

Final Review Report ISVSej_12.03.09_Shagini
Compiled from Reviews of Two Anonymous Reviewers

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: **Decoding Buildings in Vernacular Settlements: Architectural and Cultural Characteristics of the Baroda Central Library, India.**

General

This paper examines an issue related to living traditions and heritage in vernacular settlements. It explores the impact of a ruler's educational, religious, and socio-cultural reforms on the architecture of a building. The paper is reasonably well written. However, it has some serious issues that need to be resolved.

Title: The title is fine; well-composed.

Language: There are many language issues. For example, it writes "As discussed by (Hossain, 2018), the post-Independence period (1947-1960) when India acquired political and administrative freedom from British rule was a crucial time for India and was focused on nation building." This is too long and comprises too many ideas and is grammatically not correct. Moreover, there is no subject. Hossain who is the subject is within a bracket. That is plain wrong. Often, the sentences are too long and comprises too many ideas in a single statement. Please write short and meaningful sentences, using appropriate connectors to construct an argument. Do not write just one sentence as a paragraph too. Construct a narrative: a flow of the discussion. Moreover, pay attention to definite and indefinite articles, which are often not well placed. Use punctuation marks appropriately; often they are either missing or placed inappropriately. Most importantly, construct a good flow of an argumentative narrative through writing.

Formatting: This paper has issues of formatting. Sub titles should be always 12 points and left justified. All the text must be always single line spacing. Currently, some are at 1.15. First line of every paragraph must be indented from the left. Produce numbered items as a list, with text being indented and left-justified. Text within the tables must be arial narrow 10 points.

References are not formatted properly. Years must be within brackets. No dot afterwards. Do not italicize the book titles. Some references are incomplete. Do not use Vol. and pp. Many journal articles have page numbers but no volumes. Vol numbers must not be italicized. Please use the ISVS e-journal template to the last dot.

Abstract

Abstract is written poor. First paragraph must introduce the issue of the consequences of the Maharaja on the society. However, when reporting history, use report style: use past participle-not past tense. Past tense implies that you watched things unfold, which you did not do. The first paragraph must end by saying what it examines, but in this abstract, even the second paragraph is talking about what the paper does. To say this, it says "explores, provides, examines, and documents" It claims to accomplish too many things.

Second paragraph must be about the research methods and the third paragraph must be about the conclusions. Currently, the second paragraph still keeps talking about what the paper does. Moreover, all the research methods are in a 6 line long single sentence. Please explain the research method and how data was gathered in a slightly more detail, yet succinct.

In the last paragraph, it should say what the conclusions are. Although at the beginning it said that the "paper explores the impact of Maharaja's educational, religious, and socio-cultural reforms on the architecture of the Baroda Central Library," it concludes that "the library is a testament to the vernacular settlements anchoring the community's cultural identity in a geographical space." This is completely different. Please list the specific conclusions derived in response to this issue briefly. An abstract must be succinct, but there is a lot of repetition here and lack of order and clarity.

Please confine the abstract and the keywords to one page.

Paper

1. **The introduction:** Introduction is written poor. It should introduce the issue, and end with the aims and objectives. The introduction should first introduce the broader issue of Maharaja's reforms and what impact it had on the library in Baroda. It does not do this well and does not establish the impact. At the end, it should say what this research investigates and the aims and objectives.

Instead, it lists various periods under which short sentences and some paragraphs are written. While introductions to some of these periods are necessary, there is no discussion of the issue and a narrative. It goes on and on listing various reforms and then talks about the "Foundation of the Libraries in Baroda". It does not say what the issue is, what the paper specifically examines or the aims and objectives. It just abruptly ends.

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.

Afterwards, it should present the theoretical framework.

2. **Theoretical Framework:** This paper should present a good theoretical discussion about 'Architectural and Cultural Characteristics', 'meanings of built-forms', and 'meanings of spaces and spatial organizations'. As is known, 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. Currently, there is no theoretical framework that introduces the concepts and this must be done.

Please produce and place the theoretical framework immediately after the introduction and before the review of literature.

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 'Maharaja's reforms and what impact they had on the library in Baroda.' Surely, many others have investigated this issue before. Nothing exists. It goes straight to research methods.

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 the current knowledge. Sum up at the end and show the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. 12-15 references are needed.

Currently, there is nothing. A 'critical' review of literature should show the 'gaps in knowledge.' It should be a 'critical' discussion. Please bring to light the major researchers (not research- do not refer to research but the researchers) who have examined this issue and what they have found out.

4. **Research Methodology:** This is not explained well; in fact, there is no sub titles as 'Findings'. It only says 'case study.' This is wrong. Please say that the paper employed a 'survey of literature' and documentation as research methods. Literature survey is mentioned but there is nothing explaining how this was done. These procedures must be explained with all the finer details. The current discussion does not do it well.

Say what was employed (survey of literature and self and critical evaluation of the art object) (Use present tense nevertheless) and then the data gathering techniques. List them first and explain how each was carried out, with full details later. 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.

5. **Case studies:** This is a case study and it has been implemented employing documentation and interviews as techniques (Groat et al., .). However, before the findings, this case study must be introduced. Indicate the specific locations where the photographs were taken and what was done with them. Moreover, it does not say when this research was done, for how long and who was involved in gathering data.
6. **Findings:** Nevertheless, there are good findings although not presented well. First, it starts with an awkward statement that does not relate to findings. It says "The research helps in technological collaborations". This is not a finding.

In keeping with the title, the findings indicate the architectural and cultural characteristics of the Baroda Central Library, India as discovered through the data. There are good findings about the library, and there also exists an analysis of the observations and the documentation and presentation of them. It also explores the connection between the Maharaja's educational, religious, social, and cultural reforms and the library's design and functionality. It interprets the symbolism embedded in the building's design well.

7. **Discussion:** There is a reasonably good discussion here. It discusses the details of the buildings as observed by the researcher. However, it needs to also pay attention to establish "the connection between the Maharaja's educational, religious, social, and cultural reforms and the library's design and functionality, as claimed. The interpretations appear to be entirely personal.
8. **Conclusions:** Conclusions are well done. It establishes that through his approach to architecture and governance, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad left behind a legacy of progress for future generations. However, please list the conclusions derived from this research. Please discuss the strengths and weaknesses after the conclusions.
9. **References:** References are fairly well-done. However, some issues exist. The year must be within brackets. Some of the page numbers are missing. Volumes and page numbers are cited wrong. Do not italicize the Vol. numbers. Cite like 14(3), 23-45. 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 makes a significant contribution to knowledge about the impact of the visions of one of the rulers of India on the conceptualization and making of the Library at Baroda. It offers Insights from a documentation of the building and its interpretations. However, it needs major revisions to bring the argument to be cohesive supported by clear findings.

The abstract needs to be succinct but must have sufficient information. Introduce the issue first, present the details of research methods and the specific conclusions. The introduction needs to be presented in the proper order ending with the aims and objectives. This paper does not need a theoretical framework, but a review of literature would be useful. The research methodology must explain the list of techniques employed to gather data and explanations of how each was carried out. Mention that it employs case study as a method and the techniques employed within the case study to gather data.

Present the findings citing the sources of information and demonstrate data and analysis; not just personal opinions without acknowledgement of any data sources. Summarize the findings at the end and then discuss these findings, in addition to discussing the elements of the building and the interpretations offered about them.

List the specific conclusions arising from the findings related to the ways in which the building has acquired characteristics influenced by the visions of the Maharaja. Conclusions must have been 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.