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Paradise as a Metaphor for Gender Inclusivity

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Abstract:

Gender inclusivity in all religious spaces is a fundamental right but due to political, social and historical influences, this right has been misused for years. Indian women have been fighting against the discriminating system for their rights to enter religious buildings to pray and perform rituals, but their presence has been looked down upon by the patriarchal society. This journal aims to study one of these prominent religious buildings, mosques, and to try to understand the significance of women involvement in the religious institutions, to study the type of space that is provided in the mosques, to understand the factors that might have led to it and to see the future prospects for designing a mosque. The entire study has been done by using the values of the Quran as the backbone and studied under the lens of Paradise.

Keywords: Gender Inclusivity, religion, Mosque, Quran, Paradise

Introduction

On the occasion of the launch of his book, ‘Women in Masjid: A Quest for Justice’, the writer Ziya Us Salam quoted, “Quran doesn’t discriminate against women...Indian mosques are a monopoly from lack of understanding and patriarchy” (Salam 2019). He has written vastly about the social structure of the Islamic society in South-Eastern countries and the discrimination that comes in the way of the female population under the umbrella of a religious institute, Islam. *People who deny women the opportunity of praying in mosques or do not provide enough amenities to discourage them from visiting mosques are getting in the way of women believers and Allah. Namaz is one of the five pillars of Islam which should be performed in order to reach the highest of Jannat/Paradise. Not only this, the involvement of women in mosques is important to create a better environment for them and for their inclusion in the community. When we talk about the ultimate goal of Muslims which is reaching Paradise after death, it becomes important to see the execution of that on the earth as well, to see how the teachings from Quran has been implemented by the believers. To understand the notion of Paradise, it first becomes important to study Paradise as an over-arching focus in various religions and countries.*

Paradise as a notion

The word Paradise comes from the Greek word *Paradeisos* which means an enclosed park. It has a Sumerian linkage that gives the description of a perfect place with greenery, fruits, and animals. As a word, it gives us the definition of an ideal world that seems to be everybody’s desire. A place that may be achievable to only a few, a place which would have no ill feelings, no diseases, no evils, no hardships- A Perfect Place. The idea of a Utopian place gives people the hope of a better world, a world that they have never seen or been to but is only present in their imagination. Most of the stories and aspirations around Paradise seems to be a real-world parallel where the physicality of the space is mostly drawn from what they see around. Many believe that this ‘imaginary world’ is dominated by supernatural agents who would help you enter it after dying. After-life is considered a place where one moves to after death. It would be right to say that “Paradise” is both a metaphysical space and an aspirational state of mind depending on deeds. The imagination of the space, however, is different for different regions/countries.

In Egypt for instance, Paradise also known as ‘*SekhetAaru*’ has been described as a life that continues to be similar to this life but remains effortless, life sustaining hunting becomes easier with crops growing around.

Things like diseases and hunger is now unknown to people. The Celts community in Ireland has characterized Paradise or Sidhas a spacious festival hall, a distant island, or a burial mound. It possesses a never-ending supply of the choicest food and drinks. Death and diseases are unknown and even the colors are brighter than in this world.(Närhi2008)

It is interesting to observe how the ancient people of Egypt and Celt have dreamt and decided for their Paradise to have something that was missing in their own world. The flora and fauna in various regions have created different expectations as well- hummingbird is found exclusively in Aztecs and reindeers in Saami paradise as they are precious in their local regions. Lotus has only been a part of a region's paradise that lies south of Asia as it is indigenous to that region. Here we see how they have drawn a real-world parallel. Regional ideas of heaven are mostly influenced by the place's cultural context therefore, we notice a wider range of differences amongst them. Religions, however, focus mainly on following a set of rules and regulations. For years, it has been a means to provide an identity to its followers.

Bill Whitson in his book on 'Religion lives on Imagination' has described religion as "proscribe and prescribe". It is seen that with all the rules and regulations to follow, religion gives you a purpose and direction to your existence but it also has restrictions or the forbidding nature of it where all your worldly deeds are an exchange for an afterlife full of immense pleasure. Religions like Bahai Faith, Epicureanism, Shinto do not believe in souls reaching a built environment after death, they believe it is a more symbolic representation of your distance from god after you die. Religions like Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Aztecs have in fact described the afterlife through stories and verses as a built environment where on the basis of your deeds you are either sent to a place where you are awarded for your goodness or punished for your misdeeds. Islam focuses more on after-life for its followers and gives it more importance than this life. It preaches to its followers to not get carried away with the present life's illusions and to give more importance to *ibadah* meaning worship and rectify the wrongdoings of this life in this life itself. As an experiment to understand the imaginative process of young designers, a quote from Holy Quran converted from Arabic to English was circulated and results noted. The quote was as follows: "promised to Believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss." (Yusuf2007). Here, the physical nature of *Jannah* or Paradise has been described as a garden with rivers of beautiful mansions and the river flowing. This concept of *Jannah* is seen getting applied in Persian gardens hundreds of years ago. Thus, we can see the relationship between religious texts, belief system and the interpretation of the text in a physical form. The people who were asked to draw on the basis of this quote just knew that it was a quote that described Paradise, but its genesis was not revealed to them. Here are some of the illustrations:

