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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Monika B A, Registration Number: 2070202, PhD Scholar at the Department of Tourism Management, School of Business and Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 28 July 2025 at 10.00 am in the Seminar Hall, 1st Floor, Academic Block, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560076, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	**Evaluating Digitisation of Tangible Cultural Heritage for Accessible Tourism at Hampi World Heritage Site**
Discipline	:	**Tourism**
External Examiner - I	:	**Dr Madhuri Sawant** Associate Professor and Director Department of Tourism Administration Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University Aurangabad - 431004 Maharashtra
External Examiner - II	:	**Dr V T Bindu** Associate Professor and Head Department of Tourism Management Avinashilingam Institute for Home Sciences and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore - 641043 Tamil Nadu
Supervisor	:	**Dr Joby Thomas** Professor Department of Tourism Management School of Business and Management Bangalore Yeshwanthpur campus CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bangalore - 560073 Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva – voce examination.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 24 July 2025

ABSTRACT

Hampi, located in northern Karnataka, is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The establishment of a unified heritage authority, termed the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority (HWHAMA), ensures the efficacy of the management system and the coordination of activities among diverse agencies while allowing local self-governing bodies to maintain their powers as specified in the pertinent legislation. The digitization of the world heritage site, Hampi, presents distinct potential and challenges for both officials and tourists. This study seeks to comprehend the obstacles officials encounter in project implementation and the prospects linked to digitization. The perspectives of tourists regarding the benefits and challenges associated with the digitization of monuments are also examined. This research examines the accessible tourism goals of these projects and gathers the perspectives of differently abled tourists regarding their encounters with the digitization of Hampi. The present study used a mixed-methods strategy. It is limited to the experts involved in the Hampi Digitization project. The study examines tourists who have visited Hampi for recreational purposes. The study considers differently abled travellers with substantial disabilities who have visited Hampi for tourism. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for data collecting and analysis to attain a thorough comprehension of the obstacles and potential in the digitization of Hampi, tourists' expectations and requirements for digitalization, and the role of digitization in facilitating accessible tourism. The India Digital Heritage project faced several new challenges as academics sought to enhance their initiatives to achieve the project's goal of documenting, reconstructing, and digitally preserving the rich heritage of Hampi. The efficacy of digitization initiatives for Hampi's cultural heritage relies on tourists' perceptions and utilization of these technologies to facilitate accessible tourism. Various elements influence tourists' pleasure with monument digitization. The interplay of ease, experiential enhancement, and technological proficiency is a critical factor affecting tourists' acceptance of monument digitization. Employing technology to improve monuments fosters a more inviting environment for tourists. This development signifies that travel is now accessible for those with disabilities, augmenting the overall pleasure of tourism.

Keywords: *Digitization, LiDAR, Tangible Cultural Heritage, Accessible Tourism, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, 3D Tactile Model, Tourist Experience*

Publications:

1. Ashok, M. B., & Thomas, J. (2024). Digitization of monuments – An impact on the tourist experience with special reference to Hampi. In A. Kumar, V. K. Gunjan, S. Senatore, & Y.-C. Hu (Eds.), Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Data Science, Machine Learning and Applications (ICDSMLA 2023) (Vol. 1273, pp. 31–36). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-8031-0_4
2. Ashok, M. B., & Thomas, J. (2025). AI-driven service marketing in accessible tourism – Digitizing Hampi for all. In Intersections of niche tourism and marketing (Chapter 9). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-8417-6.ch009
3. Ashok, M. B., & Thomas, J. (2024). The impact of digitizing India's cultural heritage on innovation and the socioeconomic front. In 2024 IEEE 4th International Conference on ICT in Business Industry& Government (ICTBIG) (pp. 1–4). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICTBIG 64922.2024.10911057
4. Ashok, M. B., & Thomas, J. (2025). Harnessing digital technologies to enrich tourist experiences at cultural heritage sites. In A. K. Sinha, R. Sharma, & M. K. Singh (Eds.), Tracking tourism patterns and improving travel experiences with innovative technologies (Chapter 7). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9636-0.ch007

Patent:

5. A System for Digitization of Tangible Cultural Heritage to Enhance Tourist Experience