

HANUMANDHOKA DURBAR SQUARE: ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION IN A LIVING MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

Comprehensive investigation focuses on Hanumandhoka Durbar Square in Kathmandu, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a living museum with a wealth of artistic, architectural, and historical significance. The research emphasizes the site's mythical, religious, and cultural significance as well as how it has shaped traditions and practices. One of the key objectives of the research is to examine how Hanumandhoka can preserve its original while improving to become a unique museum. The research employs an interdisciplinary methodology to investigate how contemporary advancement might coexist with the conservation of cultural heritage. The methodology incorporates qualitative research techniques including field observations, interviews, and archival research with an ethnological approach. Stakeholder theory and cultural evolutionary theory were applied to analyze the interaction between the community and the evolving cultural practices within the site. The findings highlight that to ensure that the local population actively engages in the protection and promotion of cultural assets, community engagement has to be prioritized in preservation approaches. Furthermore, educational initiatives and environmentally conscious tourism practices are essential to maintaining Hanumandhoka sustainability as a cultural heart.

Keywords: Living Museum, Heritage Preservation, Cultural Immersion, Historical Architecture, Ensemble Architectural, in Situ Conservation, Gastronomy

1. INTRODUCTION

The bowl-shaped Kathmandu Valley is in central Nepal, surrounded by beautiful hills and mountains, particularly the Himalayas to the north. The valley's geography comprises terraced farms and landscaping with lush plains, and the hills surrounding it offer both picturesque beauty and natural protection [Pandey R.K. \(1987\)](#). With its pleasant summers, temperate winters, and distinct monsoon seasons, Kathmandu's subtropical highland climate makes it a popular destination throughout the year for travelers searching for outdoor activities and cultural experiences.

This valley protects full of historical, architectural, and artistic masterpieces. It is home to three ancient cities: Bhaktapur, Patan, and Kathmandu. Its diverse embroidery of cultures, representing the amalgamation of Buddhism, Tantrism, and Hinduism, creates a unique and colorful cultural landscape [Amatya, S. \(2007\)](#). The valley's historical significance and timeless appeal are attested to by its UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which include the Durbar Squares of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur, in addition to the revered pilgrimage destination of Swayambhunath. Kathmandu Valley, an interconnected pot of customs, festivals, and rituals, never stops working to captivating tourists with its experiencing appeal and spiritual essence.

The Kathmandu Valley is a well-regarded spiritual haven enclosed away in the heart of the Himalayas. Ancient temples like Pashupatinath and Boudhanath Stupa are emblems of faith and devotion. The valley has a peacefully transcendent atmosphere since Buddhism and Hinduism are fundamentally rooted in its cultural fabric. In search of blessings and enlightenment, pilgrims from all over the world are attracted to its sacred locations. Spiritual searchers discover inspiration and comfort amid centuries-old customs in the center of this beautiful valley. A living museum as a World Heritage Site Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square site actively engages its visitors through dynamic cultural practices, community participation, and interactive displays. It integrates effectively with the community, emphasizes the transmission and preservation of traditional skills, and offers educational possibilities that reflect shifting attitudes toward heritage [Bajracharya, D. R. \(2016\)](#) This plan ensures that the site will always be a lively important area that serves the interests of visitors as well as the local population.

Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square is a protected area and one of the seven monumental zones that constitute the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, declared by UNESCO in 1979. It is a significant cultural landmark that is important to preserve its rich historical and architectural heritage. The Government of Nepal has recognized this monumental zone, which includes the center part of Hanuman Dhoka and its buffer zone established by UNESCO, as a protected site under the Ancient Monument Preservation Act of 2013 BS.

In this sense, the rich cultural heritage of the Newar community both tangible and intangible consists of its core, buffer, and periphery. This sacred site considered the epicenter of Nepal's rich past, integrates elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, and other practices to symbolize the peaceful coexistence of several religions [Amatya, S. \(2011\)](#). Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, which has significant cultural significance and represents Nepal's extensive history, is home to seven outstanding historical landmarks. Its prime location as the administrative center emphasizes its important role in the country's government, and its historical and social significance as a center of power, culture, and commerce since the medieval period of Nepalese history witnesses to its continuing influence.

Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square and the surrounding area, with their exceptional architectural and intangible components, are representative of the rich heritage of old Kathmandu. The artistically carved multi-roof of the Kasthamandap, the Kumari House, the palaces, the Tulaje Bhawani Temple, the Mahadev Temple, and many more architectural masterpieces are just a few examples of the square's medieval-era Newari skill and innovation. The colorful and historically significant celebrations, such as the Indra Jatra and many other festivals, honor customs and gods that have their roots in the customs of ancient Kathmandu. The elaborate metal and woodwork decorating the area, together with the well-known Hanuman statue and the distinctive palaces from the Rana era, all serve as evidences to the creative

heritage of the city. When taken as a whole, these instances highlight Hanuman Dhoka Durbar's enormous historical and cultural significance.

Although significant changes have emerged in the Kathmandu Valley due to uncontrolled growth, rapid urbanization, and an influx of people from all over the world. This demographic shift has changed traditional lifestyles, which has caused the emergence of new practices and behaviors that affect social dynamics and community structures. Due to the blending of several cultural components brought about by immigrants, the area's identity is becoming more and more complex, creating a rich but frequently disconnected pattern of customs, languages, and beliefs. With the acceleration of urban expansion, the struggle between modernity and cultural preservation becomes increasingly contentious. The invasion and disruption of customs are the result of both the government's weak measures and the increasing migration of individuals.

2. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study employs a qualitative technique to explore the significance of Durbar Square's living museum within the framework of culture and heritage. The data have been collected from primary and secondary sources. The secondary data have been collected from books, journals, articles and internet. In order to collect the primary data, the researcher have visited field for many times as per the occasion and necessary. Furthermore, in-depth interviews are the main technique of data collection used in this study because they allow different perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders to be collected. Community leaders, locals, experts in the field of history, and other significant figures engaged in the upkeep and conservation of the historic site are among these stakeholders.

