ICOMOS SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM 2020

22nd-23rd May 2020, IIT Madras, Chennai (Mode: ONLINE)

REFLECTIONS

-By Aditi Rai, EPWG Member

Overcoming the limitations forced by the current global crises, the ICOMOS Annual General Meeting Scientific Symposium 2020 was virtually organised and successfully conducted during 22nd and 23rd May 2020 by **Council on Monuments and Sites** (ICOMOS, India) in collaboration with **IIT Chennai** with **National Centre for Safety of Heritage Structures** (NCSHS).

The confluence became a platform for **113** registered professionals and researchers from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences of scientific assessment in heritage conservation and to collectively discover an inclusive integrated approach. This document lays out the key events of the symposium and summarises the success story of an ardent team of organising committee members headed by **Dr. Arun Menon** and supported by **Prof. GSV Suryanarayana Murthy**. The Organising Committee has inspired and guided EPWG volunteers in exploring their potentials and contributing to the success of the symposium.

The symposium was focused on the key thematic area of "***Structural & Material Analysis in Built Heritage Conservation"*** with an emphasis on science, structure and material aspects of Heritage buildings. The objective was to access tools and methodologies to analyse tangible fabric, identify the key role of analysis within the conservation process and further develop an integrated approach that connects various stakeholders.

The beginning of the symposium Process was marked in December by the announcement of the call for abstracts for paper and poster presentations under 5 variegated sub-themes, as organised by Convenor of Symposium, **Dr. Arun Menon**.

1. Technology for Documentation and Condition Mapping
2. Forensic Analysis of Materials and Structures
3. Risk Assessment and Mitigation
4. Traditional Knowledge Systems and Intangible Heritage
5. Education and Capacity Building

The Organising Committee received a tremendous response, followed by a blind review of abstracts to finalise their relevance and efficacy towards finalizing papers and presentations. The Review Committee selected **41 abstracts** and **2 poster abstracts** out of **48 abstracts**. The time was given for full paper submission for considering publication and also a presentation for the symposium. Due to COVID -19, pandemic alerts arose from March 2020, the whole scenario transformed into the conduct of online symposium and submission dates were extended till **6th May 2020**. The Registrations, confirmations and PowerPoint Presentations in full shape were finally received from **27 Authors /Presenters** for final presentations. Suggestions and guidance from the ICOMOS Executive Committee, especially from the President **Prof. Kiran Joshi** and Vice-President **Gurmeet Rai** and Secretary **Shalini Das Gupta**, helped in making this process a success.

The Scientific Symposium began on 22nd May, 2020 with online platform checks by the backhand team. Post joining of registered speakers and participants, Day 1 of the virtual symposium started with the Inaugural session, followed by 3 sessions addressing the first three sub-themes of the symposium.

DAY 1 (22nd May 2020)

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

The inaugural session began with **Prof. GSV Suryanarayana Murthy**, extending a warm welcome to the participants and briefing them with the theme and objectives of the symposium. This was followed by the introduction to ICOMOS and COMOS by **Prof. Kiran Joshi**, also covering the concept of *Ars sine scientia nihil est* (art without science is nothing), with several debates on appropriate structural choices. Further, the session was graced by the valuable presence of **Dr. Ravindra Gettu,** Dean (IC&SR), IIT Madras, who highlighted the aspect of sustainable heritage conservation. The session was concluded by **Dr. Arun Menon** with the introduction of Sub-Themes, Panel Chairs, Rapporteurs, zoom volunteers and Day-01 Proceedings, which incorporated **14 presentations** from the speakers under **3 sub-themes.**

SESSION 1 Presentations
Sub-theme 1: Technology for Documentation and Condition Mapping (TDCM)
The first session of the symposium was managed by **Prof. Khushi Shah**, as panel chair, with the assistance of **Aditi Rai**, as rapporteur. A set of six meticulous research works were presented by the speakers, all focused on the potential scientific tools developed for documentation, damage mapping, SHM, etc. for the heritage structures.

SESSION 2 Presentations
Sub-theme 2: Forensic Analysis of Materials and Structures (FAMS)
The second session of the symposium was managed by **Prof. Shweta Vardia** as panel chair, with the assistance of **Yamini Gupta**, as rapporteur. The speakers presented a set of 5 research papers and case studies of site where scientific tests, analysis and structural assessment have revealed a new directional approaches to heritage conservation.