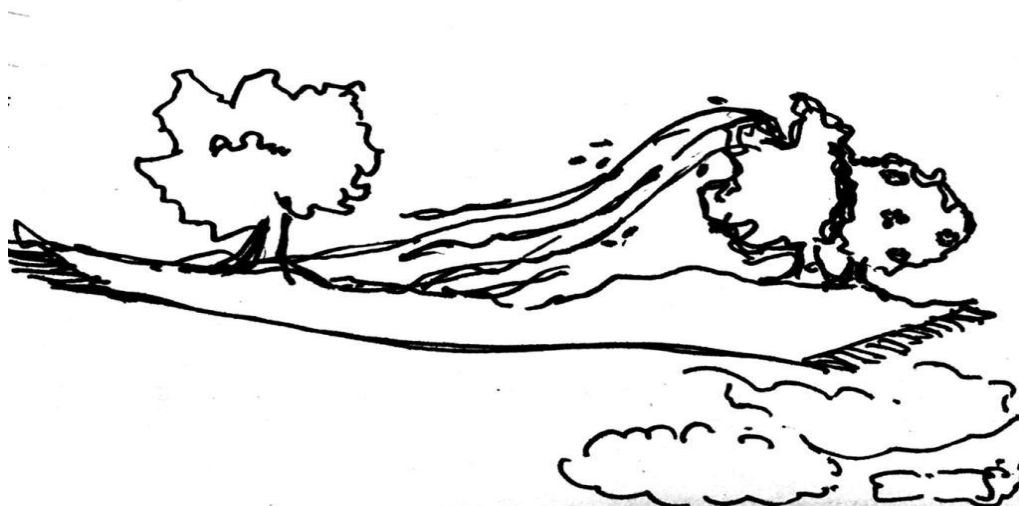


Figure 1
Source: Malhotra 2019

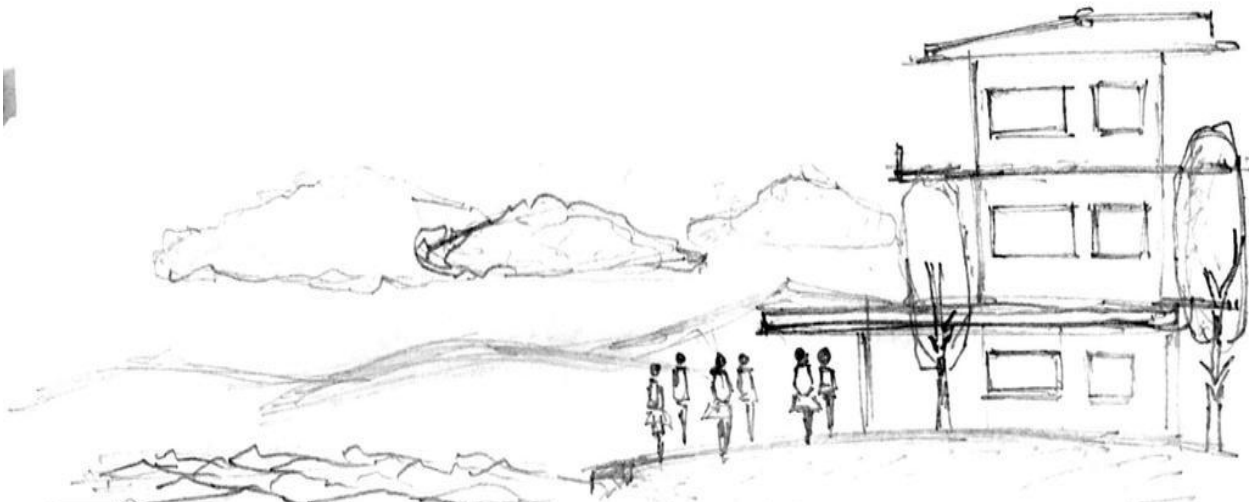


Figure 2
Source: Agrawal 2019

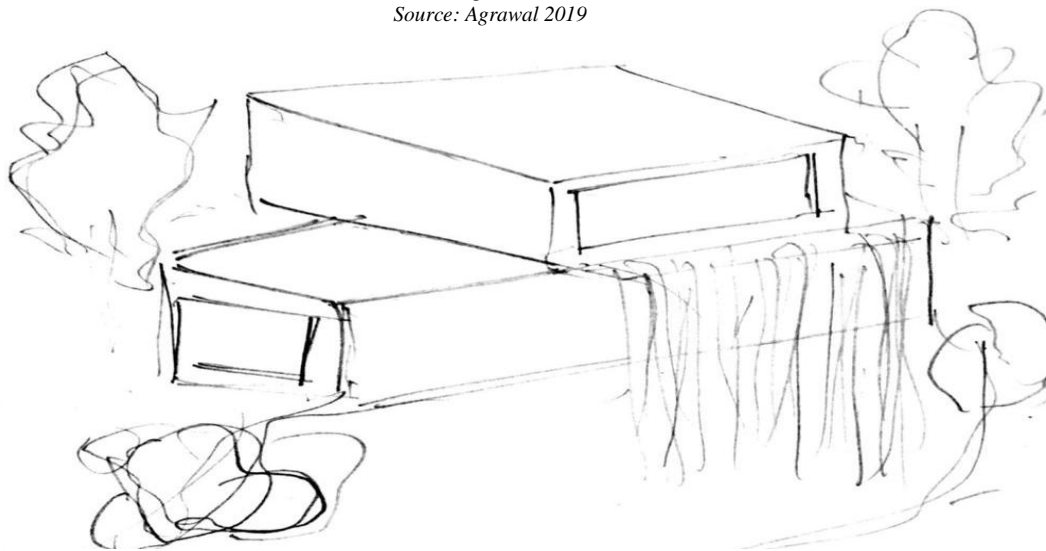


Figure 3
Source: Batra 2019

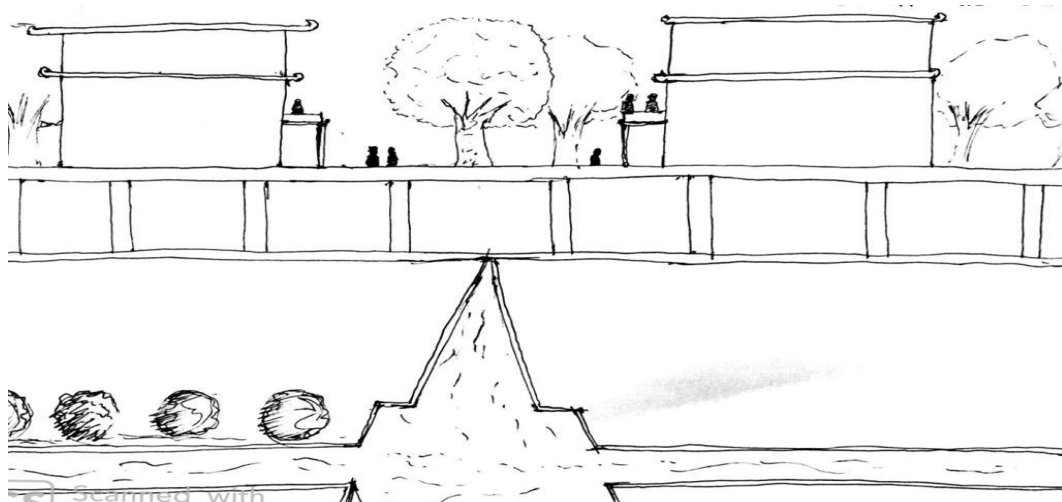


Figure 4
Source: Rishi 2019

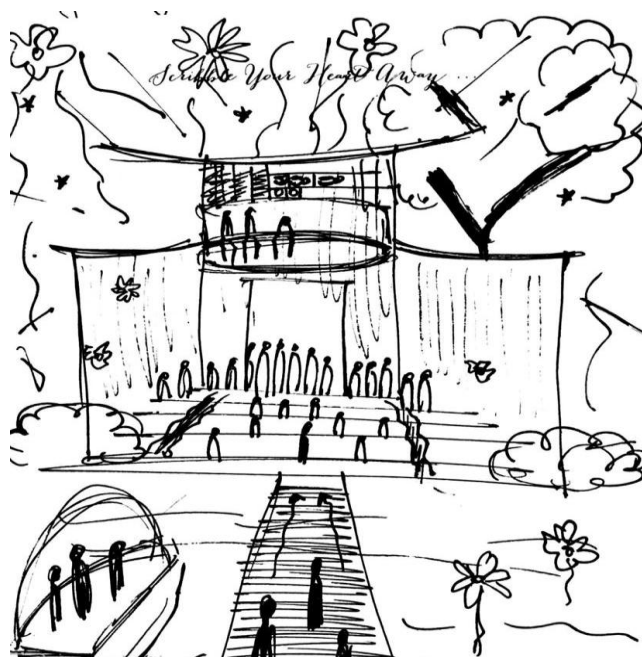


Figure 5
Source: Parinam 2019

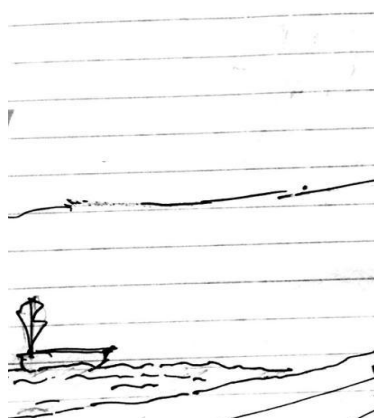


Figure 6
Source: Bisht 2019

The illustrations depict how diverse religious and regional backgrounds have an impact on imagination that results in the difference in interpretations. We see a similarity in a few drawings that show monumentality and green spaces in a similar language. We see how a few have exact architectural features as those observed in the structures around us. The drawings while using human figures have not distinguished between men and women figures either. We see a few differences too in understanding Islamic Architecture through these drawings that indicate more of Muslim Architecture and less of Islamic Architecture. Islamic architecture according to the Quran is to be mainly based on the value system inculcated in human beings. These values are a product of the lifestyle of Muslims that is virtuous and demanding. Muslim Architecture, however, is the manifestation of these values by their own interpretation. Islamic Architecture is Muslim