

Final Review Report ISVSej_12.02.08_Kushi
Compiled from Reviews of Two Anonymous Reviewers

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: Documenting Oral Histories and Cultural Heritage of Water Spaces in Semi-Arid Regions of India: Insights from Dholera, Gujarat

General

This paper examines an issue related to the production and distribution of water in vernacular settlements. The paper is reasonably well written. However, it has some major issues that need to be resolved.

Title: The title needs revision. Following title is suggested: Cultural Heritage of Water Spaces in Semi-Arid Regions of India: Documenting Water Management Practices and Oral Histories in Dholera, Gujarat.

Language: Language is reasonably good. Nevertheless, some issues exist. For example, "Hence, the preservation of water sensibility predominantly remains within rural areas, lacking in urban settings" is a poor sentence. It should be written as "Hence, the sensibility of preservation of water remains predominantly within rural communities. Such sensibilities are absent in urban settings". There are many such statements. Moreover, write short and meaningful sentences, using appropriate connectors to construct an argument. Pay attention to definite and indefinite articles, which are often not well placed. Use punctuation marks as needed.

Formatting: This paper has major issues of formatting. Text must be always fully justified except in bulleted or numbered lists. Sub titles should be always 12 points. The first letters must be always capital. There should be no spaces between paragraphs. There should be a space between a paragraph and a figure below as well as the source and the paragraph below it always. Text in figures must be 10 points and in black colour normal- not italicized. Bulleted text must be left justified in a line. Moreover, the first line of every paragraph must be indented from the left. Line spaces must be always single. Remove excess spaces between paragraphs and figures etc.

References are not formatted properly. Don't mention positions such as Dr. Start with the second name. Font size must be 11. They should have the second and third lines indented from the left. References should be listed according to alphabetical order. There should be no gaps between the references. Some references are incomplete: No page numbers or volume numbers. Cite volumes and page numbers as follows 12(3), 67-89.

Please use the ISVS e-journal template to the last dot.

Abstract

Abstract is reasonably well-written. However, the contents have some issues. First paragraph must introduce the issue of the scarcity of water and water management practices in India. It does this well but the discussion is too long. It must then say what is examined at the end. This is not done. Second paragraph must be about the research methods and the third paragraph must be about the conclusions.

Current second paragraph does not explain the research methods well. This research employs a case study method within which observations and interviews have been carried out. Please explain how data was gathered and not what was the data. About observations, it talks of what they provided rather than how it was done. There are no conclusions mentioned in the abstract. What is written currently in the paper are also only concluding remarks. Please list the specific conclusions related to this issue briefly. It uses 'will' as if this is a proposal. Do not use 'will'. This is not a proposal. It says that it 'highlights'; Research is not done to highlight. Those are done in essays. Abstract is written at the end of doing a research and even after writing the full paper; conclusions are known by that time. Write short sentences and be brief. An abstract must be succinct and there is no need to write at length. Complete within one page including the keywords.

Paper

1. **Introduction:** The introduction is written reasonably well, in terms of introducing the issue, but it has issues. Its line of argument is abruptly broken in the last paragraph. It should introduce the broader issue of people's relationships with water that have existed in India, before and now being absent. However, at the end, an introduction must say what it investigates and then the aims and objectives. This paper does not say what it investigates. Instead, it says that "Hence, the preservation of water sensibility predominantly remains within rural areas, lacking in urban settings. This emphasizes the importance of selecting a region that aligns with this criterion, making Dholera an ideal case study". This is totally wrong. Please remove this paragraph and say what it investigates and why. Do not talk about case studies here. That is part of the research methodology. Moreover, there are no aims and objectives.

Please note that aims are noble, unmeasurable, long term, almost-impossible-to-fully-achieve expectations while objectives are practical, measurable, short term, achievable intentions. Objectives must be always listed starting with 'To'. The introduction must end with them.

2. **Theoretical Framework:** This paper does not present any theoretical framework, although the sub title exists after 'research methodology'. The paper should offer a theoretical discussion about 'oral histories', 'cultural heritage', 'water management spaces' and 'semi-arid regions'. It should also discuss other theoretical notions explored in this paper. However, a theoretical framework must be produced employing the voice of the authors with statements such as 'according to Godman (1999), or Lawrence (2000) argues, instead of the author making statements and putting references within brackets. The author of this paper cannot theorize because she/he is not a theoretician. Currently, there is nothing written although a small box with some words and concepts exist. It is not even a figure: has no sub title, makes no sense whatsoever. Please produce a proper theoretical framework by referring to theoreticians. Define the terms first, even though they may be ordinary, every-day words.

Some of the written text under the sub titles such as 'water-life connection', and 'water and communities' may belong here although all of those are written by the author (as if it is written by the author although surely the ideas have been borrowed from others without acknowledging the sources) with no citations whatsoever. This is not acceptable.

However, what is written under the sub title 'Water and Life in Dholera: A Historical Perspective' does not belong under the theoretical framework. It belongs to the 'introduction to case studies to be placed after the research methodology.

A research paper without a theoretical framework is not acceptable at all.

3. **Review of Literature:** A review of literature should discuss the major research that have examined the issue previously, to show the status of current knowledge. The issue here is the 'Cultural Heritage of Water Spaces'.

However, no research is being critically reviewed.

A review of literature must be produced employing the voice of the authors with statements such as 'according to Oliver (1999), or Rapoport (2000) points out, instead of the authors making statements and putting references within brackets. It should be a 'critical review'. Please see 'how to write a review of literature' in the ISVS e-journal web site and follow suit. Write in the present tense because it discusses current knowledge. Sum up at the end and show what is the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. 12-15 references are needed. Currently, none exists.

