

# Indian Architectural Motifs as inspiration for Fashion Design

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## Abstract

The extensive architectural legacy of India, which is characterized by varied types, patterns, and symbols, can serve as an endless resource of inspiration for fashion designers in the modern world. In this work, the transfer of architectural motifs like jaali (latticed screen), dome, arches, pillars, frescos, and other details onto textiles, clothing shapes, and surface decorations is investigated. Examples of architectural motifs used in the history of Indian monuments, as well as in regional architectures, are considered. The impact of geometry, symmetry, and decoration on fabric design, clothes' shape, and ornamentation is discussed throughout the work. Moreover, the issues of cultural identity and sustainability involved in the revival of architectural designs are also examined. The examples and case studies of architectural motifs transferred into fashion demonstrate the potential of this type of inspiration. Overall, the results show that architectural motifs can contribute to the development of contemporary fashion design both aesthetically and culturally.

**Keywords-** Textile, Architecture Motifs, Fashion Design, Cultural Heritage, Ornamentation , Geometric and Floral Pattern

## INTRODUCTION

The rich architectural heritage of India is a reflection of its diverse culture and history. The variety of styles from ancient temples, rock-cut caves, and sculptures to elaborate monuments and palaces constructed by the Mughals makes Indian architecture famous for its elaborate designs with decorative patterns like flowers, geometrical shapes, jali, arches, domes, and engravings that hold various cultural, spiritual, and historical significance in each style.

Fashion and architecture are two different professions, but they share certain common characteristics like design principles, structural elements, symmetry, proportionality, and decorative motifs. Designers can incorporate certain elements of building structures to develop unique silhouettes of garments, whereas decorative motifs of structures may serve as inspiration for print patterns on fabrics and as designs for embroidered clothing.

With the rising interest of designers in using elements of traditional architecture for developing new fashion trends and making clothes more sustainable, a significant amount of information exists about this phenomenon. This study focuses on analyzing how motifs of Indian architecture could be used for modern fashion design.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1:- ANALYSING MUGHAL MOTIFS IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Mughal art and architecture (16th-18th centuries) involve many elements of Persian and Central Asian

traditions along with Indian culture. Early studies concentrated on such elements of Mughal architecture as domes, arches, and symmetry. In subsequent studies, scholars started researching symbolic and cultural aspects of Mughal motifs. As stated by scholars such as Ebba Koch, the monuments created by Mughals symbolized paradise and its beauty using such means as floral motifs and charbagh gardens. Meanwhile, Catherine Asher paid much attention to the role of motifs as symbols of imperial power and cultural identity.

As Oleg Grabar states, geometric and arabesque patterns are symbols of such aspects of existence as unity, infinity, and divinity. The motifs of flowers became increasingly realistic under Shah Jahan's rule and symbolized beauty and life of plants. Pietra dura technique was frequently used to create them. Calligraphic patterns had spiritual meanings, as did the design of Mughal gardens. Thus, Mughal motifs combine such aspects as aesthetics and symbolism.

### 2:- ARCHITECTURE INSPIRATION IN FASHION DESIGN

There are many styles in Indian architecture that include intricacies like the Nagara style, Dravidian style, and Mughal style that exhibit carved designs, geometrical designs, and symbolisms. They hold a lot of significance from cultural and spiritual perspectives. Features found in Indian architecture include domes, arches, jali work, and floral designs that depict harmony and craftsmanship.

When designing fashions, architects' creations inspire fashion designers in terms of shape and design. Fashion designers get inspiration from architectural creations in terms of the silhouette designs of garments. Motifs are translated on fashion fabrics using various techniques like printing, weaving, embroidery, and surface decoration techniques. Examples of jali work inspire cutwork and layering designs.

The incorporation of Indian architecture in fashion is a good practice that helps promote cultural sustainability since it is related to slow fashion designs. There is no specific literature available that links Indian architecture and fashion designs. The research will fill this gap in existing knowledge about fashion design by exploring the process of translating motifs of architecture into fashion designs.