but Muslim Architecture may not be Islamic. “The architecture of Islam is the expression of a religion and its view of the world rather than that of a particular people or political or economic system.” (Beg1981,16)

When one talks about Islamic architecture, we must try to understand the value system. Islam as a teaching demands complete submission to One God, Allah, which changes the spatial quality demand of a believer. The system, regulations, physical attributes and views also change with time, what remains constant is the value. “Central to Islamic architecture is its functionality with all of its ramifications-corporeal, cerebral and spiritual. A form divorced from function is in-consequential”(Omer2008, 485) This suggests that the form of the building comes as a secondary tool for its manifestation, what remains primary is the function. Muslim Architecture has slowly shifted its focus to form and given lesser attention to the functions.

Islamic architecture with its form and structural features does not concentrate on rigidity, formalism or symbolism. Therefore, the actual Islamic Architecture should remain the same due to the value systems around it. The following table shows the translation of Islamic duties into architectural manifestation:

Table 1: Values to Physical Manifestation

PRACTICE	VALUE	SPACE	ARCHITECTURE MANIFESTATION
Praying 5 times a day Use of clean cloth	Submission	Clean floors, no idols, use of	Houses, prayer rooms, mosques
Praying together in groups Neighbourhood level	Unity	Congregational Zones	Open spaces-
Praying in one direction mosque	Unity	Special zoning for this function	Mihrab (Niche) in the
Ranks while praying men and Minbar (A high pedestal tool) for the prayer)	Segregation	Separate zones for activities	Zenana-Mardana (separate women areas) Imam (Person who leads
Ablution before praying/ tank) Reading Quran	Purity	Water Source	WazuKhaana (Ablution
Burial after death	Awaiting Judgement Day; Reality	Volume of earth dugged	Cemetery, mausoleum, tomb

Coexistence with nature on the	Awareness	Use of natural sources to fulfil needs	Elements like forest motifs niche
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7 layers of Heaven	Aspiration	Verticality	Scale of building kept big
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Maker is the greatest reflect sky	Enormity	Use of water as a source	Ponds and fountains to Showing enormity
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Source: Data adapted by Fatima 2019

Paradise as a notion in Islam: Architectural Manifestation of Gardens

"But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is gardens, beneath which rivers flow" (Ali 1938, 2:25)

"Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous" (Ali 1938, 3:133).