The objective of the interviews is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the many motivations, challenges, and levels of involvement that these stakeholders have in heritage conservation efforts. The findings are examined via the critical perspective of cultural evolution theory. This idea helps to frame the dynamic interaction between stakeholders' viewpoints and the shifting cultural environment of Durbar Square. The study highlights the ongoing importance of living museums inside communities by examining how practices, beliefs, and values evolve or modify throughout time. This methodology not only showcases the living museum's role in preserving cultural assets but also emphasizes its impact on heritage conservation programs. The Survey method was also applied during the field work. The main goal of this study is to explore the current state and status of the living museum in ancient Kathmandu and in the periphery of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Monument Zone.

3. RESULT AND FINDINGS

With an emphasis on Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, the concept of creating a living museum in ancient Kirtipur has gained popularity recently since it has the potential to preserve and improve the area's architectural and cultural heritage. Through this attempt, historical sites actively changed into communities where religion, customs, and daily life coexist and visitors may see living heritage. The challenges posed by increasing urbanization, changing environmental circumstances, and developing community needs emphasize the need for further research and development. Local government, UNESCO, community organizations, and cultural organizations are among the key participants driving recent initiatives. Collaborative approaches are essential for managing tourists, educating them, and

regenerating the environment. For the cultural heritage of ancient Kirtipur to be preserved and made accessible to future generations, these ongoing efforts are crucial. Particularly in Nepal's heritage attractions, the local community has organically preserved the concept of a living museum from ancient times. For a considerable amount of time, the Guthi system has been crucial to the management and conservation of intangible cultural heritage. However, many problems have made it challenging for the Guthi system to continue these operations as intended at present. To ensure the continuation and preservation of these long-standing customs, the local government must take a more proactive approach in this area and collaborate with multiple types of stakeholders. Here are a few steps identified to address existing gaps and further enhance the management of the site.

A complex strategy is needed to manage a cultural site as a living museum to maintain its historical significance while also keeping it exciting and relevant for contemporary visitors. Comprehensive conservation work must be undertaken to preserve the authenticity of the site's buildings and artifacts. In addition, dynamic interpretative programs that use interactive exhibitions, demonstrations, and immersive experiences are needed to bring the site's past to life. To ensure that community involvement, education, and research programs continue to be carried out in a way that promotes more excellent knowledge and respect for the site's cultural legacy, collaboration with researchers, local communities, and cultural organizations is essential. To strike a balance between preservation and accessibility and guarantee the site's long-term survival as a bright reminder of the past, regular maintenance, effective marketing, and sustainable tourism practices are also essential.

To transform Hanumandhoka in Kathmandu into a living museum, preservation and modernization must be carefully balanced to maintain the site's historical relevance while making it exciting and accessible to tourists. Primarily direct rehabilitation operations and providing context for educational exhibitions, comprehensive study and recording of the site's history, architecture, and cultural value are essential. Working with local people, archaeologists, and historians may yield a wealth of information about the history and customs of the location. Incorporating sustainable measures to guard against environmental deterioration and natural disasters should be a top priority in preservation efforts and maintaining the authenticity of the structures and artifacts. Furthermore, implementing educational initiatives, guided tours, and interactive exhibitions could improve the comprehension and admiration of Hanumandhoka cultural heritage among tourists. Accepting technology may provide creative methods to bring the site's past to life while maintaining its integrity. Examples of this are virtual reality experiences and multimedia exhibitions. Involvement in the community and collaborations with cultural institutions may support tourism and economic growth while fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents. Management practices must be continuously monitored and adjusted to maintain long-term sustainability and relevance.

3.1. LIVING MUSEUM

A living museum uses authentic buildings, resources, communities, events, and people to recreate historical actions and events to accurately represent and explain a particular era's daily life and culture. According to this requirement, a living history museum must be owned and run by a government agency and be connected to resource-based activities. A living museum is a specific kind of museum that, as opposed to being housed within a conventional museum building, displays

collections of structures and artifacts outside and in their natural surroundings. By providing visitors with an immersive and engaging experience, these museums seek to replicate and maintain the historical, cultural, and architectural legacy of a certain area or era. Living museums typically showcase historic buildings, religious sites, archaeological sites manmade structures, and landscapes that have been rebuilt in their original locations. Apart from structures, outdoor museums frequently showcase an array of relics, equipment, machinery, and farming items utilized by the local communities over time. Living museums also provide communities a chance to actively participate in preserving and disseminating their cultural heritage by offering forums for community interaction and revitalization. These establishments improve society overall by participating as active platforms for discussion, reflection, and cross-cultural interchange in addition to being historical archives [Hale, M. A. \(1970\)](#). Careful planning, collaboration, and a dedication to providing immersive experiences that engage visitors in historical settings are necessary to develop a living museum. A great deal of study is usually required to guarantee authenticity and accuracy in depicting historical events, lifestyles, and artifacts. Curating exhibitions that provide perceptive narratives and facilitate interactive learning experiences requires collaboration with educators, cultural specialists, and historians [Van Vree, F. \(2018\)](#). Technology integration, such as virtual or augmented reality, can improve visitor engagement and offer chances for dynamic storytelling [Pine et al. \(2019\)](#). Moreover, community engagement via events, seminars, and volunteer programs may enhance the museum's services and promote community ownership among nearby citizens [Simon, N. \(2010\)](#). All things considered; a successful living museum necessitates a comprehensive strategy that combines historical authenticity with innovative display techniques.

