

EDITORIAL

Digital Humanities and Ubiquitous Scholarship the Himalayas

Interdisciplinary Journal of Digital Humanities and Ubiquitous Scholarship (IJ DUS) is a leading interdisciplinary Journal for research and writing drawing upon contemporary debates and intellectual practices from **digital humanities and technology-aided learning**. We aim to provide a platform for scholars to showcase their research and foster a community that shares a passion for exploring the realms of literature, art, history, language, philosophy, culture and environment among others, through a digital lens. Our mission is to uncover the innovative ways in which technology is revolutionizing scholarship and education not just in humanities but across streams and disciplines.

NEP 2020 states that, “With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand”. **Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes 2022** mentions “Flexibility to switch to alternative modes of learning (offline, ODL, and Online learning, and hybrid modes of learning)” as one of its main features. In pursuit of this spirit of National Education Policy and Undergraduate Credit and Curriculum Framework, the first issue focuses an important area of humanities and interdisciplinary approaches: Himalayan natural and cultural heritage. **Delhi University and other institutions offer papers like Ecology and Culture, Sustainable Ecotourism and Entrepreneurship, E-tourism, Environmental impact and Risk Assessment, Environmental Auditing, Floriculture, Viewing and Capturing Diversity in Nature, Horticulture, Environment Ecology, Geography of Himalaya, Hydrology and water Resource Management, Himalayan Geology, Geotourism, Cultures in Indian Subcontinent, Politics of Nature, Environment Science**. This issue not only broadens the horizons of the above-mentioned curricular content, but also prepares students for undertaking research in allied and important areas as prescribed in their graduation and post-graduation course. The objective of this issue has been to

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focus on **Himalayan cultural landscapes** and to explore some important moments of anthropic interventions that have impacted the regions in significant ways. DSE: Environment in Indian History

The focus of this issue of IJDUS is the Himalayas, the diverse communities that inhabit and prosper in them, and the unique interventions in the collective lives of these communities that the mountains make. Geopolitical interests, economic and commercial imperatives, as well as different kinds of intercultural interface have often led to structural shifts within these spaces.

Debosmita Paul, in the chapter titled ‘Gorakhvijay and the Religious Festivals of Nepal: Tracing the Cultural Links between the Himalayan Country and Bengal’ attempts to link the rituals of the Gorkha community of Nepal with the Bengali treatise Gorakhvijay in order to track the cultural linkages between the Himalayan country and Bengal. Gorakhvijay is an ancient Bengali quasi-mythical tale of Gorakhnath / Gorakshnath. The available manuscript was written in 1263 AD.

Indrani Dasgupta, in the chapter titled ‘Exploration of Himalayas at the Intersection of Modern Travelling Mobilities, Wellness Cultures, and Socio-Political Configurations’ explores those representations in this chapter that confront the vexed issue of colonial encounters, nationalist interventions, wellness cultures, and mobile global consumptive technologies. In trying to navigate all these varied depictions and discourses, the chapter attempts to locate the Himalayas as a fluid, dynamic, shifting symbol of modernity and vital to the well-being of local cultures and communities.

Mridula Sharma, in the chapter titled ‘Aesthetics of Decoloniality and Feminist Interrogation of Geography in Agha Shahid Ali’s Poetry: A Study of Space and Agency in Kashmir’ aims to adopt a decolonial approach in the analysis of Agha Shahid Ali’s shrewd rejoinders to the politicisation of religious identity in Indian-occupied Kashmir. The decolonial approach is coupled with the adoption of feminist approaches to geography to argue that human agency is a temporally embedded process that involves social engagement, which foregrounds space as an active agent that contributes toward the production and performance of gender identities. Sharma emphasizes that the reiteration of Kashmir’s association with femininity complicates its positionality as a ‘paradise’

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because while it appears to purport the myth of Kashmir's deification in abstract terms, it **compromises in actuality the production and performance of gender identity.**

Nabanita Deka, in the chapter titled 'Life in the Hills: Examining Environmental Consciousness in Ruskin Bond's Select Writings' analyses Ruskin Bond's writings to examine man's relationship with nature and 'beings' of nature and demonstrate how modernity has suffocated nature. She writes that Bond's bond with nature is not just about enjoyment and enrichment but a bond that implores him to cultivate environmental consciousness among people so reflected in his choices of protagonists. The virginal beauty of the Himalayas is alluring and people flocking to the Himalayan towns to enjoy its pristine pulchritude and simple life is a testimony to it. So, what is it like living in the hills? Is it a simple, uncomplicated and happy life as the tourists envision or a life full of struggles? And if it is indeed a life full of struggles then how have the Himalayan communities managed to survive in the lap of nature for so long?

Nikita Verma, in the chapter titled 'A Walk Through Himalayan Cities' elucidates how Padyatra or journey by foot is an important part of traditional living in the Himalayan region. Even now, millions walk to pilgrimage spots such as the Hindu Char-Dham and Hemkunt Sahib in Uttarakhand, the hill of Swayambhunath Stupa in Kathmandu etc. With the advent and convenience of motor vehicles within urban areas, pedestrian culture took a back seat. However, if there is one region in South Asia that has supported walkability in cities in ancient, medieval and modern times (sometimes only partially), it is the Himalayan belt. Pleasant weathers, rugged terrains and smaller communities play a major role in their survival. This chapter brings insights on Himalayan urbanism to the fore; highlighting its unique pedestrian morphology and finding ways to carry forward the legacy in a sustainable way. It looks at examples spread across the region, clustered into typologies based on establishment: ancient/medieval, colonial, etc. followed by a comparative analysis of their commonalities and differences, studying the evolution of pedestrian spaces in such cities and their relevance today.

Praveen Kumar, in the chapter titled 'The Fragile Himalayas: Desperate for Love, Understanding and Empathy' states that The Himalayas have fascinated people from the time immemorial. The Himalayas, however, have been in a state of flux and it is perceptible not only in the shape, magnitude and features of the glaciers, flora, fauna, and rocks, but also in the lives of the

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people inhabiting these rugged terrains. These mountains have been facing threat to their beauty, grandeur, ecology, economy, demography. He concludes that the threats are too serious to be treated lightly, and nothing short of a comprehensive and far-sighted approach, supported by the scientific knowledge of the geography and geology of the region, native wisdom, empathy, sociological concerns, long-term perspective, economic realities, and sharp reduction in human interference can possibly save the Himalayas from further degradation.

Shweta Dhiman, in the chapter titled ‘Anthropogenic Impacts on Himalayan Biodiversity’ discusses the direct impacts that have occurred through the direct interaction of an activity with an environmental, social, or economic component. For example, Deforestation, over-exploitation of resources, development projects like Hydroelectric power plants and construction of roads, as well as poaching. She also discusses the indirect impacts which are not the direct result of any activity but often produced away from or as a result of a complex impact pathway. The indirect impacts are also known as secondary or even third level impacts. For example, Global warming and Climate Change.

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