According to the teachings of Islam, those who do the righteous deeds in this life, a garden full of their desires awaits them in afterlife. These verses describe the enormity of these garden spaces under which water will flow. The Islamic description of Gardens later influenced Turkish, Arab and Persian. The Persian gardens were park gardens, while Turkish was a courtyard garden with a building in it whereas, the Arab gardens were mostly inside the building. A combination of Persian and Turkish Gardens was the Mughal Gardens that became popular in India. This garden is also considered as the closest representation of Paradise on Earth. Another verse that describes Paradise is: “A similitude of the Garden which those who keep their duty (to Allah) are promised: Therein are rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk whereof the flavor changeth not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear-run honey; therein for them is every kind of fruit, with pardon from their Lord. (Are those who enjoy this) like those who are immortal in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink so that it tearth their bowels? (Azis 1981, 47:15)

The verse states the four rivers that flow in paradise- one of water, one of milk, one of wine and one of honey. With this description, the Mughal Gardens were formed where four channels were running with a platform in the middle. The gardens also have separate zones for public and private meetings and for women of the royalty. The public area was called as Diwan-e-aam, the private area was called Diwan-e-khaas and the women area was called as the Zenana area which was placed at the end to control visual connectivity.

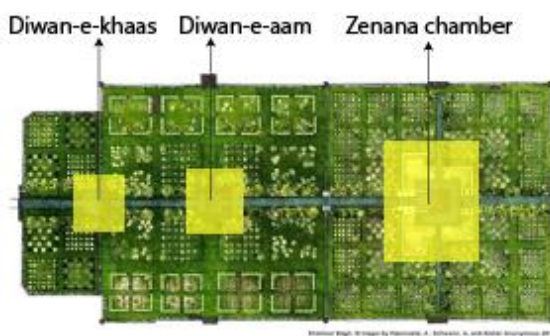


Figure 7: Plan of Shalimar Bagh
Source: Schwann 2013

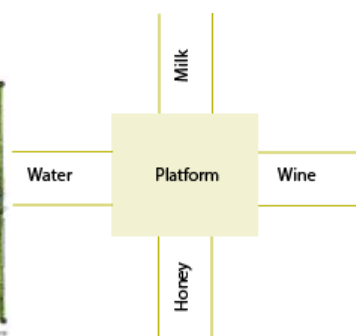


Figure 8: Char Bagh grid
Source: Fatima 2019

Architectural Manifestation of Mosques

The Arabic term for mosque is ‘masjid’ which is mentioned in the Quran at least 28 times where 15 times it is in regard with Masjid Al Haram, Kaaba in Mecca, twice it refers to the sanctuary of Jerusalem (Q17:1,7) and 6 times it refers to Masjid al-Lah or the mosques of the God. Mosque is a place of prostration where praying increases your reward 27 times. The Quran again does not give a clear description of how to build a mosque, but it gives a clear description of the journey from a verb to form. It does not state anything about its shape, form or decoration but it does ask its followers to keep the place clean and simple. Since Islam promotes unity in diversity it requires a big congregational area.

In Q37:164-166 the angles declared “We each have our appointed place. We range ourselves in adoration and give glory to Him”. This verse gave a direction on the execution of a congregational prayer. It is believed that before the revelation of this verse, the Muslim worshipers prayed without separation between men and women. When these verses were revealed, the Prophet ordered women to pray in the back rows and all the worshipers to align in straight and full rows just like the ranking of the angles in their prayer. This has further led to the division of spaces inside the built to carry out different types of prayers.

The other condition that is important while building a mosque is the direction towards Qibla. Muslims are asked to do *sujud* only in one direction as a sign of unity. This act was carried out facing the mosque in Jerusalem for a time but then it was soon shifted to Kaaba in Mecca. This demarcation on the walls is done making a dented area called as Niche, which is decorated by embedded forest motifs and Quran verses as a representation of the gates of Paradise.



Figure 9: Mihrab in the Green Mosque of Busra
Source: dreamstime.com

Architectural Manifestation of Mosques: Women inclusion

Mosques are probably the most important Islamic structure promoting the submission of its believers. Here, form follows function diligently. These functions are heavily dependent upon the value systems that remain constant for all the believers, be it, man or woman. The five pillars of Islam remain important for all the believers in order to reach Paradise or Janah. However, a few places all over the world have denied women the access to mosques in the name of religion. Many of the patriarchal features and socio-cultural customs in Muslim Communities have been twisted in order to favor one gender.

