

Critical Evaluation of Architectural Rudiments from the Perspective of Religion.

Sangam Namwad¹, Nikhil V. Badrike², Mansi Golchha³, Kartiki Narkhede⁴

¹ Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Navi Mumbai.

² Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Navi Mumbai.

³ Students, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Navi Mumbai.

⁴ Students, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Navi Mumbai.

Abstract –

History and literature denote importance of symbols which represent Religion and architecture. As per cultural evolution different symbols evolved in aesthetic form making it tangible. This paper focus on religion that binds them together at a certain point and how it has its own values and elements in the shape that society and its people has given it. The role played by religion in architecture can be stretched back thousands of years ago. Religion arises as a necessity to understand various aspects of society and surrounding social activities, that reflect in complementing the scientific understanding of religious architecture and symbols. Religious architecture is the historic record of the way people express their faith. These old structures are the heritage of the country. The elements like religious symbolism come up with various beliefs, rituals, and scriptures from ancient times. These elements merged with the architectural style to form religious structures. Since the ancient era religion has been a major source of inspiration in architectural construction and architecture has concretized religion, thus spaces they shape support and reflect spiritual practices and religious beliefs. Indeed, the motive of each structure remains the same, varying its symbolism in each religion. The aim of this paper is to understand how all religious structures are connected to each other with various aspects.

Key Words: Architecture, religion, religious structures, heritage, case-based reasoning and history

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing urbanization and urban population resulted in the rapid growth of towns and cities. (Badrike & Petkar, 2021). In this modern urbanization, the architectural style of religious structures has continual remarkably. The focal point of multiple religions that bind them together at a certain point which is how it has their own values and elements in the shape, that society and its people have given them.

Symbols are the tangible element mainly associated with particular religion. In fact, associated has deeper meaning making statement of religion, its power, spiritual and cultural appearance. Symbol is an expression having direct, instant, singular communication with society. Symbols is an art to connect with focused group its spiritual mindset making it

powerful. Meaning of symbols changes according to generations and sociocultural transition.

Above factors can be illustrated with an example, like a colour Blue. Blue colour represents water, sky etc. which symbolize serenity and Peace. Currently it represents in more of culture and fashion. First use of colour blue found in Ancient Egyptian 2,200 B.C. Ancient Greek does not shows influence of blue colour. Egyptians valued the blue semiprecious stone, blue become uniform in their language and clothing. Blue was worn mostly in royal families for many centuries, also referencing The Catholic Mary in a blue robe, adding a positive meaning to the colour. Which shows history, society, the socio-cultural change and the ideological meaning of same colour in different religion. (Phillips, 2022)

2. ARCHITECTURE AND RELIGION

Architectural forms reflect the philosophies and rituals of these religions, some have emerged by the consideration of the social and climatic conditions of the community. These structures represent a special genre in architecture. They differ from other buildings in size, symbolic meaning, and creative imagination. India has the oldest unremitting civilization with a diverse culture of several religions and historical backgrounds and all coexisting in disjointed geographical regions. Even the history of architecture is more concerned with religious buildings than with any other type. Building in each community, spiritual upliftment, peace, and happiness have always been important human goals.

The meaning of religion differs from person to person, community to community, or region to region. Religion, in ancient times, was made by people, followed by various beliefs and rituals. In a word, religion is a connection to all these beliefs and worship of God.

Religion becomes only constant while human civilization undergoes in many changes constantly. Belief system and its complexity diversified into multiple ideological

beliefs. As per enhancement in science or Industrial evaluation does not affect religion in modern era. Importance of Symbols and its representation stays constant in human consciousness, which reflect in architecture.

Architecture and religion are connected to each other, which results in the creation of various elements and beautiful structures. Different religions have their own architectural features and identity, but the reasons and concepts behind them are connected. Religious Architecture becomes representation technique for spreading awareness, belief system and ideologies during the development of the civilisations. Traditional architects analyse the pattern and human connection to symbols in architecture, which drives architectural styles in different era. Before understanding Symbol and its importance in religion, we must understand meaning of religion. Buddhism, Islam, Jainism, Hinduism etc. are some types of religious groups follows similar ideologies and symbols. Still in the root of all religion is the 'Belief' which in supernatural omnipotent, omnipresent being pass on to generation to generation. Religion also indicates existence of the human race on the planet.

Religious architecture includes place of worship, shrines, tombs, crematorium etc. which follows shared belief in spiritual understanding. These places are the statement of the religions and symbols becomes physical bridge for enlightened individuals.