### **3:- EXPLORING THE EVOLUTION OF SHEKHAWATI ART :CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND TRADITIONAL MOTIF DESIGN ON FABRIC SURFACES**

Motifs found in Indian architecture have been used as an inspiration in many designs of garments for centuries because they demonstrate cultural richness, depth, and symbolism. The history of Indian architectural motifs goes back to ancient civilizations; the motifs were modified during different periods, including Hindu, Mughal and Colonial eras. Such motifs as lotus, jaali, arched motifs, dome motif, and mandala were used for decoration. Moreover, there are several symbolic meanings associated with the motifs used in Indian architecture – spirituality, nature and balance of life.

The scholars agree that the use of architectural motifs can be efficiently employed in the design of garments due to digital printing, laser cutting, and other methods. The architectural elements are transformed into flexible fabrics, preserving its visual appeal. Today, designers create garments inspired by such elements as Mughal Gardens, Rajasthani fresco motifs and the architecture of temples. The scholars claim that there is great potential in the revival of traditional craft in sustainable fashion, but further research is needed to explore some gaps in this area.

### **4:- ART DECO ARCHITECTURE AS AN INSPIRATION SOURCE IN FASHION**

Indian architecture is a very rich source of inspiration in the field of fashion design because of its unique motifs, geometrical designs, floral patterns, and other forms of decoration. Some researchers have stated that temple architecture, Mughal architecture, and

palace architecture, including lotus motifs, jaali work, arches, domes, etc., reflect the cultural identity of the society.

It has been observed that the architectural motifs have an impact on the design of the fabric as well as the garment. Various techniques, including digital printing, embroidery, weaving, and laser cutting, help designers use the motifs in their designs. Indian traditional crafts, including Kalamkari, Zardozi, and Chikankari are helpful in this respect.

The designers take inspiration from the prominent buildings of the country, not only for aesthetic reasons but also to promote culture. The motifs used by fashion designers have different symbolic meanings related to purity, harmony, and grandeur. Thus, this type of inspiration can help designers create new sustainable designs, but further study is required to assess the market response.

### **5:- INDIAN TEXTILE MOTIFS AND TECHNIQUES FROM GUJARAT AND THEIR ADAPTATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY DECORATIVE DESIGN ON FABRICS**

There has been an enormous influence of Indian architecture on textile design and fashion design due to its beautiful motifs and decorations. Motifs such as lotuses, geometrical designs, jaali designs, and carvings from temples, Mughal structures, and palaces have been utilised in embroidery and weaving, making textiles that look like wearable architecture.

The Indian Mughal style, temple architecture, and the Rajasthani style play an important role in creating floral motifs, symmetrical designs, bright colors, and mirror work. Digital printing and laser cutting technology make it possible for these motifs to be applied in contemporary fashion.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study Indian architectural heritage in detail.
2. To identify and classify architectural motifs.
3. To understand the cultural and symbolic significance.
4. To examine the relationship between architecture and fashion design.
5. To explore methods of adaptation into fashion.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present investigation has been carried out using qualitative and exploratory methodologies to understand the potential of Indian architectural motifs as an inspiration source for fashion design.

The collection of secondary data is done by going through various books, journal articles, research papers and online sources regarding Indian architecture, textile design, and fashion design. This provides insight about the history of Indian architecture, the different motifs used in it and their symbolic values. Some popular architectural forms, such as Mughal style, Rajput architecture, Dravidian architecture and Indo-Saracenic style, are analyzed to understand various motifs, which include floral patterns, geometric patterns, jaali patterns, arches and domes.