SESSION 3 Presentations
Sub-theme 3: Risk Assessment and Mitigation (RAM)
The third and the last session of Day 1 was managed by **Ar. Poonam Verma Mascarenhas** as panel chair, with the assistance of **Ashita Agarwal**, as rapporteur. A set of 3 papers presented by the speakers explored the present systematic frameworks and demonstrated Heritage Impact assessment tools to address the major challenge of climate change and the resultant increase in the rate of natural and man-made disasters.

The coordination provided by the panel chairs, speakers and the fellow EPWG volunteers, helped in smooth execution. The learnings were transferred and instant modifications were done accordingly to make further proceedings more efficient and enriching. The presentations were followed by Q/A session, and a summary of each session by the respective panel chairs, which provided a window to get to know the potential way forwards for each topic.
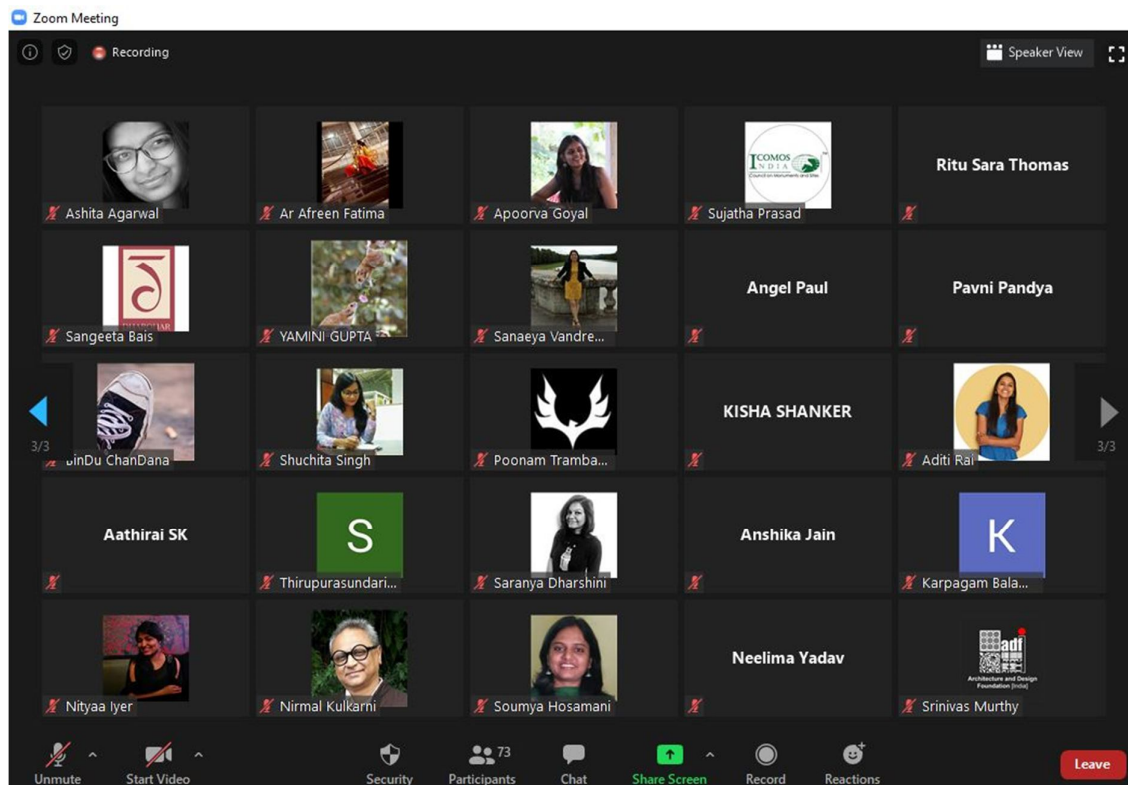
Figure 1 ICOMOS Scientific Virtual Symposium 2020, on zoom- DAY 01

DAY 2 (23nd May 2020)

The beginning of the second day was marked with handling technical hiccups and connectivity issues. The zoom coordinators, rapporteurs and the panel chairs, miraculously managed to conduct the sessions with a challenging time crunch. Day-2 proceedings incorporated 13 presentations from the speakers under **2 sub-themes.**

SESSION 4 Presentations
Sub-theme 4: Traditional Knowledge Systems and Intangible Heritage (TKSIH)
The fourth session of the symposium was managed by **Prof. Nalini Thakur** and **Prof. Sangamithra Basu,** as panel chairs, with the assistance of **Suramya Bansal** and **Yamini Gupta**, as rapporteurs. A set of 12 enriching research works were presented by the speakers, which explored the relationship between the tangible built heritage and the intangible knowledge behind it and proposed integrated methods of recording, analysing and conserving the same.

