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Mapping gaps in documentation of Islamic intangible cultural heritage:
A systematic literature review of institutional and mosque-based contexts

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Islamic intangible cultural heritage (ICH) includes oral traditions, religious practices, crafts, and community knowledge passed down through generations. However, its preservation is facing critical challenges in the digital age, especially within cultural heritage institutions. Despite growing awareness of its importance, there are still few systematic methods to document Islamic cultural practices, particularly in Sri Lanka. This scoping review was conducted by following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, aiming to examine the current state of documentation practices for Islamic ICH in cultural heritage contexts, identify methodological gaps, and explore opportunities for improvement. The study employed a systematic search strategy across two databases, "ScienceDirect" and "Taylor & Francis", as well as the academic search engine "Google Scholar" using predefined keywords and search strings: 'intangible cultural heritage', 'Islamic cultural heritage', 'preservation of cultural heritage', 'religious heritage documentation' applied to titles, abstracts and keywords, published during 2014-2025. Search conducted in June-August 2025, retrieved 64 research papers, 41 eligible studies were screened against predefined inclusion criteria (English, peer-reviewed) and the data were systematically coded for contexts, methodology, and key findings. Studies were coded into eight categories: Islamic heritage documentation, ICH methodologies, Sri Lankan heritage context, digital preservation, community engagement, legal frameworks, technical standards, and additional resources. The review identifies major gaps, including the absence of systematic studies examining how mosques and Islamic institutions document their ICH, the limited use of culturally sensitive methods and multilingual approaches (Arabic–Tamil/Arwi), and weak collaboration between communities and institutions. While participatory methods and Arwi manuscript preservation efforts offer few models, they are rarely applied to religious contexts. This review provides the first comprehensive mapping of these gaps and calls for the development of integrated, culturally sensitive documentation approaches that align Islamic values with modern documentation practices.

Keywords: *Islamic intangible cultural heritage, Participatory methods, Preservation of cultural heritage, Sri Lanka*