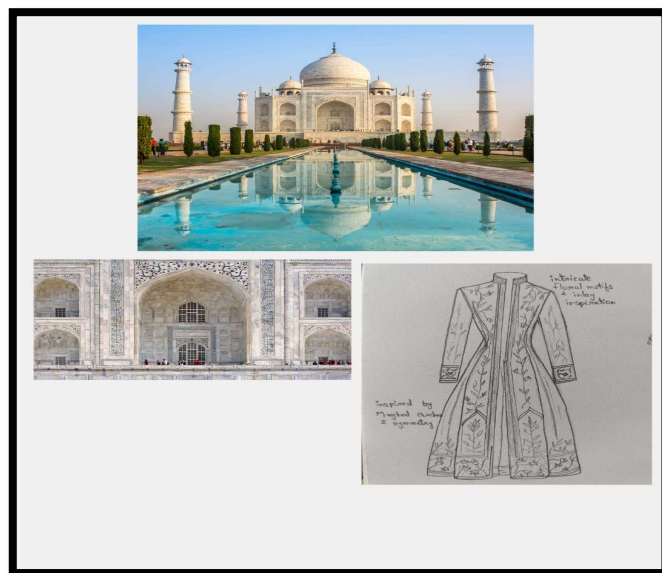
In primary research, analysis of architectural monuments is conducted visually using photographs and case studies to analyze motifs with respect to form, structure, symmetry and ornamentation. On the basis of such analysis, selected motifs are adapted and converted into textile design and garment designs using sketching and computer-aided design techniques as well as printing and embroidery. It also involves experimentation of design, where architectural details can be converted to fashion items. This conversion is done using motifs, simplifying, stylizing, and applying the designs on the textiles without losing their cultural meaning.

This method will help realize the effective transformation of architectural motifs into fashionable designs.

- To study Indian architectural heritage in detail.

This composition illustrates how Dravidian (South Indian temple) architecture inspires fashion design. The temple gopuram, with its tiered structure, vertical form, and symmetry, influences the layered and structured silhouette of the garment. The intricate carvings and sculptural details seen in the pillars and figures provide inspiration for surface ornamentation such as embroidery and decorative patterns.

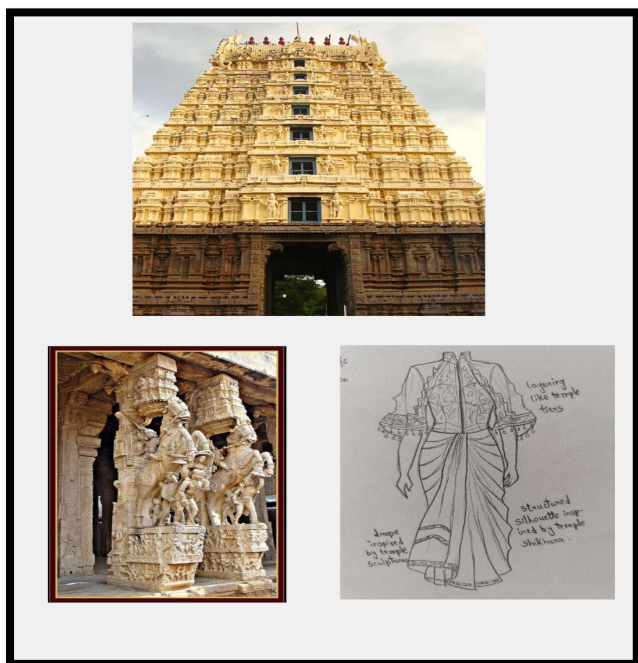
In the final sketch, these elements are translated into a layered upper garment, a structured form inspired by the temple tower, and a draped lower portion that reflects traditional Indian attire. The sleeve and border details mimic architectural motifs, showing how temple features can be adapted into wearable designs. Overall, it demonstrates the connection between architectural form and fashion aesthetics.