Prophet Mohammad said, *“Do not stop Allah’s women-slave from going to Allah’s mosques.”* (Bukhari and Khan, n.d.) *Every deed that the last prophet performed is considered as sunnah for all the followers. “We were ordered to go out (for`Id) and also to take along with us the menstruating women, mature girls and virgins staying in seclusion. The menstruating women could present themselves at the religious gathering and invocation of Muslims but should keep away from their Musalla.”* (Ahmad 2017) *It is understood from this that the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) encouraged women to enter the mosques even when they were not allowed to pray. He would also accompany his daughters and wives to Friday and Eid prayers. He once mentioned that the reward is 27 times more when one goes to pray in the mosque. To this statement, a few women argued saying that they had children at home and other household chores and therefore, could not visit the mosque. Thus, the men would have a greater advantage than women for receiving such high rewards. It is then that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said “It is more excellent for a woman to pray in her house than in her courtyard, and more excellent for her to pray in her private chamber than in her house.”* (Dawood 1514, 570) *Prophet never imposed anything on women and did not forbid them, however, this statement has been realized and twisted by men very differently. They have used it as a loophole to keep women at home and hold themselves as the supreme race.*

As per Quran, no one is permitted to own a mosque. All mosques are considered to belong to God; those who fund them are viewed as donors, while those who ‘own’ mosques for legal purposes are simply trustees. The mosque is considered a Waqf or endowment where any Muslim is free to enter, pray and participate. Mohammad encouraged people to fund building of mosques, declaring anyone who did so would find a home built for him in paradise. (Bokari and Seddon 2016)

Thus, no person has control to decide who gets to use these spaces. Patronage has no power over this, yet we see male dominance where they decide everything for the female population, from making decisions with respect to their entrance in the House of God to deciding the type of space to be allocated. Ranking system has also been observed as duty in congregation prayers. This ranking system or segregation has been understood by scholars differently. Some believe that Allah has requested for complete segregation while some believe that it is alright if women pray directly behind men. This segregation is done in such a way that women are pushed to balconies or small congested rooms. It becomes extremely difficult for women with infants and children to visit the mosques, thus gravely reducing the footfall of women in mosques. Praying areas for women are also separated by temporary measures such as curtains which does not ensure proper segregation or privacy. One reason for barring women in mosques is the reduction in the area of male space. It is also understood that men would not be allowed in the women area for privacy reasons, which would also lead to a demand for women employees. Safety and security would also be one major reason for which the male population would want to separate these spaces.

It is extremely hypocritical when all believers of Islam perform the annual pilgrimage, *Hajj* together without any ranks or segregation. Where women get the same space as men do. Everybody is seen doing *Tawaf* and *Sai* together. For praying, separate areas are allocated for both.

Space for Women: Mosques in Delhi, India

To understand the issue in the Southeastern countries, example of Delhi will be apt to see how the evolution of these spaces have happened over the years as Delhi has been the center for many Islamic rulers in the past 800 hundred years and has witnessed many political orders. It has seen rulers of the Mamluk dynasty, Khilji dynasty, Tughlaq dynasty, Sayyid dynasty, Lodhi dynasty, Mughal Empire and the East India Company. The following table shows the progression of how spaces allotted to women in mosques has changed over the years in Delhi:-

Table 2: Evolution of Praying area in Delhi Mosques



NAME	YEAR	RULE	AREA	COMPARISONREMARKS
Quwattul Islam Mosque	1192-1316	Mamluk Dynasty		The western side was dedicated for male while the eastern side was raised to accommodate female. Neighbourhood level
JamatKhana Masjid	1315-1325AD	Khilji Dynasty		The mosque is divided into 3 zones where the central zone is the biggest and accommodates men while the left side smaller in size is for women Neighbourhood level
Kalan Masjid	1375	Tughlaq Dynasty		The proportions of two zones 1:6 Neighbourhood level

Figure 10: Plan of Quwattul Islam Mosque
Source: Orientalarchitecture.com

<https://www.orientalarchitecture.com/sid/155/india/delhi/quwwat-ul-islam-mosque>

Figure 11: Plan of JamatKhana Masjid
Source: archinet.org

http://archinet.org/sites/2534/media_contents/75818#

Figure 12: Plan of Kalan Mosque

Source: Fatima

2019





NAME	YEAR	RULE	AREA COMPARISON	REMARKS
Bara Gumbad Masjid	1494	Lodhi Dynasty		<p>Since the mosque was a personal property, the proportion remains constant</p> <p>Personal Property</p> <p>Source: archinet.org</p>
<p>Figure 13: Plan of Bada Gumbad Masjid</p> <p>http://archnet.org/sites/1562</p>				
Jama Masjid		1650-1656	Mughal Dynasty	<p>This city level mosque houses thousands believers during Friday and Eid Prayers. There does not seem to be an allotted area for women but they are mostly accommodated in the aisles.</p> <p>City Level</p>
<p>Figure 14: Plan of Jama Masjid</p> <p>Source: archnet.org</p> <p>http://archnet.org/sites/1571</p>				
Baghwali Masjid		1680-1685	Mughal Dynasty	<p>The women praying area is 10 times smaller than that of men praying area and is located separately as it was made 300 years after its construction.</p> <p>Neighbourhood level</p>
<p>Figure 15: Plan of Baghwali Masjid</p> <p>Source: Fatima 2019</p>				
Sunehri Masjid		1740s	Mughal Dynasty	<p>There is no provision for women to pray in the mosque</p> <p>Local level</p>
<p></p>				

Figure 16: Plan of Baghwali Masjid

Source: Fatima

2019

Jamia Islamia
Sanabil Mosque

2018

AamAadmi Party



Secondlargest mosque
in Delhi and stilldoes
not accommodate
women.

