



Restoring the Roots: Structural Integrity and Exceptional Origins of Yusufganj Mosque, Sonargaon, Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT: The historical city of Domdrom is located in Sonargaon, the capital of ancient Bengal. Yusufganj Mosque located in ancient Majhipara included in this city. This mosque of the Sultanate period is still intact as an important and traditional architectural and cultural monument. There are a lot of developments have been made around the mosque. This only renders the mosque visible now. Today, the location of this mosque in Yusufganj still makes it clear that the region is indeed a magnificent monument of rich Islamic heritage. Although the historical importance of this ancient mosque is immense, it is now under some threat due to people's greed, short-sightedness and lack of progress. There are few or no natural causes here. Only man-made causes are now playing a major role. The main aim of the research paper is to make the ancient structure, whatever the culture, religion or group, the wealth of the country, contemporary thinking, appropriate techniques, sufficient and adequate documentation, continuous efforts for conservation, all these things to make a great combination. This is also finding out the results to determine the prosperous future of the establishment. At the outset, this is providing the detailed historical background (Sultanate period) for the Yusufganj Mosque will have the greatest depth. During that period, Sonargaon was considered as commercial and cultural hub. Contemporary architectural features of the mosque will have that culture, that appeal, and appreciation. The availability of the terracotta ornamentation of the mosque is quite ambiguous yet the time spent looking it is worth it. And that would be to dwell more fully on the role of Islamic architecture in Bengal in the broader perspective. Research papers must be evaluated correctly. And it will be in the light of any history, survey or any paper work. Speaking to local potential partners can be quite effective. These ways of working allows for the assessment of the mosque structure and realize which areas are most vulnerable to progressive decay. The study also shows how the centre has become an important cultural and religious landmark in the community, which makes it worthy of protection. Concerning the issue of conservation, the paper discusses previous and present intervention measures by different governments and NGO. This paper then looks at the strategies that have been used from simple prevention and control measures to the more complex activities of rehabilitation and assesses the difficulties experienced during their application. Issues such as funding constraints, lack of technical expertise and the impact of local development projects are examined in detail. The study concludes by proposing a set of recommendations for future conservation efforts, emphasizing the need for a more integrated approach that combines technical, cultural, and community-based strategies. In support of the paper's argument on the reasons to conserve the Yusufganj Mosque it appears that this building is an architectural asset of Sonargaon that can also serve as a place to elevate a sense of community belonging amongst the inhabitants of the region. In order to be able to still bring avail for such purpose in the future it is very important to preserve this historic monument. Thus, this paper will contribute to the general discussion regarding Bangladeshi heritage conservation and could be used to inform similar sites in the country.

KEYWORDS: Investigation, Aesthetics, Documentation, Conservation, Reflected Photography.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Ancient Domdom City" is a township occupied by the erstwhile capital city "Sonargaon". The importance of this city in ancient times was quite significant but now its name does not even smell. *Sonargaon was ruled by Vanga and Samatata Kingdoms during antiquity. The Sena dynasty used the area as a base. The Deva dynasty King Dasharathadeva shifted his capital from Bikrampur to Suvarnagrama in the middle of the 13th century.* [01] Everything seems to be lost in the history of time. Domdom city had the greatest amount of Sultanate architecture. *Domdom belongs to Domdom fort. Ancient tomb, Masjid Halam Ghata is a place for washing muslin yarn.* [02] Yusufganj Mosque is one of the few famous architectures of that time that have survived to this day. The magnificent beauty of the Sultanate period had a great impact on the Mughal period as well. *The mosque is now in a renovated condition, and although much of its original features have been lost, its antiquity can be traced back to the 15th century in view of its having some characteristics of sultanate architecture.* [03] Over time, this mosque was largely changed. Once upon a time the mosque lost its mythical beauty. However, what has survived till now inspires wonder in the minds of tourists and archaeologists. Overall this is now Yusufganj Mosque Complex. Despite having all kinds of facilities in the mosque, many inconsistencies are observed. Now, the sustainable theme for this establishment is to give and sustain the proper status of this establishment for future generations in the days to come. For the sake of establishment, its place, time, container should be highlighted. It must be remembered that no nation can move forward by leaving its history behind.