3. SYMBOLS IN RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

Religion and Architecture sometimes conflict with traditional architectural styles. Styles evolved from mythological stories, religious beliefs, *vastu*, social fabric, climate etc. which creates various elements and architectural enhanced structure. Different religion has their own style still in some manner basic concepts are connected. Symbols are always main elements in any religious building. These symbols are physical landmark connecting with people on spiritual levels. Architecture refers to designing and construction of buildings. Architecture and religion are connected to each other, which results in creating various elements and beautiful structures. Different religions have their own architectural identity, but the reasons and concept behind them is connected. In this research paper, various religious structures are compared through different case studies, to study their common aspects.

3.1 HINDUISM

Hinduism considers as one of the oldest civilizations in given history. a modern usage, which refers to the idea that its origins lie beyond human history. Hinduism got its prominence during Vedic era. Around 400 BC, two parallel religions, Buddhism and Jainism, came into existence. It includes diverse ideas of traditions, spirituality community. (Mitra & Sadhukhan, 2020)

A Hindu temple is a structure planned and oriented based on symmetry, geometry and with various variations on a square grid of vertical support like pillar and walls. All things are connected with each another is the basic thought and belief behind Hindu temples. By the analysing a style of the Hindu temple erection, it was an evolution from stone temples to monolithic temples, which thereafter lead to structured temples. A benchmark set by the *Kandariya Mahadev* temple at Khajuraho in Hindu art and architecture in India. The temple consists of six major parts (

Figure 1).

Garbhagriha; It refers to the innermost sanctum of the temple, where the idol resides.

Mandapa; It is the pillared structure (porch like structure) mainly used for public rituals.

Shikhara or Vimana; It is a curve or pyramidal shape structure referring to the rising tower of the temple.

Amalaka; It is a stone disc like structure at the top of shikara.

Kalasha; It is the topmost part of amalaka.

Antarala (vestibule); It is the place between the garbhagriha and the mandapa i.e., the main hall.

Jagati; It is the platform where people sit for prayer.

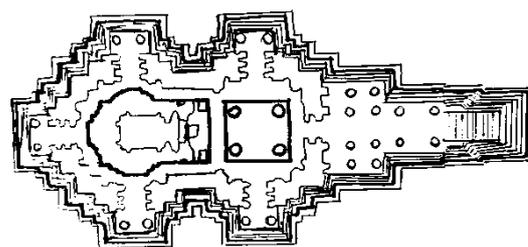


Figure 1: Left: plan of Kandariya Mahadev temple

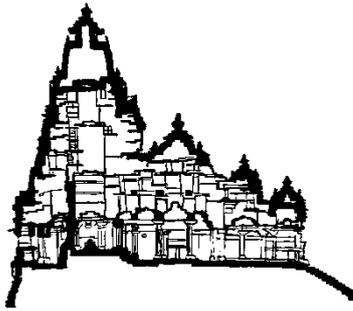


Figure 1.1 : Right: East–West section of Kandariya Mahadev temple.

3.2 JAINISM

Jainism is an ancient belief put forward by a *Jaina* (Titze & Bruhn, 2008). *Jaina* is not a particular immortal being or the incarnation of such a supernatural being, but an ordinary human being who through hard efforts succeeded in conquering the passions of the world. Therefore, a *Jaina* is an ordinary human being with inner strength and is therefore considered victorious. To represent these religious beliefs architecturally, a Jain temple is distinguished by opulent materials, usually marble and the abundance of ornaments that adorn the building. (IvyPanda, 2020)

Elements of Jain Temple Architecture:

Jain temples consists of numerous pillars, well designed which forms a square grid structure.

Chambers are created by the squares formed and are used as chapels with engravings of deities.

From these pillars are abundantly chiseled brackets that originate at about two third of their height.

Each room of the temple have aciculate domes. An octagonal space is created by the pillars, wherever there is a dome.

The Chaumukh or the four faced design is the only innovation in the Jain temple architecture.

Entry to the temples is from four doors that face the radial directions.

The dominant idea of the Jain temple plan is that of a range of columns planned in squares. Pillars were omitted, wherever it was designed to have a dome, to leave spaces in the form of octagons.

Adinath Temple, Ranakpur

It stands like a fortress on a basement of 60m x 62m. A vast space covering of 48000 sq. feet is occupied by the temple. (

Figure 2 and Figure 3) Light Colored marble was used to construct the entire temple, which was brought from the quarries of Sewadi and Sonana. A three storied “Balanka” (i.e., an entrance hall) is situated at the central entrance on top of the staircase. The Balanka has a ornamental dome with innumerable carvings on it. It is a monumental hall with 24 pillars, 80 domes which are supported by 400 columns. The temple is supported with more than 1400 alluringly carved pillars. At a height of 45 sq. ft magnificently incised dryads are seen in various dance postures playing flutes. Various domes of several heights are seen while entering through two to three stories, with abundant sculpture on the ceilings which are unbelievably intricate. Abundant amount of light penetrates through the gaps between the ceiling and from he courtyard, focusing the carvings throughout. Its magnificence is so pure, as the entire temple is constructed with marble.