SESSION 5 Presentations
Sub-theme 5: Education and Capacity Building (ECB)
The fifth and the last session of the symposium was managed by **Prof. Ranee Vedamuthu**, as panel chair, with the assistance of **Narayanan T.**, as rapporteur. Educators and experts - **Dr. Jigna Desai** and **Prof. Kiran Joshi** presented the initiatives taken by CEPT University to facilitate Capacity Building for Heritage Conservation in India.

The presentations were followed by the Q/A sessions and respective summaries by the panel chairs.

This was followed by the remarks from the EPWG National representative, **Ritika Khanna**, who highlighted the extensive cross-learning process and the efforts made by the EPWG volunteers along with the organising committee. Vice-President **Gurmeet Rai** also shared her reflections on the

symposium. As supported by the comments and feedbacks from the zoom participants, the Scientific Symposium was an enriching experience for the participants as well as the organising team. All the research works presented by the eminent minds under 5 sub-themes were highly engaging and informative. The following 5 papers were recognised as the **"Best Papers"** by a panel of 4 experts from the Symposium committee.

    (i) **Shivani sharma, Dr. Vishakha Kawathekar** (TKSIH-08: Theory, Interpretation and Restoration – Markanda Temple, Gadchiroli)

    (ii) **Sarath Chanra Boyapathi, Sneha Borate** (FAMS-09: Testing of materials and building components for restoration of Gagan Mahal, Anegundi)

    (iii) **Kimaya Keluskar & Sanaeya Vandrewala** (TDCM-03: Energy efficiency within historic buildings : A study of occupant comfort and energy mapping)

    (iv) **Karpagam Balamurugan, Swathy Manohar, Aishwarya KV, Sudhakar Sekar, Manu Santhanam, Arun Menon** (FAMS-06: Damage analysis of coral stone deterioration)

    (v) **Ritu Sara Thomas** (RAM-04: An analysis of flood resilience of the built heritage of Thiruaranmula)

Also, 5 more research works were awarded the "**special mentions."**

    (i) **Arpit Karnv** (TDCM-10: SCAN to BIM - Process and benefits of implementing point cloud technologies in heritage building information modelling)

    (ii) **Nigar Shaikh** (TDCM-06: Characterisation of burnt clay units with respect to their production technology and raw material province: A case of the church of St. John of Nepomuk)

    (iii) **Prathyusha Ravi Nilakantan** (TKSIH-13: Kumbhabhishekam - A Cultural Phenomenon Safeguarding Tangible & Intangible Heritage)

    (iv) **Nishi Poojary** (TKSIH-16: Endurance of The South Canara Manor Houses)

    (v) **Malvika Mehta** (TKSIH-17: Repairing an Endangered Traditional Knowledge System: The Case of Non-Hydraulic Lime Putty)

The event concluded with closing remarks by **Prof. GSV Suryanarayana Murthy** and **Dr. Arun Menon** who were the torch bearers for the entire Scientific Symposium. This was followed by a brief discussion with the team members to identify the challenges faced and the possible way forwards for the symposium.
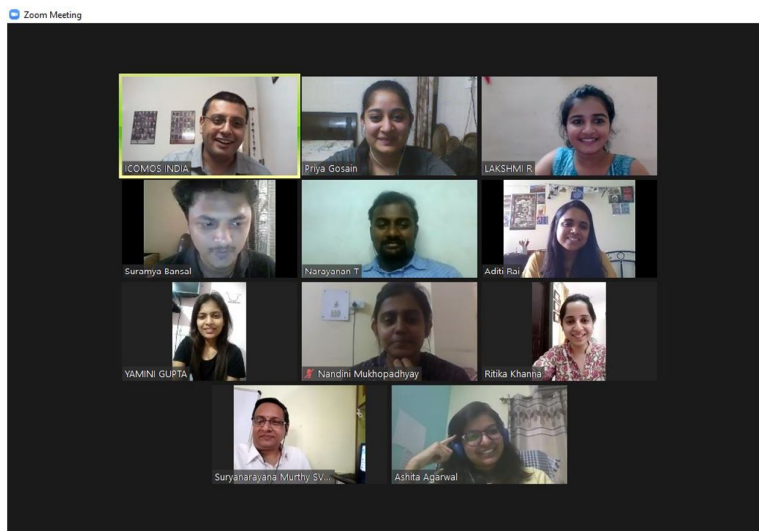

Figure 2 The Organising team- ICOMOS Scientific Symposium 2020- DAY 02

"As a **team**, it was inspiring to note that each one of us was configuring such **creative ways** to deal with the **unexpected problems**, in an **unanticipated situation** of **virtual interaction."**