3.2. KATHMANDU VALLEY IS A LIVING MUSEUM

Describing the Kathmandu Valley as a "living museum" means recognizing the way effectively its traditions, customs, and cultural heritage have been incorporated into a dynamic urban environment. The Valley is home to ancient religious practices, artwork, and architectural traditions found in places like Patan, Bhaktapur, and Kathmandu. The principle of a "living museum" focuses primarily on the active involvement of local people in maintaining and engaging with their heritage. One example of this is the Guthi system, which regulates temples, festivals, and rituals while conserving cultural traditions. Performing ancient rituals in their original settings during festivals like Indra Jatra, Seto Machidranath Jatra, Bisket Jatra, and many other jatra processions and festivals, which are occasions of these living traditions, creates a dynamic connection between the past and present. At the same time with seven monumental zones that perfectly represent Newari craftsmanship, architecture, and religious devotion, the Kathmandu Valley is a World Heritage Site, showcasing its outstanding international significance. According to [Amatya, S. \(2007\)](#), Kathmandu is an outdoor museum with incomparable universal importance, where every artifact serves as a window into the past of humanity. The valley is a storehouse of thousands of years of civilization and is essential to Newari culture [Amatya, S. \(2011\)](#). With streets, palaces, and temples telling stories about its rich past, it serves as a living historical repository. Furthermore, looking at the current initiatives to promote and preserve cultural assets in urban areas illuminates the prospects and difficulties of ensuring that this UNESCO World Assets Site is preserved for future generations. With a wide variety of Buddhist stupas, Hindu temples, and monuments, it possesses a civilization that is among the most advanced in Asia and a beautiful history spanning two millennia. It has much to offer

tourists and is sometimes called an open museum of medieval arts and architecture. Existing ensemble buildings, a living museum, a cultural landscape, a historical timeline, religious beliefs, and traditional practices in the Kathmandu Valley have all been recognized as World Heritage Sites and, due to their unique qualities, have been classified under UNESCO's criteria (iii), (iv), and (vi). Its exceptional universal value has led to its division into seven monumental zones encompassing them. Amongst seven monumental zone Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square in one. In this regard our ancestors implemented the concept of a living museum thousands of years ago, long before the formal term "living museum" was even conceived. Criteria (iii): The seven monument ensembles offer a remarkable testament to the Kathmandu Valley's traditional culture. The distinctive urban society, known as the Newars, manifests the cultural traditions of the multiethnic group that has lived in this isolated Himalayan valley for the past two millennia. They are known for having some of the world's most advanced bronze, brick, stone, and woodworking skills. It is rare that Tantrism and animist rituals coexist and combine with Buddhism and Hinduism.

Criteria (iv): This area has outstanding architectural typologies, ensembles, and urban fabric that showcase the Valley's highly developed civilization, which peaked between 1500 and 1800 AD. Only in the Kathmandu Valley can such magnificent examples of stupas, temple groups, and palace complexes exist.

Criteria (vi): The attribute is linked to the distinct cohabitation and fusion of Buddhism and Hinduism with Tantric ceremonies and animist practices. The architectural adornment, the urban layout, and frequently the surrounding natural surroundings all of which are intimately connected to customs, holidays, and rituals all make expressions of the symbolic and artistic values [UNESCO, \(2002\)](#).

3.3. ATTRIBUTES OF LIVING MUSEUM IN HANUMANDHOKA DURBAR SQUARE PERIPHERY

Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's periphery is a perfect example of a living museum, where historical sites coexist with current cultural activities that honor both tangible and intangible cultural history. This UNESCO World Heritage site is not just a vibrant representation of the past, but also a living place where customs, festivals, and daily activities still shape the urban landscape. The continuous interaction between the locals and their physical surroundings which include sculptures, courtyards, and temples sets Hanumandhoka and other living museums apart [UNESCO. \(2023\)](#) The persistence of devotion at sites such as the Taleju Temple and the presence of traditional handicrafts maintain a direct link between the past and the present. Heritage preservation requires community involvement, which is vital for preserving the relevance and authenticity of these living museums [Tiwari, S. \(2019\)](#)

3.4. AUTHENTIC LANDSCAPE AND SETTING

Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square's standing and cultural and manmade surroundings, which reflect centuries of Newar architecture and urban design, are essential to the square's cultural significance. This area is an outstanding instance of the intricate combination of palaces, courtyards, and temples serving as historical remnants and dynamic religious and social hubs [Shrestha, P. \(2021\)](#). The square's urban layout skillfully integrates the ancient and the new with its large open areas, wandering alleyways, and historic buildings. The legality of the site depends on the preservation of this setting, which represents the civic and religious life of

Kathmandu throughout history [Tiwari, S. \(2019\)](#) The square's cultural and spiritual significance is emphasized even more by the way customary events and celebrations are incorporated into daily life.

Elaborate wooden carvings and complex craftsmanship cover the ancient red-brick buildings, telling memories of past events, dynasties, and the spiritual fervor that has long influenced this sacred site. The atmosphere is respectful and peaceful, encouraging self-analysis, as warmth streams through the historic pagoda roofs and prayer flags carefully billow.

3.5. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Hanumandhoka Durbar Square is a popular center for cultural events and festivals, highlighting the area's rich legacy [Joshi et al. \(2020\)](#). This ancient square is filled with activities a strong foundation in belief and tradition all year. Indra Jatra, a week-long celebration honoring Lord Indra, the deity of rain, is one of the most well-known festivities celebrated here. The square is comprehensively decorated for this event, and locals participate in colorful processions, mask dances, and worship. Thousands of people from around Hanumandhoka Durbar Square enjoy the rich cultural variety of the area during other essential occasions like Dashain, Tihar, Holi, and Buddha Jayanti. Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, a flourishing center of Newari culture, is the site of various customary Jatra festivals that highlight the rich history of the area. The ShetoMachandranath Jatra is a significant celebration that celebrates the deity Machindranath and is celebrated in April. Thousands of people participate in and watch this magnificent chariot procession, which showcases the Newar people's enduring agricultural practices and feeling of community [Joshi et al. \(2020\)](#) The Festival of Cows, or Gai Jatra, is an August celebration that is well-known for its unique blend of comedy and respect. To honor dead family members and comfort those in mourning, participants do humorous performances and march through the streets with cows [Koirala \(2022\)](#). The Gunla Festival is a significant Buddhist celebration that extends for a month in July and August in Kathmandu. It is observed with ancient rituals, music, and processions. During the month-long GunlaBajan celebration, holy scriptures are recited and devotional music is performed, showcasing the social and spiritual aspects of Newar Buddhist culture [Joshi et al. \(2020\)](#). [Gurung, S. \(2019\)](#). Maintaining religious practices and cultural identity is essential for the Newar people [Shrestha, M. \(2021\)](#).