Neighbourhood level

Figure 17: Plan of Jamia IslamiaSanabil Mosque
Source: Fatima 2019

Source: Data adapted byFatima 2019

Islam came to Delhi through invasion and not trade like in the case of Kerala because of which, the religion was forcefully imposed on the subjects. Every move of the rulers was planned to assert power and dominance of Islam. The fear of the rulers was such that many poor people converted to Islam. Feroz Tughlaq in his time forced women to go to mosques and opened Islamic educational institutes called *madrakas* for them to study in. This is the reason why we see in the plans of Quwwat-UI Islam and Jamaat Khana Masjid that women have been given importance in the mosques with the type of space given to them. This idea of partial segregation comes from the Turkish side of the world.

The Mughal era also saw establishment of many mosques in Delhi like Jama Masjid, Moti Masjid, Jamali Kamali Masjid, Akbaarabadi Masjid, Zinat-Al Masjid and Fatehpuri Masjid. Out of these mosques, the last two were made by women. Zinat Al Masjid was made by Aurangzeb’s daughter in 1707 and Fatehpuri Masjid was made by Fatehpuri Begum in 1650. Therefore, we see the participation of women in establishing Islamic rule in Delhi. With rulers changing over time, the commotion in the lives of ordinary people increased many folds. Crimes over the years increased, therefore, a Sunni Fatwa got released which asked women to stay at home to offer prayers. Thus, we see a complete change in the area division for women after the Mughal era, examples are Baghwali Masjid and Sunehri Masjid. It has now resulted with mosques like Jamia Islamia Sanabil Mosques which pays no regard to female worshippers.

Spatial Analysis of Mosques: Delhi

Baghwali Masjid is located near Khan Market, New Delhi. It was made in the Mughal era around 400 years ago. It got its name Baghwali because it was made in the middle of a garden at that time. At present, it is concealed behind a nursery, hence, it also called Nursery Masjid. The nursery was started in the late 1950s by a Hindu owner when his land was ruined because of communal riots. Placed between housing colonies and bustling markets, the mosque maintains a quiet environment.



Figure19: Location of Baghwali Masjid
Source: Googlemaps.com

Figure 20: Baghwali Masjid
Source: Fatima 2019

Then other mosque is the Sunehri Masjid, located in one of the most prime locations of Delhi. Built around 300 years ago in the Mughal period, the mosque still holds the glimmer. It is surrounded by some of the most important government-owned buildings like A-Block, B-Block, Vayu Bhawan and Udyog Bhawan. There is also a *Dargah Sharif* located right in front of the masjid. Since there are not many public mosques in that area, the mosque is flooded with people for Friday and Eid prayers.

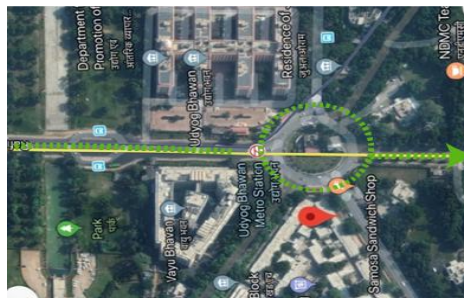


Figure 21: Location of Sunehri Masjid
Source: Googlemaps.com



Figure 22: Sunehri Masjid
Source: Fatima 2019

Table 3: Spatial Analysis of mosques in Delhi

SNO.	NAME	PARAMETER	OBSERVATION	QUALITY ANALYSIS
1.	BAGHWALI MASJID	A) SPACE		The spatial quality of the women area is existing but very low. Women would not want to come to a mosque if congregation space for them is so small. The idea of self worth is lost and one feels like a lower gender. The spatial quality must be inviting and peaceful. The space must also act as multifunctional hall where toddlers can be put to sleep Must avoid having separate architectural features. To increase the footfall, maintenance of the already built is also required Quran mentions separate entrances to ensure safety of women. Need of better, controlled entrances. Surveillance automatically increases safety levels
		1.1 How much space is provided for women to pray?	An area of 4m* 3m is provided	
		1.2 Is it comparable to that of men's praying area?	15 times smaller than men's praying area	
		1.3 Does it cater to a woman's needs, eg child feeding area?	Covered private space	
		1.4 Does it encourage or discourage a woman's motivation to come to the mosque?	Small congregation space for women, very dirty.	
		B) IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO DESIGNING WOMAN'S AREA	Men entrance is covered, women entrance is closed, thus same entrance used	
		2.1 Entry	Provided with running water, Private	
		2.2 Wudhu Area	Very dirty, being used as a store	
		2.3 Praying Area		
		C) SAFETY		
3.1 Are the entrances to the mosque and the praying area secure for women?	Same entrance for men and women			
3.2 Do the authorities ensure proper security facilities for the women?	Security cameras put			