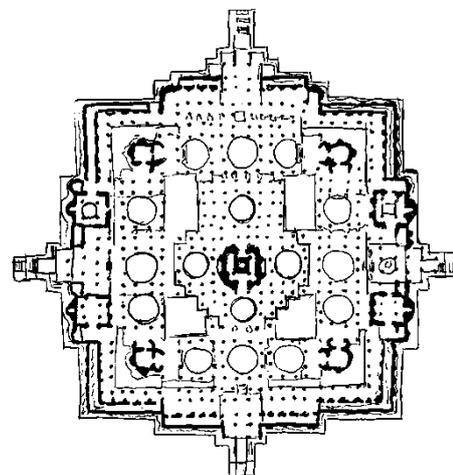


Figure 2: Plan of Adinath Temple, Ranakpur

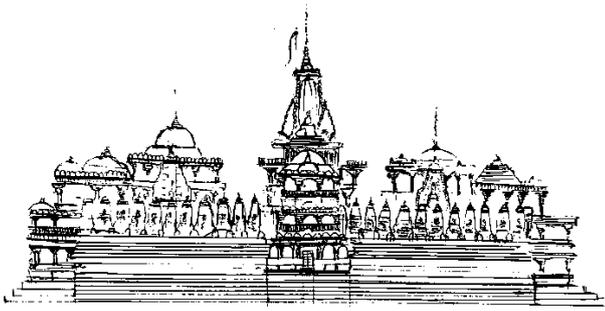


Figure 3: Front Elevation of Adinath Temple, Ranakpur

3.3 ISLAMISM

Islamic architecture is an architectural style related with the religion of Islam and evolved from various architectural styles such as Mesopotamia and Roman. Islamic architecture has also influenced by other contemporary architectural styles such as Chinese architecture and Mughal architecture. (Lionar, Arslan, & Durak, 2019)

Some of the main elements of Islamic architecture are qibla, mihrab, minbar and minaret.

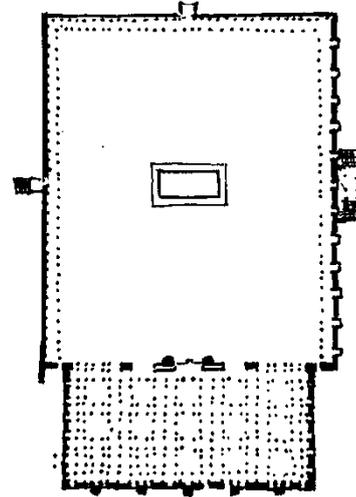
The *qibla* is the direction in which Muslims face when praying toward the Ka'ba in Mecca. The *qibla* wall is the wall in a mosque that faces Mecca. The *mihrab* is a niche indicating the direction of Mecca. The *minbar* is a pulpit, on which the prayer leader (*imam*) stands for delivering a sermon after Friday prayer. It is usually situated to the right of the *mihrab*. A *minaret* is a tall tower adjacent to a mosque. It is designed, so the call of prayer is loud and audible to the people.

In the history of Islamic architecture, construction of the monuments is based on principal which represents ideology and power of the empire. In creation of such building great attention has been given to symbolic representation, message the building and writing on it deliver to people. Construction of mosques undertaken by state, prince, rich merchants' nobles Bering their own names.

Masjid-e Jahan Numa in Delhi (India) before A.D. 1857

The construction masjid starts in 6th of October 1650 A.D. under the supervision of wazir saadhullah khan and khansaman. 261x90 feet roof doom creating with support of arches with decorative white and black marble. (

Figure 4 and Figure 5) Masjid has 3 gates except west side. Where eastern gats called shahi gate meant for emperor. Being architectural marvel masjid considers as padshahi masjid which symbolise ideology, authority and imperial aura of Shahjahanabad. Basic principle of the structure was Great proportioned and symmetry. This was the largest masjid in India where mass prayers happen



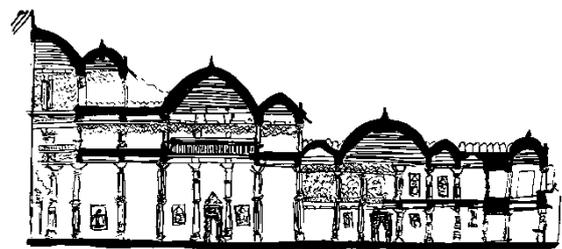
today with largest footfall.

