# INTERNATIONAL EXPERT LECTURE ON : EMPOWERING GRASSROOT COMMUNITIES THROUGH VIRTUAL HERITAGE

**Date: 28ᵗʰ,April, 2023 (Friday)**
**Time**: 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM
**Duration:** 3 hours
**No. of Student Participants:** 57
**No. of Faculty Participants:** 10
**No. of External Guests:** 1

**Key Note Speaker:** Imamur Hossain, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Sonargaon University, SU , Dhaka , Bangladesh,  Member  ICOMOS

**Chief Coordinator:** Ar. Madhuri Agarwal, Assistant Professor and HOD, Department of Architecture and Planning, Convener (GBU)

**Coordinator:**       Ar. Radhika Goel and Ar. Pooja Poply

**Mode conducted :** Offline


**About the speaker:**

**IMAMUR HOSSAIN** is a professional and a Commonwealth Scholar with a strong background in the fields of architecture and cultural heritage, my research centers on the exploration and interpretation of both the intangible and tangible aspects of cultural heritage in the Global South. My expertise includes critical heritage studies, architectural conservation, and integrating innovative methods and technologies such as photogrammetry, virtual reconstruction, and technology-based heritage interpretation.

In addition to my focus on built heritage, I am deeply interested in the intangible elements of cultural heritage sites and practices, such as meaning, narrative, allegory, and collective memory, and how they relate to social history and cultural identity. I believe that a comprehensive understanding of these elements is essential for the effective interpretation and preservation of heritage sites.

As an Assistant Professor, I prioritize in-depth analysis and the exploration of embedded narratives and cultural practices in order to foster design approaches that are meaningful and relevant to the communities they serve. I actively encourage my students to engage in theoretical design inquiry as a means of establishing a dialogue between architectural elements and their socio-cultural contexts.

**About the chief coordinator:**

**Ar. Madhuri Agarwal**, Assistant Professor and HOD, Department of Architecture and Planning at Gautam Buddha Univeristy, Greater Noida. She is GOLD MEDALIST Post Graduate in Architecture Pedagogy from Faculty of Architecture and Ekistics, Jamia Millia Islamia in year 2012, Currently Pursuing PhD in Architecture. She has approximately **13 years of experience** in various fields like teaching, research, and Industry experience. She has attended several International and National seminars and conferences and workshops. She has completed various National and International Certification with University of Nizwa, Oman and Aachen University, Germany. She is a Member of Council of Architecture and ESDA.

Her areas of interests are Architecture, Architecture Pedagogy, Crafts in Architecture, Heritage. She has various Research Publications in National and International Conferences and Seminars, Journals. She is also a SOCIAL ACTIVIST, leading a campaign **'Neki ki Deewar'** or 'Wall of Kindness' selected for publication in National Report on "Documentation & Compilation of the best practices of Sustainable Development as propounded by Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhaya", a Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Antyodhya along with team (Students of Architecture), has built **100+ walls so far, in 20+ cities**. She has also received Young Researcher Award by ESDA Delhi. She

has also received A3 Teachers Award by A3 foundation Chandigarh.She has also received Best Guru Female Award by SEMS Welfare Foundation.

**Objective of the session:** To get a better understanding of how the preservation of heritage sitses can be conducted through technology

**Brief Description of the session:**

An International expert lecture was conducted on "Empowering grassroot communities through virtual heritage" on 28th April, 2023  on Microsoft teams. The session was started by Ar. Madhuri Agarwal, Convener, GBU. She welcomed the key note speaker of the day i.e., Ar. Imamur Hossain Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Sonargaon University, Dhaka Bangladesh , Member ICOMOS and all the participants who joined the program. he also welcomed other eminent guest Dr. Indu Kirti, Dean planning and research who greeted all the participants. Ar. Madhuri Agarwal also welcomed Dr. kirti pal, Dean, School of engineering who highlighted the importance of such lectures.

Ar. Imamur Hossain started the lecture by explaining the virtual heritage with diverse groups from underprivileged, rural, and remote regions, where it is difficult to travel to heritage places and culturally significant sites. We held an art competition after establishing the context of cultural heritage with a few slides, while the children conveyed their understandings of and relationship to 'culture' in a follow-up discussion, as it was our objective to transform well-known historic places into hyper-real spaces and explore whether it could have the ability to engender positive forces of communal cohesiveness. And based on our observations, this virtual heritage initiative somewhat fulfilled its goal of enabling communities to discuss, provide meanings, and explore their cultural identity through the notion of 'shared' cultural heritage sites.

The study concludes that subaltern understanding of heritage is shaped by cultural processes of meaning-making, offering insights into harmonious, non-binary contexts arising from negotiation strategies of resistance and diplomacy. The findings suggest a need to explore sub-AHD intricacies, developing frameworks for integrating subaltern narratives. This integration could ensure authentic heritage experiences and cultural continuity, particularly in community-centric religious heritage sites. This study examines the intricate dynamics surrounding heritage mosques in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. These mosques hold cultural significance as embodiments of subaltern religiosity and historical importance. However, a state-sanctioned discourse in Bangladesh prioritizing monumentality tends to overlook the cultural essence in favor of preserving materiality. Referred to as the 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (AHD), this dominant narrative competes with others, sparking negotiations.
Through an exploration of the cultural processes at play, the study aims to shed light on these negotiations and their implications. A framework, drawing from literature on religious heritage and AHD, focuses on power, knowledge, and representation. The research method involves the qualitative analysis of three heritage mosques in Old Dhaka

**Learning Outcomes:**

The Students, Faculties, Research Scholars etc. gained in depth knowledge on technology on preserving heritage and celebrating cultural identity in Bangladesh

**Session Photographs:**



**Social Media Links:**

Twitter- https://twitter.com/madhu2486/status/1652522920361758720?s=20

LinkedIn- https://www.linkedin.com/in/madhuri-agarwal-75662b47

Facebook-  https://www.facebook.com/departmentofarchitectureandplanninggbu