3.6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, community engagement is a significant activity that fosters a dynamic environment. Through their voluntary work and suggestions for planning and arranging events, people of the community have directly contributed. Encouraging workshops, markets, and cultural events lets locals demonstrate their customs and abilities while drawing tourists. Implementing beautification projects, educational efforts, and social media outreach aims to enhance the involvement of residents and cultivate a feeling of pride in their historical heritage.

3.7. INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

The rich cultural heritage of Kathmandu has been brought to life through interactive exhibitions created by local artisans in the ancient Hanumandhoka Durbar Square. A lively and immersive experience welcomes visitors eager to

discover the lively traditions of the country through these displays, which feature everything from careful handcraft demonstrations to traditional dance performances. Fascinating audiences with interactive activities and lively storytelling that emphasize the timeless appeal and value of Nepalese culture, craftsmen deftly display their craft against the backdrop of historic temples and palaces.

3.8. EDUCATION PROGRAMME

As a heritage site and open-air museum, Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's education program attempts to provide students with comprehensive and meaningful learning experiences. This program involves students in the lively tapestry of Nepal's legacy, going beyond standard classroom settings and taking place within Kathmandu's historical and cultural richness. Through interactive seminars, guided tours, and hands-on activities, students better comprehend Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's significance in Nepal's history and cultural identity. This program not only delivers knowledge but also fosters in students a feeling of pride and duty to conserve and promote their cultural legacy for future generations by encouraging their curiosity and enthusiasm for their cultural heritage.

3.9. IN SITU PRESERVATION

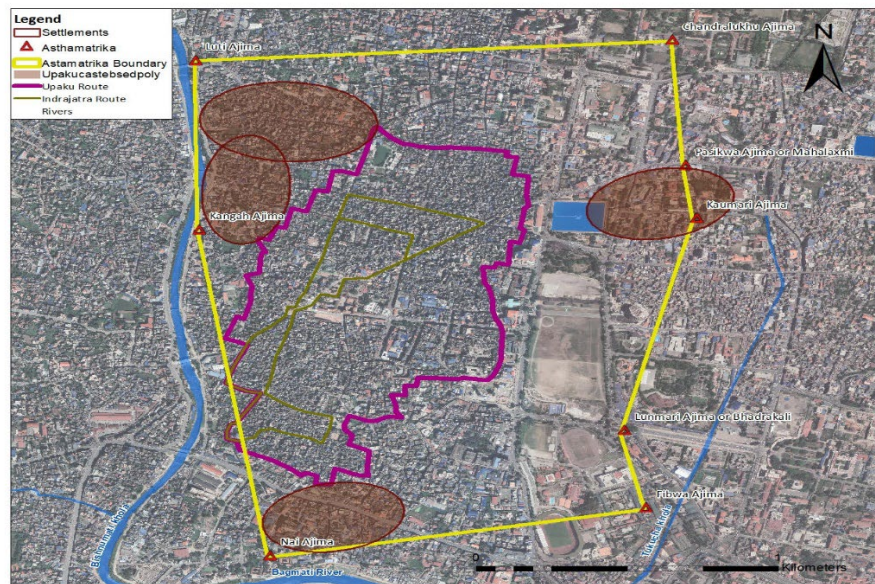
The preservation of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's historical and cultural heritage depends significantly on both in situ conservation and preservation initiatives. To preserve the integrity and authenticity of the place, in situ conservation involves protecting cultural heritage while keeping it in its original setting. This strategy includes actions such as periodic upkeep, structural recovery, and environmental effect monitoring to stop degradation. [Gutschow, N. \(2011\)](#) The goal of preservation activities is to preserve the monuments' physical structure, which includes carefully repairing, restoring, and documenting their historical elements. Hanumandhoka Durbar Square is a living example of Nepal's rich architectural and historical past, and it has been maintained as a notable cultural asset via cooperative activities involving local people, heritage specialists, and governmental organizations.

3.10. LIVING TRADITION IN THE CORE KATHMANDU AREA

Surrounding with medieval palaces, courtyards, and temples, the vicinity is still an alive site where daily activities, religious ceremonies, and cultural events take place. The living museum idea at Basantapur, which highlights the connection between people, tourists, and the site's physical heritage, allows traditions to be continually modified and maintained. This concept, which places a strong focus on community responsibility, emphasizes the importance it is for residents to maintain the area's historical significance while still keeping it practical and current in the modern world [Shrestha, P. \(2021\)](#). In addition, the neighborhood's prosperous community of historians, storytellers, and artists offers an invaluable opportunity for genuine interpretation and interaction. A living museum at the Hanumandhoka Durbar Area creates a unique experience by combining the past and present in a way that maintains physical artifacts while also bringing Nepal's cultural history to life. A few aspects of the living museum in the vicinity of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square can be examined.