SNO.	NAME	PARAMETER	OBSERVATION	QUALITY ANALYSIS	
1.	SUNEHRI MASJID	B) IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO DESIGNING WOMAN'S AREA	Entrance through the house of Imam Not Available, has to use bathroom in the house Not given at all	Importance to praying area, wudhu area not give. Caters to male worshippers dominantly. Therefore the praying area provided inside the house also shut now.	
		2.1 Entry			
		2.2 Wudhu Area			
		2.3 Praying Area	C) SAFETY	Inside the house therefore not really No	Entrance into the strangers house is unsafe and nobody would want to put their lives on risk. No surveillance cameras or security systems that would invite women at after sunset or before sunrise
		3.1 Are the entrances to the mosque and the praying area secure for women?			
		3.2 Do the authorities ensure proper security facilities for the women?			
		D) CONNECTIVITY	Present on the roundabout so front drop-offs are a problem Right in front of a metro station	Situated right opposite to the metro station. Parking which is far from the mosque also generates safety issues.	
		4.1 Is the mosque easy to access?			
		4.2 Are there safe transport facilities around the mosque?	E) SANITATION AND AMENITIES	Not Applicable	
		5.1 Is there a proper washroom facility, especially for women?			
		5.2 Are the women's washrooms equipped with proper dustbins, sanitary napkin dispenser?			
		5.3 Do the mosque premises have drinking water facilities?	Yes		

Source: Data adapted by Fatima 2019

The spatial analysis of the case studies gives us some broad parameters that must be considered while designing a female inclusive mosque. Apart from these parameters, one must make sure to provide more amenities to improve the experience. The amenities usually include carpeted floors, basic furniture, Quran and books on Hadith, praying robes, etc.

Conclusion

The study of the Paradise as a worldwide notion gave us the idea of a psychological place that people aspire to reach as a reward/achievement. For some, it is just a state of mind where physical means would not play a big role whereas for some it might be the ultimate destination. The study was done to understand and correlate the superficial idea with reality. The scope of understanding Paradise in Islam was limited to the teachings of Quran that gave us the sense of a place where one would go after death and its relation to the built structures on earth. The translation of that on earth is changing especially in the south-eastern countries. The concept of gender inclusivity in mosques has been a topic for debate due to many political, social and historical factors. The Sunni *fatwa* of forbidding women from entering the mosques by men is based on twisting an incident in their own favor. This level of disparity and discrimination only divides a religion where one gender has an upper hand. It is important to have women freely enter the mosques and to make better provisions for them as that would help in making better community decisions. Proper provisions for women include a big area for performing Namaz which is clean so that the mothers can rest the babies while they are praying, a small feeding area, clean wudhu areas and books on Islam for them to read.

The provisions would increase the footfall of women which would put pressure on the board to hire women in mosques for cleaning and other purposes. This would further increase job opportunities for them. In the West, however, women are raising their voices as they are tired of being pushed in the corners by men and not treated with the same respect as them. Women have initiated campaigns to talk about the quality and maintenance of these spaces. Women-led mosques are a breath of fresh air for women where they can sit and talk about many issues they are facing as well.

Along with the provisions, the thought process also needs to change. Over the years, women in Southeast Asia have been told to avoid mosques as it may get dangerous to travel to the mosque alone. This is one of the reasons why according to the research done by student of Ansal University in Delhi in 2019, around 8.3% women are not eager to experience praying in mosques, while 22.2% are not sure if they would like to. These root-level problems have been inculcated in the minds of young girls for years. This thought process is something that needs to be tackled before. The type of space we pray in enriches and heals us from within, therefore, it becomes important to design these spaces considering all factors of the user group. The unit-unit relationship for every believer to feel good and safe in the house for prayer also is crucial. This study can be used as a tool to design the future of Women Inclusive Spaces in Mosques and be taken up to study the other cities India to derive a stronger pattern for this injustice.

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