa, hosted by the Asian School of Knowledge with forty-six papers having been presented in parallel sessions; across two days. Simultaneously, this issue carries 10 papers, some of which have come from the seminar, which were of very high quality.

In this issue, many papers present the relationship between vernacular and water. First, Sriparvathy Unni presents the architectural heritage of sacred water. She examines the role of women in shaping culture and sacred landscapes through subterranean architecture in India. She demonstrates that stepwells were not only utilitarian structures but also gendered spaces where women were able to engage in spiritual and communal activities.

Chandramathy Irulappan et al. add to this when they examine the traditional water tank spaces to enhance the spatial vitality of contemporary public spaces. Drawing lessons for the modern world, they offer great insights from the temple tanks of Madurai, India.

Shimaa Mohamed takes us away from water. She examines the ways of integrating vernacular designs of Mashrabiya to promote sustainable architecture. She offers insights from an experiment in Egypt, which would be of immense value in introducing Mashrabiya in contemporary buildings.

Sukriti Setia, Mohd Afzal Khan, Manavi Suneja & Ram Sateesh Pasupuleti take us back to water. They examine the manifestations of culture and vernacular built heritage around canals. They offer great insights from the Ganga canal route in India and say that its engineering and cultural impact continues to shape the region's development.

In contrast, Muskan Diwan & Ashwani Kumar examine the impact of transformations of vernacular settlements on cultural practices in the hill regions of India. They offer a systematic literature review demonstrating how urbanization and modernization affect traditional architecture, the challenges from new economic trends and aspirations, and how different communities are adapting their homes while trying to keep their cultural identity.

Similarly, Desy Aryant, et al. examine the spatial characteristics of Rumah Gadang Kajang Padati in Padang, Indonesia. They emphasize the importance of understanding spatial characteristics of these houses in preserving cultural heritage.

Carina Tjandradipura, Yunita Setyoningrum & Forocenta Laiqa Kamulva take us further into the vernacular settlements in Indonesia. They examine how the Dutch Colonial Residential Building for tourism in Gelgel Village narrates Balinese Moslem everyday environments.

On the other hand, Linas Fathima & Chithra examine the cultural influences on the architecture of courtyard houses bringing insights from the courtyard houses in Kerala, India. They re-affirm the role of culture in shaping architecture contributing to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between culture and architecture.

Koonthota & Coorey look at an entirely different issue. They examine the role of spatial configuration on spatial cognition bringing insights from the historic grid city of Kandy, Sri Lanka. They provide insights for future urban planning interventions to preserve historic city identities through a deeper understanding of city imagery, element interrelation, and city arrangement.

Finally, Prachi Mistry & Shweta Suhane take us back to the relationship between water and vernacular settlements. They examine the stepwells as living heritage of India bringing insights from two step-wells in Ahmedabad.

Needless to say, these papers divulge the nuances of the manifestations of culture, traditions and the unique practices that exist in the human settlements. This issue of the ISVS e-journal yet again presents very meaningful studies into the human settlements bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are most encouraged by their contributions and look forward to publishing further research on the cultural practices of human settlements for the enhancement of Knowledge.

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