4. UPAKU TRADITION

The Upaku route, a living museum that encompasses the city's religious and cultural environment, is an integral element of the ancient practices of Kathmandu. This sacred path, mainly associated with the Astamatrika religion, links eight powerful goddesses, Maheshvari, Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Indrani, Kaumari, Varahi, Chamunda, and Mahalakshmi, who are all worshipped at key points along the route. Upaku is the traditional designated wall boundary of ancient Kathmandu. Previously, the boundary incorporated Astamatrika Devis' with beautiful temples and courtyards which is still in existence. There were 32 gates placed in the area to enter in the administrative zone of the core Kathmandu. All gates do not yet exist; however, a small number are available. A tradition is very popular around Upaku, referred as Upaku Jatra which is celebrated during the initial days of Indra Jatra. When someone in the area loses a family member, they walk the path with the deceased person's relatives and other sacred items. The circumambulation gives them the strength to bear the severe loss, providing them the validity that the demised soul will rest in peace [Bajracharya, B. B. \(2003\)](#). People representing various ethnic community connected to their occupation have lived in the area since the medieval era. People from the Dhobhi community participated in the cleaning activities. Comparably, members of the Mali community participated in floriculture. These folks continue to do these associated activities in the vicinity. However, the area is presently impacted by serious issues such as excessive population growth, irresponsible resource use, and uncontrolled development. As a result, the area's water supply is currently having difficulties. As a result, both tradition and the living tradition are today facing difficulties. The site will be an essential tool for the growth of tourism in the nation if we can maintain the living history, manage the resources, and find solutions to all of the current issues.



4.1. ASTAMATRIKA CULT

The religious and cultural traditions of Kathmandu are deeply rooted in the Ashtamatrika cult, which created the foundation for the city throughout the medieval era. Since they are a significant group of deities in Tantric and Hindu rites, the eight mother goddesses, also known as Ashtamatrikas, have been regarded as

protectors of the Kathmandu Valley and have a significant influence on the religious and spiritual life of the city [Allen \(1996\)](#); [Bajracharya, B. B. \(2003\)](#). Because the Astamatrika are considered the protectors of the cardinal directions, a protective mandala of their temples is placed around the city [Slusser, M. S. \(1982\)](#). The mandala idea maintains the city's spiritual security and purity [Levy, R. I. \(1990\)](#) These goddesses' temples are regularly located near the limits of the ancient city, designating the holy area's boundary. Two festivals, Indra Jatra and Bhairab Jatra, are dedicated to these mother goddesses, to obtain their blessings for community safety and prosperity through offerings and celebrations [Gutschow et al. \(2008\)](#). In the past, taking part in these rituals added the protective influence of the royal family and the residents of the area [Shrestha et al. \(2017\)](#). According to [Allen \(1996\)](#), the Ashtamatrikas are a representation of women's strength and procreation, which are seen to be essential to the city's development and continued existence. When worshipped alongside the Ashtamatrikas, Ganesh, Bhairava, and other guardian deities create powerful the principles of supernatural characteristics that together safeguard the city [Bajracharya, B. B. \(2003\)](#) These deities' synchronization in rituals and temple connections increases their collective protective power over the city [Slusser, M. S. \(1982\)](#). The Astamatrika' devotion has left a lasting impression on Kathmandu's cultural identity. The fact that these traditions have continued for centuries shows that people still believe in the goddesses' ability to protect. [Levy, R. I. \(1990\)](#) Despite the city's urbanization, this cultural continuity makes sure that traditional borders and holy places are maintained [Shrestha et al. \(2017\)](#). In the Hanumandhoka area of Ancient Kantipur, the Asthamatrikas—Maheshvari, Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Indrani, Kaumari, Varahi, Chamunda, and Mahalakshmi—are established along the Upaku route, each with a selected priest responsible for their worship. These deities are managed by a Guthi, a traditional institution that oversees their care and maintenance. The maintenance and administration of these deities is the responsibility of a Guthi, a traditional institution. This arrangement is a perfect illustration of a living museum, where a unique assortment of places of worship, cultural contexts, historical narratives, and rituals come together to honor and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Newar people. The Astamatrika, also known as the "Eight Matrikas," are venerated in the Hanumandhoka section of Kathmandu's ancient district through a complex web of temples and holy places along the Upaku path. These gods are Maheshvari (also called Maheshwori), which is near the southern end of the path; Brahmani, which is near the western end; Vaishnavi, which is in the middle; Indrani, which is towards the north; Kaumari, which is on the eastern side; Varahi, which is at a major the intersection; Chamunda, which is in a significant corner area; and Mahalakshmi, which is near the central precincts of Hanumandhoka.

4.2. JATRA PROCESSION WITH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Hanumandhoka Durbar Square is well-known for its colorful cultural history and several jatras, or traditional festivals. These jatra, which have religious and cultural origins, liven up the area with vibrant processions, cheerful tunes, and passionate devotion. The Indra, Kumari, and Gai jatra are just a few of the well-known jatra celebrated here; each provides a distinctive window into Nepal's rich cultural fabric [Regmi, P. \(2019\)](#). With its historic buildings and exquisite craftsmanship, the square attracts locals and tourists and serves as a hub for celebration and community building. These jatras serve as a memorial to Nepal's rich cultural legacy and sustain centuries-old customs as they take place against the backdrop of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square [Joshi et al. \(2020\)](#)

4.3. INDRA JATRA

Indra Jatra is a lively and important cultural event that is celebrated in Kathmandu. It usually starts in September and lasts for eight days. The celebration, which honors Indra, the Hindu god of the sky and rain, is marked with spiritual rites, colorful processions, and folk dances.

