

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Gujārāt has <sup>a</sup>very rich heritage of artistic and architectural wealth beginning from the early medieaval period. As such we have structural monuments of temples and mosques which exhibit <sup>a</sup>high standard of engineering and technical skills and artistic genius, Mosques of the Gujārāt stand out prominently among the contemporary monuments. Moreover majority of the mosques of Gujārāt are still in a good state of preservation.

It will not be an exaggration if one says that although many temples were destroyed, their architectural tradition survived and was transformed in a way that suited even the Islamic philosophy. This was very natural for a region like Gujārāt where traditional architects and sculptors like Sompura Brahmins have still preserved their techniques and profession. The masons, builders, carvers and architects of Gujārāt had co-operated to build and decorate the mosques. This <sup>tend</sup> of decorative art has developed interesting features of art. These decorative features on the structure of the mosques are distributed at certain places on walls, pillars, windows, screens, mehrābs etc. in a well defined order. Hence this provides ample opportunities for research. Therefore analysing the subject "Decorative motifs of mosques of Gujārāt from 14th to 16th century A.D." was taken up for research.

Most of the mosques of Gujārāt which were built during 14th to 16th Century A.D. are preserved. These are highly decorated structures of exceptional grandeur's <sup>and</sup> beauty. They have provided good data for study. This data indicates that motifs

used for decorations are many and varied. The pillars, brackets, architraves, arches, windows, balconies, mehrābs, ceilings etc. were straight adopted but the Mandovara which contained images of gods and goddess<sup>es</sup> was transformed by dropping the images and other figures of animals or birds. But the decorations on minars, doors, arches, ceilings, windows and mehrābs are not only rich in their decoration but interesting from the point of view, of their compositions, patterns and ultimate planning of decoration<sup>ve</sup> scheme of the monument as a whole.

By decoration it is meant only the carved decoration in stone. Under the head of mosques a group of important representative mosque, of Gujārāt is taken up. This was imperative, because mostly all decorative motifs are represented in group. As such following mosques are studied.

(SEE TABLE)

Further the problem is confined to the political limit of Gujārāt; which are demarcated at present.

The decorative motifs of mosques of Gujārāt have not been studied in details, their classification, tabulation and interpretation is a long felt need. No doubt the scholars like Fergusson, Marshall, Percy Brown and Havell have studied the architectural forms of these magnificent monuments. These studies were basically survey type with emphasis on recording the architectural details, but decorations were not given the

importance they deserve. In fact no one of these scholars have attempted such detailed study on the whole except few papers like that of Shri Dhanky in "Kumar", the references available in the books of F.S. Mayer, Sarabhai Nawab, U.P. Shah, Sompura are taken. This situation indicated the need of such a study and looking to this need the present study is undertaken.

The method employed for present study was as follows :

First of all a list of mosques constructed between 1400 to 1600 A.D. was made with their dates, locations, conditions of preservation etc. From this it was easy to judge the dimension of the problem undertaken. Moreover this has provided a good picture of present state of research in field.

After this, all the mosques under study, were visited personally and detailed notes of decorations were taken along with detail photographic recording. For this purpose every mosque was taken up in a uniform serial pattern as follows :

- 1) Porch
- 2) Pillars
- 3) Bracket
- 4) Architraves
- 5) Arches
- 6) Windows
- 7) Minars
- 8) Balconies
- 9) Mehrābs

- 10) Mamber
- 11) Ceiling
- 12) Merlon
- 13) Back support Behind Mehrābs

But more emphasis was laid on the jali decorations, which are profuse not only in their numbers but varieties as well. Moreover many designs are also reflected from them in a clear presentation. These jali decorations are classified on the basis of elementary motifs like geometric and floral, such as band, triangles, squares, circles, hexagon, octagon, swastika, flower-petals, creepers, interlaced creepers, arms and weapons and miscellaneous motifs.

Each of these motifs is further studied in details of variations in form, size, compositions with other motifs and composite designs. This has revealed various patterns of compositions and decorative schemes, which are illustrated by classified and arranged photographs of each square or rectangle in window grill.

As stated above the decorations of floral motifs like lotus, chequer, pattern and architectural components like brackets, pillars, niches, door frames, kakshāsanās etc. are adopted in mosque architecture. This process continues in almost all mosques under study. After the end of this period, non-muslim architecture of temple continued the traditional decoration of temple which is

evident even in 19th century. In Jain temples of Ahmedābād, lotus were made more intricate with multiple petals. The cheques were made more regular and the toran motif were carved with delicate decorations on them. In the same way the delicate decorations of petals and flowers were also continued with the arches and door frames.