(TAJMAHAL)

- To identify and classify architectural motifs

An architectural motif refers to designs or shapes that are recurrent and found in architectural structures for both decorative and functional reasons. Such motifs can range from structural motifs such as domes, arches, columns, roofs, and vaults to decorative motifs such as carvings, mouldings, frescoes, geometrical shapes, and symbolism. In order to identify motifs in architecture, one should consider the various aspects of the structure. These aspects include the shape of the structure, the proportion used in the design, the material used to build the structure, the techniques of construction, as well as the decorative elements used in the construction process. The placement of these elements also counts because there are those placed on the exterior, while others are located inside the building. After identification, architectural motifs may be classified systematically



DRAVIDIAN TEMPLE (SOUTH INDIA)

in several ways. One way to do this is to classify architectural motifs according to the architectural styles and periods they are associated with, such as classical architecture with its orders and symmetry, Gothic architecture with pointed arches and ribbed vaults, Islamic architecture with its elaborate geometrical patterns and calligraphy, and modern architecture with its emphasis on simplicity and functionalism. Architectural motifs can further be classified into categories according to function; that is, whether they serve the purpose of providing strength and stability or merely adding visual interest. Form provides yet another basis for the classification of motifs, including such categories as geometric motifs, which include shapes such as circles and squares; organic motifs, derived from natural forms such as floral and animal themes; and abstract motifs, which express certain philosophies and symbols. Identifying and classifying architectural motifs is significant for many reasons. First of all, motifs can reveal much about the development of architectural styles throughout time and the cultural impact on these styles. This information plays a crucial role in architectural preservation because it helps architects and historians keep the integrity of buildings when restoring and conserving them. Besides, the examination of motifs may give some useful ideas to today's architects for applying motifs of ancient architecture in contemporary designs. Ultimately, motifs allow buildings to express their significance in architectural communication.

functioning of the motifs through design other than visual aspects is made possible.

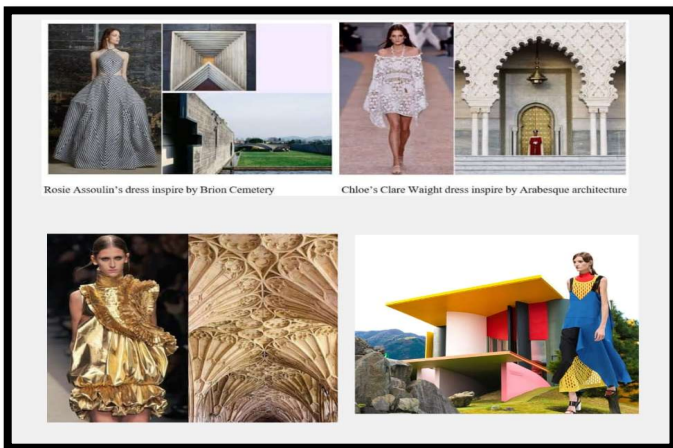
This insight is important for the application of the motifs within fashion design. This way, it will be possible for designers to preserve the significance of the motifs even when creating clothing designs. In addition to utilizing the motifs for decoration purposes alone, it will be possible for designers to use the motifs in making more meaningful fashion designs that reflect their culture.

Through this objective, I will be able to explore in detail the symbolism of architectural elements, their cultural significance, and various interpretations within the Indian context. These architectural elements have much deeper meaning than simple decoration since they carry with them the cultural beliefs, religious values, philosophical ideas, and social traditions of Indian culture. Every architectural element is endowed with a deeper meaning such as lotus, which stands for purity and renewal, geometry as the manifestation of harmony and infinity, and jaali as the interaction of light and shadow representing the physical and metaphysical world. Moreover, the use of arches, domes, and mandala in Indian architecture also has much deeper meanings of power, authority, infinity, etc.

With this objective, it will help me understand the varying motifs used in different architectural styles, including Mughal architecture, Rajput style, Dravidian architecture, and Indo-Islamic design, each having its own set of cultural elements. For example, Mughal architecture makes use of symmetrical designs representing paradise, while Indian temples incorporate symbols from mythology.

Moreover, through this objective, I can learn how these symbolic meanings shape the identity and story of a particular space. The motifs present in architecture have significance as visual language that conveys meanings related to religious beliefs, social hierarchy, connection to nature, and aesthetic values. Through the decoding of this visual language, an enhanced insight into the functioning of the motifs through design other than visual aspects is made possible.