The construction of the ceremonial wooden pole, known as the "lingo," represents Indra's living and is one of the main attractions of Indra Jatra. The terminology is set up in Hanumandhoka Durbar Square with much ceremony and religious determination, decorated with colorful flags. The event also honors Kumari, Nepal's living goddess, who is revered as representing divine energy and purity. Devotees can approach the Kumari regarding a chariot as she is paraded through the streets during Indra Jatra, appealing for her blessings [Shaha, R. \(2005\)](#). The traditional masked dances performed by different ethnic groups, especially the Newar community, who are native to the Kathmandu Valley, are the festival's main attraction. The my myths and legends depicted in these dances, called "Devi Nach" and "MahakaliPyakhan," sometimes have humorous and humorous elements [Regmi, P. \(2019\)](#). The performers captivate the audience with their deft movements and colorful expressions while donning excessive costumes and finely created masks. The traditional masked dances performed by different ethnic groups, especially the Newar community, who are native to the Kathmandu Valley, are the festival's main attraction. Indra Jatra is a significant religious celebration that contributes significantly to social cohesion and the preservation of Nepal's rich cultural heritage. It gives communities a place to gather, fortify relationships, and transmit customs from generation to generation. With its vibrant ceremonies, energetic performances, and deep spiritual meaning, Indra Jatra is still a beloved occasion that highlights the richness and diversity of Nepalese culture.



4.4. LIVING GODDESS KUMARI

Numerous live Kumari are revered as living deities by the native Newar community. Kumari is regarded as the reincarnation of Taleju Bhawani. The protector goddess of Newari Hindus in the Kathmandu valley is Goddess Taleju Bhawani. After being forced from his country by Muslim soldiers in 1325, the king Harisimha Deva, a Karṇāṭa ruler of Tirhut, established the goddess to the

Kathmandu Valley in the 14th century. Kumari is regarded as one of the supreme incarnation of the whole nation. She is celebrated in every important procession of the county. For example, during Indraajatra, which is a huge procession celebrated by the Kathmandu Valley during when three gods Bhairab, Ganesh and Kumari is worshipped. By placing Kumari in a well-designed chariot, she is supposed to circumambulate throughout the core Bashantapur Durbar square with thousands of people following her in her journey [Shrestha et al. \(2018\)](#). King Jay Prakash Malla built a Kumari ghar and formally started a ritual of selecting Kumari from Shaky clan of Newari community. Kumari is worshipped since then as an incarnation of god. Kumari is regarded as the protected deity of local community who is regarded as the healing goddesses for the whole community. Whenever any people from the community face difficulties in their health, household chores or other form of personal problems they find Kumari as the prime deity to address their problem. They visit Kumari and take blessings from here. As a result, all their problems are believed to be solved.



5. COMMUNAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN LIVING MUSEUM

In the Kathmandu Valley, public utilities are vital for maintaining communal unity and meeting basic requirements in the traditional settlements of Newar groups. Public open spaces foster a sense of community, which are used as hubs for religious rituals, cultural activities, and social interactions. As essential sources of clean water for cooking, drinking, and ceremonial uses, waterspouts, known as stone spouts, stand for sustainability and purity in the community [Slusser et al. \(1974\)](#). Raised platforms known as Falcha are multifunctional areas where inhabitants gather informally, interact, and engage in leisure activities. This promotes interaction and idea sharing between residents. In addition to their visual appeal, ponds are helpful for recreational purposes, irrigation, water storage, and environmental enhancement. They help support biodiversity in the area. Together, these components provide the Kathmandu Valley's traditional Newar villages with their distinct cultural heritage and livability.

Urban planning flourishes in Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, a historic site with well thoughtout architecture, several gates, peaceful ponds, graceful waterspouts, and large public open areas [Thapa, R. \(2020\)](#). Every component adds to the area's functionality and appeal, resulting in a well-balanced setting that lasts. A centrally positioned palace, a grand focal point among the surrounding architectural treasures, sits at the center of this busy square. In addition to representing outstanding magnificence, the palace also acts as a center for administrative and cultural activities, encapsulating the dynamic community spirit and rich cultural

heritage. These components combine to create a fascinating urban design fabric that beckons tourists to experience Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's ancient grandeur.



5.1. MYTHICAL HERITAGES WITH LIVELY INTERPRETATION WITH RELIGIOUS VALUE

One of Nepal's most distinctive traditions, the Living Kumari of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square in Kathmandu, has been alive for centuries. The Kumari is a young prepubescent girl whom Buddhists and Hindus worship as a representation of the goddess Taleju. She is chosen based on demanding religious and cultural standards and goes through a complex initiation ritual before becoming the living deity. The Kumari reside in peace within the Kumari Ghar, a palace located in Hanumandhoka Durbar Square. There, people worship her and seek her wisdom and blessings. The Kumari represents the divine relationship between the mortal and the sacred in Nepalese society and is an essential part of Kathmandu's spiritual and cultural fabric. [Allen, C. \(2008\)](#). The KalBhairav of Hanumandhoka, located in Kathmandu. Is steeped in myth and legend. According to local folklore, the statue represents Bhairab, a vicious manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva. Known as the deity of law, Kal Bhairab has been assigned with maintaining justice and order in the cosmos. According to legend, this once cut Lord Brahma's fifth head, signifying the victory of time over creation. Offering wine is one among the rituals that are routinely carried out at the location because devotees believe pacifying KalBhairav would grant protection and benefits. The monument itself represents both the protecting and destructive facets of Hindu mythology's deities, making it a powerful representation of both amazement and fear.



Indra Jatra is a colorful celebration with origins in both Buddhist and Hindu traditions that takes place in Hanumandhoka Durbar Square in Kathmandu, Nepal. According to legend, Indra, the supreme deity of Hindu mythology, came to Earth to find the Parijat flower, which is said to offer immortality. A wooden pole known as "lingo" is set up during the festival to represent Indra's flagpole, and processions of chariots with images of several gods, such as Bhairab, Kumari, the living goddess, and Indra, travel around the square. The "Yosin" dance, which is the festival's finale, features masked dancers portraying a variety of gods and evil spirits, attracting audiences with their vibrant costumes and dynamic performances. Indra Jatra promotes a feeling of belonging and unity and honoring Nepal's cultural history.

