

## Foreword

India's built heritage is a profound repository of knowledge, expressing centuries of accumulated wisdom through architectural typologies, planning principles, material culture, and symbolic expressions. This special issue on "*Traditional Knowledge Systems in Building Science*" is a focused attempt to critically explore this rich legacy and establish its relevance in contemporary discourse. In a time where modern development often overlooks tradition, context and culture, validating and understanding the parameters of traditional architectural knowledge is not merely academic—it is a pressing necessity.

The selected papers in this volume offer a multifaceted view of India's traditional architecture. They demonstrate how historic towns, temple complexes, residential settlements, and regional practices serve as living testaments to design principles grounded in ecological sensitivity, spatial harmony, and cultural coherence. For instance, reading of Purāṇic texts as architectural treatises bridges textual and physical realms, showing how ancient knowledge continues to offer conceptual clarity for modern design challenges. The comparative work on measurement systems and anthropometry brings an important dimension to this issue—challenging the universality of Western design paradigms and offering India's Śilpa-śāstra traditions as valid, context-sensitive alternatives. Another paper on exploration of expertise-driven rural residential design uncover the occupational influences on rural built forms, demonstrating how livelihood practices intricately shape the spatial configurations of traditional agricultural settlements. Study of vernacular housing in Ghantasala village, Andhra Pradesh, emphasizes how spiritual anatomy and spatial autonomy collectively contribute to the occupant's sense of wellbeing. This paper highlights a framework for vernacular architecture enabling health and wellbeing, critically comparing Indian and Western models, and proposing a holistic approach rooted in indigenous principles. One paper analyzes spatial organization in temple towns, emphasizing sacred geometry and pilgrimage-based urbanism that continue to shape community patterns today. Theoretical study on material determinism in temple and megalithic forms underscores the dynamic relationship between architectural evolution and building materials. Lastly, documentation of the Maluti terracotta temples in Jharkhand reveals a Bengal school typology that fuses artistic expression with structural ingenuity.

Across these papers, the articulation of traditional systems is not nostalgic—it is analytical, critical, and aimed at empowering contemporary architectural practice. This volume is a testament to the idea that India's architectural traditions are not static relics but dynamic systems, rooted in time-tested principles of sustainability, resilience, and cultural identity. As we face global environmental and urban challenges, the need to re-engage with these frameworks is more urgent than ever. Traditional knowledge must not only be preserved but evaluated and adapted for modern application—anchored in both scholarly validation and contextual integrity.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the authors, whose contributions offer rigorous insight, and to the reviewers for their thoughtful guidance. Special thanks are due to my colleagues on the editorial board for their constant support and valuable suggestions, making this issue both academically enriching and practically relevant. This special issue affirms that the future of Indian architecture lies not in abandoning tradition, but in reinterpreting it with renewed relevance and precision.

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