This insight is important for the application of the motifs within fashion design. This way, it will be possible for designers to preserve the significance of the motifs even when creating clothing designs. In addition to utilizing the motifs for decoration purposes alone, it will be possible for designers to use the motifs in making more meaningful fashion designs that reflect their culture.



- **To understand the cultural and symbolic significance**

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- **To examine the relationship between architecture and fashion design.**

It is important to remember that architecture and fashion design share structural, geometrical, proportional and aesthetic concerns in order to explore the connection between the two. While architecture deals with building and space design, fashion design is concerned with the design of clothes for the human body. The commonalities do not end there.

Various aspects of architectural design such as symmetry, geometry, texture and materials can be reflected in fashion designs. For example, rigid geometric shapes of architecture are found in structured clothes, while flowing lines in fashion imitate organic architecture. Other architectural designs such as domes, arches, columns, and carvings have been incorporated into fashion in the form of designs, patterns, embroidery and garments.

Both architecture and fashion also reflect the cultural, historical and environmental aspects in their designs. Architecture defines the culture and character of societies in many ways, while fashion reflects cultural stories through its design elements. The detailed Indian architecture has contributed to fashion through fabrics, colors and structures.

Also, both architecture and fashion design include practicality along with aesthetics. Architecture should not only look good but also be comfortable to live in. Similarly, fashion design should also be functional in addition to looking aesthetically pleasing.

Ultimately, both fashion design and architecture have a link between them owing to similarities such as design concepts, culture, and aesthetics.

- **To explore methods of adaptation into fashion.**

When examining adaptation approaches within fashion, it is essential to focus not on imitation of architectural features but on their creative translation to the world of clothing. In this regard, architects reinterpret the elements and details of buildings in accordance with fashion's unique parameters.

Abstraction refers to simplifying building elements, details, or ideas. Architects can transform domes, arches, and facades of buildings into various silhouettes or hemline designs.

Surface translation concerns the transfer of architectural details, such as carvings, jali, or motifs, to fashion through prints, embroidery, weaving, or other decorative techniques applied to fabric.

In structural adaptation, the construction principles of architecture are applied to fashion design. As a result,

structured garments, pleats, and panels can become part of a designer's ideas.

Materials play an important role in the adaptation of architecture for fashion, too. In particular, fabrics can symbolize certain building materials, including stone, metal, glass, or wood. Accordingly, stiff fabric can symbolize concrete form, while a delicate one can imitate glass facades.

It is possible to use a color palette of buildings in fashion. In particular, traditional buildings are usually designed in earthy colors, whereas modern buildings feature neutral colors, which may also be used in fashion.

Finally, conceptual adaptation means drawing from the philosophy or spatial experience of architecture, including aspects like minimalism, symmetry, and fluidity, and then manifesting it in the designs of clothing.

By doing this, architecture can be turned into fashion in such a manner that preserves its fundamental nature but still ensures originality and practicality

## **OUTCOME**

This research has indicated that the incorporation of the motifs of Indian architecture, like floral patterns, geometrical motifs, jaalis, arches, and domes, is possible in fashion design. It is achieved by conducting a review of existing literature and analysing images for the identification, classification, and symbolic significance of these motifs.

Finally, the results reveal that there is a significant relationship between architecture and fashion because the structure of architecture influences the form of garments, while the motifs of architecture contribute to textile design.

## **CONCLUSION**

The main conclusion of the study is that the motifs from Indian architecture can provide meaningful inspiration for designing clothes. From analyzing the literature sources, as well as setting the purpose and using visual references, it becomes obvious that the motifs such as floral patterns, geometrical forms, jaali, arched and domed structures possess cultural meanings and values.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that architecture and fashion have much in common because both spheres employ similar principles of design – form, symmetry, balance, etc. Moreover, architectural features can be adapted to become patterns or ornamentations on fabric.

In general, one may say that using motifs from architecture in clothing designs contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage.

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