Figure 4: Plan of Jama Masjid, Ahmedabad, Gujrat, India

Figure 5: Cross Section of Jama Masjid, Ahmedabad, Gujrat, India

3.4 SIKHISM

The basis of Sikhism lies in the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. Sikh ethics emphasizes the parallels between spiritual development and everyday ethical behaviour. Tenth guru Gobind Singh knows as successor, bringing people close as community establishing script as internal living guru, spiritual guide to community. living an "active, creative, and practical life" of "truthfulness, fidelity, self-control and purity" is



above metaphysical truth, and that the ideal man "establishes union with God, knows His Will, and carries out that Will and carries out of will.

The symbol or emblem of Sikhism is known as the Khanda. It is made up of: The Khanda - a double

edged sword. This represents the belief in one God. The Chakkar, like the Kara it is a circle representing God without beginning or end and reminding Sikhs to remain within the rule of God. Apart from religious buildings, Sikh architecture includes secular forts, bungas (residential places), palaces, and colleges. The religious structure is called gurdwara (a place where the Guru dwells). The word gurdwara is a compound of guru (guide or master) and dwara (gateway or seat). Guru Granth Sahib is the centre of worship in gurdwara. It is placed on a raised platform called a *manji* sahib under a tree in the divan hall. He always sits above the congregation (sangat) as a symbol of respect.

The Golden Temple, Amritsar.

The Golden Temple is described as a blend of The Hindu Rajput Architecture and The Indo-Islamic Architecture. The two storey sanctum measures of area 12.25 x 12.25 sq. mt. with a golden dome. (

Figure 6 and Figure 7) The sanctum consists of 19.7 x 19.7 sq. mt marble platform. The Golden Temple is situated inside a pool which measures about 154.5 x 148.5 sq.mt named as Amritsar or Amrit Sarovar (which means pool of nectar). The shrine connects the platform by a podium. The entry into the podium is called "Darshani Deorhi". It is a two-storey sanctum in which on the ground floor Guru Granth Sahib the Sikh Scripture is seated. The Sikh Scripture is seated on a rised platform, which is raised on a level above the causeway. The sanctum's upper floor is gallery. The lower floor is finished with white marble which is a aisle enclosing the sanctum. Glided Copper Plates finishes the exterior of the sanctum. The doors with ornamental nature motifs namely birds and flowers on gold-lead coated copper sheets fascinates the entrance.

The sanctum dome with apex ornamentation is semi-spherical in shape enveloped with gold-leaf coated glided



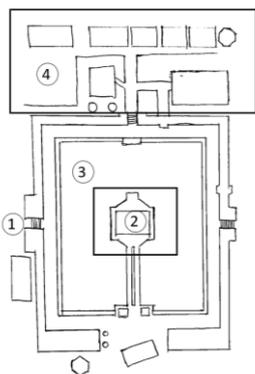
copper. The sides of the sanctum dome are enhanced with arched copings and various solid domes.

Figure 6: The Golden Temple Map

Figure 7: Elevation of the Golden Temple, Amritsar

4. CONCLUSIONS

Highest point of any sacred building in all religion plays very important role connecting people, belief system and Physical landmark in surrounding area, which also includes identity of religion, spirituality, community as a symbolic representation. This symbolic representation of roof indicates in all different sacred building resolve's same purpose of Subcontinent both geographically and historically connecting people and community. This paper explores difference in religion and architecture still commonality in religious buildings with element like roof and what is represents to community. The roof appears in architecture of the Subcontinent showing a historical transition of connotation. Hindu and Jain temple has a dome inside and has carvings related to the elements in their religion, whereas Mosque and Gurudwaras have a distinctive dome like structure from outside and inside. All religion has used some common point which connects them together but use them differently to create their own identity. The dome or the inner sanctum of each religious structures represents the space with positive energy where the deities are worshiped. The ceiling is engraved with ornamental sculptures and carvings of the deities and the religious beliefs of each religion. Massive innumerable columns and carved pillars can be seen in each structure to form a square or hexagonal grid which supports the domes and the large number of carpels. All these common features connect the religions with respect to its planning and various spaces.



- 1 Main Entrance and Clock Tower
- 2 Sanctum
- 3 Sarovar (Holy Pool of Immortal Nectar)
- 4 Memorial Halls of Sikh Gurus'

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