On the whole the study is divided into five chapters. For the better understanding of the whole research, general plan of the thesis is divided as follows :

Introductory, back-ground is presented in Chapters I and II this is followed by presentation of the data in Chapter III. The critical analysis is presented in Chapters IV and V.

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Background
  - (a) Political History (Chapter I)
  - (b) Islamic Architecture (Chapter II)
- (3) Presentation of data of motifs (Chapter III)
- (4) Critical analysis of motifs (Chapter IV )
- (5) Conclusion (Chapter V )

The first and second Chapters deal with the back-ground of the study. The discussion on the political history of Gujarāt from 14th to 16th century A.D. is done in Chapter I. It begins with the conquest of Alā-ud-dīn Khilji (1298 A.D.) and describes

the outline of the dynastic history of Khilji's and the Sultanas of Gujarāt and their successors.

Most of the mosques were built during this period, hence architectural activities of concerned kings are also described.

Chapter II provides the general outline regarding the Islamic Architecture in India and Gujarāt in particular.

Chapter III is nucleus of the whole thesis. As stated above in this chapter description is made in detail for all the motifs in their basis elements, their compositions and decorative patterns. Hence a detail study of the forms, their combinations, the composite and ultimate designing is presented under this head. Each and every geometric, floral and miscellaneous motif is described and illustrated separately.

Chapter IV is the main contribution of this thesis, because in this a critical ethics behind this topic is discussed.

Chapter V, is the concluding chapter which will present the conclusions derived from the study as a whole.

## List of mosque referred in the Thesis.

TABLE

Name of Mosques	Name of Site	Districts	Date	Contemporary Ruler during construction
** 1) Shaikh Farid Tomb	Patan	Mehsana	1300	Ulagh Khan Governor of Alā-ud-dīn-Khilji
2) Jami Mosque	Broach	Baroda	1321	Danlat Shāh-Mohamed Bhutani, during Taghluq period.
3) Jami Mosque	Cambay	Kaira	1325	Muhammadbin Tughluq.
4) Hilāl Khān Kāzī's Mosque	Dholka	Ahmedābād	1333	Hilalkhān a Kazi at the time of Mohammad Taghluq.
5) Tanka Mosque	Dholka	Ahmedābād	1361	Malik Muzaffar - Governor at the time of Firūzshāh Taghluq
6) Ahmad Shah's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1411	Ahmad Shāh-I
7) Haibat Khan's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1412	Ahmad Shāh-I
8) Sayyid Ālam's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1412	Ahmad Shāh-I
9) Siddhapur Mosque (Jami)	Siddhapur	Palanpur	1416	Ahmad Shāh-I
10) Jami Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1423	Ahmad Shāh-I
11) Shaikh Ahmad Khattu Mosque	Sarkhej	Ahmedābād	1446-1451	Muhammad Shāh
12) Alif Khān's Mosque	Dholka	Ahmedābād	1453	Qutb-ud-dīn
13) Qutb-ud-dīn's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1454	Qutb-ud-dīn
14) Sarkhān's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1455	Qutb-ud-dīn
15) Mosque Sayyid Usmān	Usmanpur	Ahmedābād	1460	Mahmud Begrāh

Contd.....



Table contd...

Name of Mosques	Name of Site	Districts	Date	Contemporary Ruler during construction
16) Dasturkhan Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1463	Mahmud Begrāh
17) Miyankhān Chīstī's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1465	Mahmud Begrāh
18) Bībī Achūtkūkī's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1472	Mahmud Begrāh
19) Shāh Ālam's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1475	Mahmud Begrāh
20) Jami Mosque	Chāmpāner	Baroda	1484- 1507	Mahmud Begrāh
21) Mosque of Muhafizkhān	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1492	Mahmud Begrāh
22) Bībī Harīr's Mosque	Asarva	Ahmedābād	1500	Mahmud Begrāh
23) Sīdī Bashir's Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1510	Mahmud Begrāh
24) Fath Mosque	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1510	Mahmud Begrāh
25) Guntim Mosque (Isanpur)	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1510	Mahmud Begrāh
26) Mochrab Mosque (Paldi)	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1510	Mahmud Begrāh
27) Mosque of Rānī Sīpri	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1514	Muzaffar Shāh-II
28) Mosque of Siddi Sayyid	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1515	Muzaffar Shāh-II
29) Mosque of Rānī Rūpavati (Queen's Mosque)	Ahmedābād	Ahmedābād	1515	Muzaffar Shāh

\*\* The earliest jali decoration of the under study is not from a mosque but a Tomb of Farid at Patan dated 1300 A.D. This is necessary to note the precedent decoration in Muslim architecture.