

Review Report ISVSej_12.01.02_Dilhani
Composite Review from Two Anonymous Reviews

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: **Living With Nature: Flood Risk Mitigation Strategies in Vernacular Dwellings of Rathnapura, Sri Lanka**

General

This paper examines an issue related to vernacular practices and their relevance in the modern world. The paper is well written and has some issues that need to be resolved. It has a great potential to be developed as a very insightful and valuable research paper on the flood risk mitigation strategies adopted by rural communities: in Sri Lanka in particular.

Language: Language is generally good. Please pay attention to grammar and to appropriate use of definite and indefinite articles. Write short and meaningful sentences. Separate paragraphs when the ideas change and construct an argument supported with evidence. Please use references and cite the sources of information extensively in the findings.

Formatting: There are few formatting issues. General text must always be 11 points, Sub titles must be 12 points. Fig titles must be 10 points. There should be a space between the sub title and the paragraph above it. There should be also a space between a figure and the text above it. Please use the ISVS e-journal template to the last dot.

Abstract

Abstract is reasonably well written. However, contents have some issues. First paragraph must introduce the issue and say what is investigated. Second paragraph must explain briefly the research methods employed, followed by the data gathering techniques. The third paragraph must say what the conclusions are. Currently, the issue is well introduced. However, the first paragraph does not end with a statement about what exactly is investigated. Research methodology is explained well. Conclusions are not clear. Please mention the specific conclusions derived in this research based on data. Please do not make general statements.

Paper

- 1. The introduction:** Introduction is written reasonably well. It should introduce the issue which this paper examines and conclude the introduction with a statement about the aims and objectives. This introduction introduces the issue well. However, it has no clear aims and objectives: Please say what the aim is and afterwards produce a list of the objectives starting with 'To'. Current aim is good. However, it needs clear objectives too. Please note that aims are noble, unmeasurable, long term, almost impossible-to-fully-achieve expectations while objectives are practical, measurable, short term, achievable intentions. This paper needs clear aims and objectives to end the introduction.
- 2. Theoretical Framework:** There is no sub title as 'theoretical framework'. This paper is based on the notion 'Flood Risk Mitigation Strategies'. Please define what it means and establish how they can be identified, and what parameters exist to do so. The term Nature must be always written with a capital N when referring to mother Nature. In constructing the theoretical framework, employ the voice of the authors with statements such as 'according to Godman (1999), or Lawrence (2000) argues, instead of the authors making statements and putting references within brackets. The authors of this paper cannot theorize because they are not theoreticians. Theory must stop with the definitions and meanings of these notions and how they inter-relate. Currently, there is no theoretical discussion at all. This is not acceptable.
- 3. Review of Literature:** There is no review of literature too. Please see 'how to write a review of literature' in the ISVS e-journal web site and follow suit. A review of literature should discuss the major research that have examined this issue previously, to show the status of current knowledge. The main issue here is "flood risk mitigation strategies in vernacular settlements" not particularly about Sri Lanka. 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'. Write in the present tense because it discusses current knowledge. Sum up at the end and show the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exists. 12-15 references are needed. Currently, nothing exists.

4. **Research Methodology:** Research methodology is reasonably well written. However, it does not say that it employs case study as a qualitative method. Instead, it says that it employs qualitative research and then it goes onto explain what is qualitative methods and why that is relevant. This is unnecessary. The research mentions direct observations and interviews. Please present them meaningfully, in proper order and systematically. All the data gathering techniques employed such as observations, discussions, and interviews, must be listed and each must be explained in detail. How were the case studies chosen? respondents chosen? Who was interviewed? How many, for how long etc. must be mentioned. These are not detailed here. 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. Currently it is not properly written.
5. **Case study;** Introduce the case studies afterwards. This is done sketchily. Please provide a location plan of the region and the locations of the case studies and declare which one was 'observed' as claimed. Fig. 1 needs a legend.
6. **Findings:** Findings are reasonably well presented, although some of the information do not have sources acknowledged. Please produce the data first and analysis of data afterwards. When presenting data from observations, please say so and indicate where these were observed. Although interviews are claimed to have been mentioned as data gathering techniques, there are no references to the interviews.
7. **Discussion:** Please discuss the findings of this research and say what they mean. You may produce tentative conclusions in this discussion.
8. **Conclusions:** Conclusions are reasonable. It identifies (a). adaptive capacity of the vernacular dwellings and (b). compliance with modern guidelines as the reasons why the settlements have been able to mitigate the flood risks. Please discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this research after the conclusions.
9. **References:** References are generally well done. However, some issues exist. Do not italicize the Vol. No. of a journal. Page numbers must not have pp. There should be no comma before '&' when listing names of authors. Follow the template to the last dot in producing the list of references.

Final Decision: Major Revisions

Summary of the overall observations of the paper:

This is a very valuable paper making a significant contribution to knowledge about the flood risk mitigation strategies in vernacular dwellings of Rathnapura, Sri Lanka. However, it needs revisions to bring the argument to be cohesive. Please make the abstract clearer, and provide aims and objectives at the end of the introduction, Produce a theoretical framework to define the parameters to be employed to assess flood risk mitigation strategies. Explain the research methodology adopted precisely. Findings need to articulate and demonstrate how the vernacular dwellings have adapted to the natural floods happening frequently in this area. Use data from the interviews and observations to identify the characteristics of houses that can withstand the floods. Strengthen the conclusion with specific conclusions related to how they have been able to mitigate risks of floods. At the end, discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this research. Re-examine the references to be compatible with the ISVS e-journal template.