5.2. GASTRONOMY CULTURE

Heritage sites' gastronomy ties together the gastronomic delights of a place with its rich history and cultural traditions, creating a compelling appeal. It entails presenting age-old methods of preparation, culinary techniques, and regional delicacies passed down through the years, giving guests a sensory historical tour. Gastronomy offers a tasty depth to the tourist experience. It provides insights into a region's cultural fabric and character, whether it can be enjoyed through the centuries-old recipes in historic palaces or when strolling along cobblestone alleys and enjoying street cuisine. The area offers a rich tapestry of gastronomic experiences, drawing in both locals and visitors with its architectural wonders and historical significance [Pokhrel et al. \(2017\)](#). Hanumandhoka Durbar Square encompasses guests in the culinary delights of Nepal, offering everything from traditional Newari cuisine served in charming cafés along the square's cobblestone streets to lively food markets presenting a broad array of flavors and smells. Whether enjoying blowing hot moms (dumplings) in bamboo baskets, chowing down on fiery curries, or nibbling on sugary treats like sel roti (rice flour doughnuts), the square's culinary offerings entice the senses and foster a rich, cultural environment where food is a central component of the communal experience.

5.3. ENSEMBLE ARCHITECTURAL SHOWPIECES

The integration of secular and religious buildings in the square enhances the architectural value. Religious architecture in the area may be seen in Hindu temples such as the Taleju Bhawani and Kumari Ghar, as well as other structures dedicated to gods like Shiva, the goddess Taleju, and Vishnu, each of whom has a unique ceremonial and symbolic significance. The square is made more multicultural by the presence of Buddhist and Hindu architecture. Traditional architectural design and construction methods reflect a particular location's unique historical, cultural, and regional qualities [Korn, W. \(2007\)](#) It frequently uses materials that are easily available locally and complies to time-tested construction methods that have been handed down through the generations [Korn, W. \(2014\)](#). Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's most significant cultural heritage component is its traditional architecture, which expresses the community's artistic values, material qualities, and craftsmanship. The existence of cultural heritage is not isolated. Traditional architecture is one of the most significant aspects of inheritance in this community, and it incorporates a wide variety of socio-religious factors, including beliefs, values, practices, worship, mythology, legend, artwork, and the way of life. Art and architecture from the previous 500 years are displayed in Basantapur Durbar Square, an outdoor museum. The medieval royal palace, Hanumandhoka Durbar

Square, comprises a variety of architectural showpieces, with a primary concentration on temples and palaces. The magnificent ensemble architecture of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is an example to centuries of creative creativity and cultural fusion. The square is a colorful example of the Kathmandu Valley's architectural development, combining Buddhist and Hindu elements in a well-balanced combination. The impressive Hanuman Dhoka Palace, a Malla-era masterpiece of Newari architecture, dominates the square, which is also home to various elaborately carved temples, shrines, courtyards, and palaces from different eras. The ensemble architecture of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square is a living legacy that embodies the complex fabric of Nepal's religious and cultural variety and is attracting with its visual beauty. Nepal's rich religious and cultural heritage has been preserved at a living museum located in Hanumandhoka Durbar Square. Its ensemble architecture, which combines Buddhist and Hindu elements to create a spectacular and historically significant space, symbolizes the many traditions of the Kathmandu Valley. Religious and secular architecture constitute the two primary architectural types of the square. Famous Hindu temples like Taleju Bhawani and Kumari Ghar are among the religious buildings. Numerous multi-roof temples are also there, all of which are carefully built to honor gods like Shiva, Taleju Bhawani, and Vishnu. Traditional homes, water features, and palaces are examples of secular architecture that showcase the creativity of ancient architects who employed innovative approaches to provide earthquake protection resilience. The combination of Hindu and Buddhist architecture at Hanumandhoka Durbar Square functions as a living museum, protecting Nepal's rich cultural heritage. The temples and secular structures on the square, which symbolize the city's historical and cultural narratives, are examples of old craftsmanship and imaginative design. This vibrant, dynamic area always captivates travelers with its architectural history and way of life.

5.4. INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWS SUGGEST FOR REVITALIZATION

Hanuman Dhoka is a living museum that exhibits incredible tangible and intangible Cultural Heritages that have been developed since ancient and medieval era. It is the center of socio-economic activities which can be developed for tourist activities also. It is enlisted as one of the World Heritage sites due to which people from all around the globe visit the place. Hereby, for its development as a living museum, it can address a few aspects according to the KII interview. A living museum in ancient Kathmandu that integrates cultural excursions and activates historical routes as recommended using a comprehensive and multi-layered approach. Hence, Incorporating the concept of a "living museum" into Kathmandu's ancient heritage involves re-routing and revitalizing traditional trails that connect the city's rich cultural landscape. This initiative can create immersive, heritage-driven tours by reactivating ancient sites like Vihars, Temples, Stupas, Bahals, palaces, courtyards, water spouts, traditional gates, and ponds. Categorize these sites into thematic groups for the tours Vihar tours, ShaktaSampada tours (Pinga/Pith), Shaivat Shiva tours, and Vaishnaviate tours. By designing packaged tours around these routes, visitors can experience the living culture and history of Kathmandu beyond the well-known World Heritage sites. Transforming old buildings into homestays, tourist apartments, traditional eateries, and so on. Such private to public institutions could prefer to cater to traditional lodging and food facilities with more ethnic flavor. There are many handicraft industries and workshops that can be visited by visitors to learn the local technology, skills,

materials, business systems, and so on. Guests can interact with the producer and craftsman, and also be motivated to buy them as souvenirs. Involve the local community in planning and implementation, including enterprises, religious organizations, cultural advocates, and artisans, to ensure the sustainability of the living museum initiative. Furthermore, Work together with travel agencies, tourism departments, and cultural organizations in marketing and promoting the trips both domestically and internationally. Hanumandhoka Durbar Square should integrate community engagement and sustainable preservation practices to create a living museum in collaboration with local government authorities.

