ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 4| April 2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

# INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY AND CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY MODERN INTERIOR DESIGN

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research examines the evolution of architectural identity in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, transitioning from indigenous, survival-based dwellings to contemporary modern interior environments. Traditional typologies such as the Onge huts, Mus and Shom village systems, and the Kar (Nicobarese kitchen) demonstrate highly refined responses to tropical climate, social organization, and material efficiency.*

*Despite this rich heritage, contemporary architectural developments – particularly resort-based designs – often fail to integrate indigenous knowledge systems, resulting in a significant "design gap." Modern structures prioritize comfort and permanence but frequently lack climatic responsiveness, spatial intelligence, and cultural depth.*

*This study identifies the missing links between traditional and modern design approaches and proposes a reinterpretation strategy that translates indigenous principles into contemporary interior design. The research advocates for a design language that merges luxury with sustainability and cultural continuity by reintroducing passive design strategies, material authenticity, and community-oriented spatial planning.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Indigenous Architecture, Vernacular Design, Onge Hut, Nicobarese Architecture, Kar Kitchen, Design Gap, Cultural Identity*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands embody a unique intersection of culture, climate, and architecture. Indigenous communities such as the Onge and Nicobarese have developed highly adaptive built environments that respond efficiently to environmental conditions and social needs.

Traditional settlements, including Mus and Shom villages, reflect strong spatial organization and communal living, while structures like the Kar kitchen highlight functional specialization. These architectural systems are deeply rooted in sustainability and cultural identity.

However, with the rise of globalization and tourism, contemporary developments have shifted toward standardized construction methods. Modern resorts and infrastructure often neglect indigenous design intelligence, leading to a disconnect between built form and context.

This research addresses this gap by investigating how traditional architectural wisdom can be reinterpreted within modern interior design to create spaces that are both culturally meaningful and functionally advanced.

## 2. CULTURAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Historical Evolution

The islands have transitioned from isolated indigenous settlements to globally influenced tourism hubs, significantly impacting architectural practices.

### 2.2 Concept of Cultural Continuity

The idea of integrating historical identity into modern design ensures preservation while allowing innovation.

### 2.3 Intersection of Heritage and Interior Design

Contemporary interiors must balance aesthetic modernization with cultural authenticity.

## 3. VERNACULAR INTERPRETATIONS

### 3.1 The Onge Hut

The conical geometry of Onge huts promotes thermal efficiency and natural ventilation, making it highly suitable for tropical climates.

### 3.2 Elevated Living Systems

Stilt-based construction protects against flooding, enhances airflow, and ensures structural adaptability.

### 3.3 Village Planning Strategies

Clustered layouts in Mus and Shom villages promote community interaction and functional zoning.

## 4. MATERIALITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

### 4.1 Bamboo as a Sustainable Material

Bamboo offers structural strength, flexibility, and rapid renewability, making it ideal for eco-conscious design.

### 4.2 Timber and Colonial Influence

Padauk wood and processed timber reflect a blend of indigenous and colonial material practices.

### 4.3 Textural Authenticity

The use of woven elements and palm-based materials enhances tactile and visual richness in interiors.

## 5. CLIMATE-RESPONSIVE DESIGN

### 5.1 Passive Strategies

Natural ventilation, daylight optimization, and shading techniques are key elements of traditional design.

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### 5.2 Indoor–Outdoor Integration
Seamless transitions between interior and exterior spaces create a strong connection with nature.

### 5.3 Disaster Resilience
Lightweight, flexible construction improves safety in cyclone-prone regions.

## 6. COLONIAL LEGACIES AND ARCHITECTURAL MEMORY
### 6.1 Spatial Organization
Radial and functional layouts derived from historical planning influence modern design approaches.

### 6.2 Industrial Heritage
Timber industries have contributed to material culture and construction techniques.

### 6.3 Adaptive Aesthetics
Natural decay and vegetation integration inspire contemporary design narratives.

## 7. DESIGN GAP ANALYSIS
**Modern architecture in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands reveals:**

- Lack of climatic responsiveness
- Minimal integration of indigenous spatial logic
- Over-reliance on heavy, non-contextual materials

This results in spaces that are visually modern but environmentally inefficient and culturally disconnected.

## 8. DESIGN REINTERPRETATION FRAMEWORK
The research proposes:

- Translating indigenous survival strategies into luxury design solutions
- Incorporating passive cooling systems into interiors
- Reinterpreting vernacular forms into contemporary aesthetics
- Using local materials in refined, modern applications

## 9. FUTURE DIRECTIONS
### 9.1 Urban Applications
Applying vernacular strategies to contemporary urban interiors.

### 9.2 Sustainable Tourism
Designing culturally immersive and environmentally responsive resort spaces.

### 9.3 Heritage Preservation
Ensuring cultural continuity through adaptive reinterpretation.

## 10. CONCLUSION
The reinterpretation of indigenous architectural principles offers a pathway toward sustainable and culturally rooted interior design. By bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, designers can create spaces that are environmentally responsive, socially meaningful, and aesthetically refined.

The future of contemporary interior design lies not in abandoning tradition but in transforming it into a framework for innovation

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