

Editorial

I am pleased to present the inaugural volume of the '*Abhidha Journal of Art, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*', an annual periodical published by the Pragjyotish Centre for Cultural Research (PCCR) in Guwahati, Assam. As the name implies, the scope of the journal is broad and encompass the domains of art, archaeology and the cultural heritage. Meaning of the Sanskrit term *Abhida* is 'sound' which leads to the knowledge. The Editorial Board realised it fit to be the title of the journal as it is a figurative representation for 'a platform to the early stage researchers'.

The relevance of holistic and multidisciplinary approach of research in humanities and social sciences, particularly in historical writing is well received. Academically we are at the transitional phase as the traditional education system is revamping and multidisciplinary higher education is being introduced across the nation as per the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The main thrust of the NEP 2020 with regards to higher education is to end the fragmentation of education by transforming educational institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and knowledge hubs. The policy intends to bring back the age-old Indian tradition to create well-rounded and innovative individuals. In these lines, the broad-spectrum of this journal is an attempt to include multi-disciplinary and methodological research works on allied disciplines like art, archaeology, museum studies, art history and aesthetics, visual culture, cultural studies, semiotics and linguistics, anthropology, ethnography, ethnology, and creative industries of South and Southeast Asia.

Indian cultural traits are the most vibrant and diversified in the world built around regional, geographical, ethnic and linguistic variants. The interesting factor about Indian cultural elements is that although they are individual, regional centric yet they are part of an integrated complex system that covers the whole sub-continent. Furthermore, these factors and distinctions are reflected in her material cultural remains too and it is evident that many local and small cultural communities have contributed to the big metropolitan cultures of India. Hence, these cultural patterns need to be approached from a new direction which would solve many complicated questions and research gaps rather than just reporting, categorising and giving subjective descriptions. The trend of such interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to review the cultural components has gained importance in recent years. In the disciplines like archaeology, anthropology, art history and many others of humanities and social sciences and for some extent physical sciences are being brought closer together and this theoretical shift of connecting tangible and intangible cultural components is need of the hour.

The concept of cultural heritage has transformed and broadened in the last five decades. It is no more just the documentation of monuments and the collection of objects. The interventions of the UNESCO convention have broadly linked the tangible and intangible aspects of the culture. Now along with material aspects of the cultural customs, music, oral legends and traditions, festivities and religious ceremonies, dance forms and indigenous traditional knowledge systems are also equally significant in the modern day holistic approach of cultural education and research. Keeping in mind these developments in the field of art, archaeology and cultural heritage and related studies, *Abhidha Journal of Art, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage* encourages its contributors to follow the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach in their research which would be a larger impact.

The vision of Pragjyotish Centre for Cultural Research through *Abhidha Journal of Art, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage* is to provide a platform to young and upcoming scholars for sharing their academic contribution and exchange ideas. We invited submissions from academicians, scholars, cultural practitioners, professionals and students from across the country and received positive responses. Subsequently we executed the double-blind peer review process. The authors have considered the suggestions made by the reviewers and submitted the revised manuscripts. This volume has ten research papers on archaeology, anthropology, sculpture, art and iconography, visual culture, temple architecture, inscriptions and three book reviews.

It is undeniable that regardless of encompassing quality research papers in this volume there are areas for betterment. In the forthcoming volumes, the journal would focus on thematic versions, researches concerning scientific applications in the field of art, archaeology and cultural heritage, conservation and preservations of cultural heritage and so on. Since the COVID 19 pandemic, the heritage sector is facing fresh challenges. The process of uncovering, studying and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets must go on. It is the duty of policy makers, heritage activists and importantly experts and researchers to safeguard our cultural items and bring awareness among the masses. On these lines the contributors in this volume have given a thorough account on the lesser known archaeological sites, schools of arts, ethnographic practices and artisans.

The volume could not have been possible without the assistance of several individuals. At the outset I am thankful to all the authors of the papers. Managing Editor and Secretary of Pragjyotish Centre for Cultural Research, (PCCR) Phanindra Talukdar's role in bringing out this edition is commendable. I am very thankful for the support rendered by our Associate Editors and other members of Editorial Board especially Dr. Neetu Agarwal for her insightful inputs and editorial assistance which has enhanced the quality of the volume. I also acknowledge the help and assistance extended by Sanathana, Y.S. in various ways. I express my gratitude to our anonymous reviewers, who have read the manuscripts carefully and have given comments and suggestions promptly. I am very thankful to Anneshan Publication in Guwahati for taking care of the publication and production of the journal.

Dr. Manjil Hazarika

Editor