5.5. FEW MORE STEPS FURTHER MANAGE THE SITE

A complex strategy is needed to manage a cultural site as a living museum to maintain its historical significance while also keeping it exciting and relevant for contemporary visitors. Comprehensive conservation work must be undertaken to preserve the authenticity of the site's buildings and artifacts. In addition, dynamic interpretative programs that use interactive exhibitions, demonstrations, and immersive experiences are needed to bring the site's past to life. To ensure that community involvement, education, and research programs continue to be carried out in a way that promotes more excellent knowledge and respect for the site's cultural legacy, collaboration with researchers, local communities, and cultural organizations is essential. To strike a balance between preservation and accessibility and guarantee the site's long-term survival as a bright reminder of the past, regular maintenance, effective marketing, and sustainable tourism practices are also essential.

To transform Hanumandhoka in Kathmandu into a living museum, preservation and modernization must be carefully balanced to maintain the site's historical relevance while making it exciting and accessible to tourists. Primarily direct rehabilitation operations and providing context for educational exhibitions, comprehensive study and recording of the site's history, architecture, and cultural value are essential. Working with local people, archaeologists, and historians may yield a wealth of information about the history and customs of the location. Incorporating sustainable measures to guard against environmental deterioration and natural disasters should be a top priority in preservation efforts and maintaining the authenticity of the structures and artifacts. Furthermore, implementing educational initiatives, guided tours, and interactive exhibitions could improve the comprehension and admiration of Hanumandhoka cultural heritage among tourists. Accepting technology may provide creative methods to bring the site's past to life while maintaining its integrity. Examples of this are virtual reality experiences and multimedia exhibitions. Involvement in the community and collaborations with cultural institutions may support tourism and economic growth while fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents. Management practices must be continuously monitored and adjusted to maintain long-term sustainability and relevance.

5.6. METHODS OF MAKING LIVING MUSEUM IN THIS PERIPHERY

- Determine the objectives of the living museum and establish the vision and mission for the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square area. Consider the stories it intends to tell, the experiences it must provide, and its goal.

- Regular maintenance and restoration activities are carried out under conservation principles to safeguard Hanuman Durbar Square's historical structures and preserve their authenticity and cultural relevance for future generations.
- Developing a living museum near Hanuman Dhoka Durbar requires investigating established living museums, historic places, and cultural organizations. Find areas where the market is lacking and opportunities to stand out. Create a comprehensive company plan with a budget, schedule, target market, and objectives.
- Cultural performances and demonstrations in Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square showcase traditional Nepalese music, dancing styles like Newari and Maithili, sophisticated crafts like metalwork and woodcarving, and holy ceremonies like Kumari Puja. Through these presentations, tourists can fully engage with Nepal's dynamic living culture and learn about the centuries-old legacy woven throughout the square's historic ambiance.
- Diverse ways of understanding the site's rich history can be found at Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, such as educational interpretation that explains the art and architectural significance and historical context of the structures, interactive exhibits that demonstrate the development of Nepalese culture, audio guides that tell stories of dynasties and legends in a variety of languages, and knowledgeable local guides that lead tours.
- Traditional Workshops and The artisans encouraged traditional craftspeople to set up shop in the square so that observers may witness how craftsmen still practice their trades, such as the metalworking process, woodcarving, and pottery-making. Visitors may recognize the beauty and expertise required in these centuries-old processes through this interactive experience.
- Using pedestrian crossings, Hanumandhoka Durbar Square offers a peaceful setting away from the bustle of the city, which completely changes the experience for visitors. Visitors may explore the square's rich history and beautiful architecture at their leisure, undisturbed by the ban on vehicles and motorbikes. People may now fully understand the cultural value of this UNESCO World Heritage Site according to a more comfortable and immersive experience.
- Hanumandhoka Durbar Square is successfully transformed into a living museum by the invaluable storytelling abilities of its tour guides. Visitors are captivated by their abundance of expertise and enthusiasm for the place, which provides significant historical context and cultural insights. Through their excellent storytelling of the square's historical significance, tour guides not only create a lasting impression but also support their livelihoods while helping in the preservation of this famous historical monument.
- Community engagement primarily concerns developing close linkages with the surrounding area's historical societies, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. Work together to create programs, displays, and activities that honor the history and beliefs of the neighborhood. Encourage the participation of community people in oral history initiatives as volunteers, storytellers, or contributors.

6. CONCLUSION

The Hanumandhoka Durbar Square a living museum experience encapsulates a remarkable journey through Kathmandu's rich cultural heritage. Visitors leave with a renewed understanding of the rich fabric of Nepalese history and architecture as they bid farewell to this ancient wonder. A greater comprehension of the country's cultural significance was fostered by the immersive study of old palaces, temples, and courtyards, which provided a window into the lively history of the nation. Every step through the living museum offered stories of creativity, exceptional ability, mysticism, and nobility from ancient times. The encounter creates a lasting effect and sparks a desire to discover more of Nepal's cultural riches and preserve Hanumandhoka Durbar Square's heritage for future generations. Visitors are encouraged to participate in a tangible, immaterial, and meaningful way with the past, utilizing the seamless integration of history with immersive settings. Furthermore, community interaction, traditional workshops, and cultural performances that create a dynamic atmosphere will bring the square's historical narrative to life. In addition to providing immersive experiences for visitors, these initiatives help local artists and crafters, thus improving the social and economic life of the area. By including the community in maintaining and interpreting of the site, the living museum concept ensures the continuation of Hanumandhoka's lively and accessible cultural history. Also, these museums provide lively settings for community events, educational programs, and creative manifestations, enhancing viewpoints from local and global communities. Consequently, sustained funding and creativity in outdoor museums will preserve our shared history while encouraging the next generation to value the diversity of cultures and civilizations. In essence, the vision of Hanumandhoka Durbar Square as a living museum is to create a harmonious blend of preservation and modernization.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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