4. **Research Methodology:** This is poorly done. The research employs a case study method and this must be mentioned first, after which, all the data gathering techniques employed must be mentioned (preferably listed) in the text immediately. The current discussion does not do so. Instead, it mentions 'three villages' (These are case studies). This research employs in-depth documentation, detailed measurements and drawings of selected houses, interviews of residents, observations of daily routines, and collection of oral histories. However, nothing is explained in detail. They must be listed and each must be explained in detail. Say what was employed (Case studies) (Use present tense nevertheless) then the data gathering techniques. List them first and explain how each was carried out, with full details.

They must be explained in such a way that another independent researcher can repeat them and see if they will get the same results. That is the test of science. Current description is messy; not well organized and presented systematically. It lacks details and does not say how 'oral histories were collected'. Instead, it talks of how 'these narratives reveal', 'the focus of this paper' and 'study aims'. THEY ARE NOT RESEARCH METHODS and do not belong here at all.

5. **Case studies:** Before the findings, introduce the case study region: Dholera, and the case study houses: where the observations were conducted. Show the locations where research was conducted. Provide location plans and a general descriptions to the case study area and also the houses. This should be an introduction to the place. History can remain here too. Figs 1 & 2 are good but they are not meaningful without annotations. They are just graphics of colour patches.

Introductions to the case studies: 3 houses is missing. The Khedut community; the Bharwad Community and the Kumbhar community .Where do they exist in Dholera. A researcher wants to go there and see. Some of these location plans exist somewhere else. They must be here.

6. **Findings:** Findings are not well presented. In fact, there is even no sub title named as findings.
Please introduce the sub title first after 'introducing' the case studies and then present the data.

1. Measured drawings
2. Observations
3. Interview data
4. Oral Histories

In respect of each house documented and studied.

Most of the data do not have sources acknowledged.

Produce the data for each data gathering technique first and analysis of data afterwards. Explain what the observations and the interview outcomes are, before explaining. More critically, cite the sources of information. Currently, it is written as an essay describing as if the authors know everything. There is no data from many of the techniques of gathering data. For example, where are the data from the interviews with the residents? No data. No sources acknowledged. This is written like an essay. Not acceptable.

What is written is messy and not well organized.

Criteria for House Selection and

Chosen Sites

are presented long after the introduction to the case studies. They must be in the research methods.

However, the three case studies have good material, despite the fact that the sources are not acknowledged. No interview data; no oral histories. Please present them separately. Quote the interviews in English.

Discussion: There is no section sub titled 'discussion'. Please discuss the findings of this research and what they mean. This is written as conclusions which is wrong. Please also compare with other research that have examined the same issue if any and show if they are similar or different. If different, explain why. Discuss what the findings mean and what their implications are.

7. **Conclusions:** Poor. It reiterates what was done and what was discussed earlier and their interpretations which should be presented under 'discussion'.

Research must have specific conclusions. Given the fact that this involves case studies, conclusions must be related to each house. Saying that some were similar and some were different is not a way of making scientific conclusions. Be specific. List the conclusions separately. Currently, it claims many things which are not conclusions derived from data in this research. If this research identified any specific conclusions related to the 3 case studies, they must be listed here. Avoid statements like 'It also seems like', and do not talk about things that were not examined.

For example, it says, "Moreover, the availability of water has enabled people to build washrooms in their homes, making it very conveniently use the facility at home rather than the need to travel to open fields for sanitation. This has improved hygiene and privacy". They were not examined. It says 'Over time, people have also adapted their occupations to meet changing needs and circumstances. They seek to better opportunities and this is reflected in the transformation of their lifestyles and goals. Progress is essential for continued development, and the community remains committed to pursuing and believing in this progress". How do you know these?

Say what this research 'concludes'. Please note that 'concluding remarks for an essay' is not acceptable in research as conclusions.

Please discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this research after the conclusions.

8. **References:** References are totally inadequate and are poorly done. The second and third lines should be indented. Some of the page numbers are missing. Pay attention to details and be consistent. Use Harvard system as per the template. Follow the template to the last dot. Left justify the list.

Final Decision: Major Revisions

Summary of the overall observations of the paper:

This is a very valuable paper that could make a potentially significant contribution to knowledge about water management practices and water related spaces in India. It examines case studies in Dholera, Gujarat. However, it needs major revisions to bring the findings to be cohesive supported by clear data. The abstract needs to be succinct but must have sufficient details of research methods and the specific conclusions. Introduction needs to be presented in the proper order ending with proper aims and objectives. Introduce a proper theoretical framework, and write a proper review of literature. The research methodology requires to be organized well with a list of techniques employed to gather data and explanations of how each was carried out. Re-organise the findings to be meaningful and to show the main finding of what oral histories exist and how they were documented (the titles implies so). Detailed floor plans are needed for the 3 case studies (including the immediate surroundings) and interview, as well as oral history data must be presented if they were gathered. Present the water management practices and 'oral histories' in particular. That is what this research said that it will present .

Write the conclusion with only the specific conclusions arising from the findings related to the 3 case studies. Do not make general statements about things that were not investigated. This should not be 'concluding remarks' but 'conclusions derived and 'substantiated by data'.

At the end, discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this research. Re-examine and reproduce the references to be compatible with the ISVS e-journal template. There should be more references when you do the theoretical framework and the review of literature.