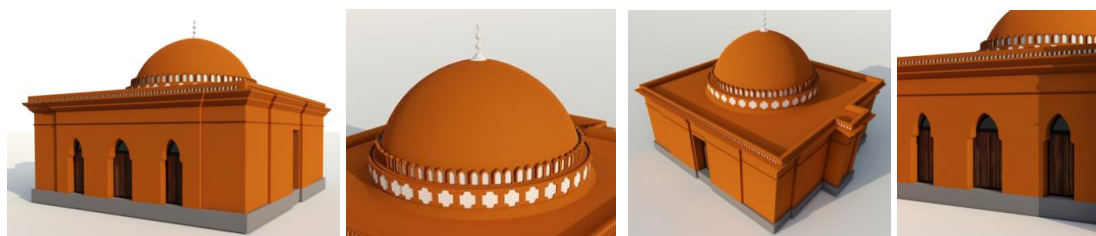


Fig.01 Existing 3D View (Inferential) of Yusufganj Mosque, 3D Modeling by, 4th Author

A. Definition of Mosque

A mosque (/mɒsk/ MOSK), also called a masjid (/ˈmæsdʒɪd, ˈmɑːs-/ MASS-jid, MUSS-), is a place of worship for Muslims. [04] In a word, the mosque is the house of Allah. Allah created man to worship Him. Muslims enter the mosque five times a day to pray and seek the pleasure of Allah. In addition, mosques often serve as centres for social, educational, religious and Islamic cultural and ritual activities. Another term is "Mosque Architecture". *Mosque Architecture (1205-1765) was introduced by the Muslims for the ritual needs of their religion, Islam after the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal.* [05]

B. Definition of Sultanate Mosque

Mosques built during the Sultanate period are called Sultanate Mosques. Originally, more regional sultanates were attached to the Delhi Sultanate when it ruled the Indian subcontinent. And at that time i.e. (1206-1526) century, all the structures built by the Muslim rulers are Sultanate architecture. *The sultanate's history is generally divided into five periods: Mamluk (1206–1290), Khilji (1290–1320), Tughalak (1320–1414), Sayeed (1414–1451), and Lodi (1451–1526). It covered large swaths of territory in modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, as well as some parts of southern Nepal.*[06] The style, structure, aesthetics and features of this architectural style are different from other structures. It can be said that there is a difference between them. Many structures of the Sultanate period in this Bengal are still surviving in good condition. Examples are:: Yusufganj Mosque, Dumdum; Shahi Mosque, Bandar; Goaldi Mosque, Sonargaon; Baba Adam's Mosque, Rikabi bazar; Bibi Begni Mosque, Bagerhat etc.

C. Definition of Conservation

To protect, preserve, and conserve the physical fabric of the tangible cultural heritage is called Architectural Conservation.[07] Architectural conservation includes the process of conservation and restoration of important structures, places, environments and monuments/sculptures. And of course these things should be done keeping several aspects in mind. It includes historical quality, cultural quality and architectural quality. It is important to preserve the prehistoric features and value of historic architecture. In that case, it is necessary to maintain the original condition. Keeping everything in mind, like preservation, maintenance, repair, restoration and reconstruction as per need. The most important aspect of architectural conservation is to preserve these structures for future generations, so that they can be exposed to important aspects of history and culture. Saving does not happen all at once. There are many steps to go through to do this. This includes assessing the current

condition of the installation, examining the components, developing plans for restoration, and following local, national or international conservation standards.

D. Establishment of Yusufganj Mosque

Sonargaon Upazila is part of Narayanganj district, a city of history and heritage. This Sonargaon city is called the capital of ancient Bengal. Today it is no longer the capital. This Yusufganj mosque is located in a Hindu dominated area called Majhipara during the capital. Although popularly known as Majhipara, it is now more commonly known as Yusufganj. *This historic mosque is located 500 meters west of the Mograpara crossing of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and 1000 meters east of the Dargah Bari on the north side of the road towards Mograpara.* [08] Needless to say, due to the reconstruction and remodeling of the mosque, the mosque has taken on such a shape from the outside that it is difficult to understand that it is an old structure. If one can enter inside the mosque then the original mosque structure can be clearly understood. Today, the main architectural features of the mosque are mostly dirty and in the abyss of oblivion. It is as if the bad part of time is waiting to swallow it. *However, some traces of the Sultanate architecture seen in the mosque are still intact, which attests to the 15th century architecture of the mosque.* [09]



Fig.02 Different Parts of Yusufganj Mosque at Domdom. Photography by, 1st Author

E. Origin Mosque and It's Complexity

Sonargaon was the capital of ancient Bengal. A part of the historical capital city is the ancient Domdom city. Yusufganj Mosque is essentially a remarkable monument of this Domdom which still survives in good condition. Initially, the journey started with only one mosque and a digghi adjacent to the mosque, but over time, many buildings have been assembled in this mosque complex. Here's a flowchart of it.

<i>Crom.</i>	<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Establishments</i>
01.	1500 AD	Sultani Era	Square Mosque
02.	1500 AD	Transitional	Ancient Digghi
03.	1600 AD	Mughal Era	Shaan (Mughal Shaan) Extension In East Side
04.	1705 AD	Mughal Era	Sultani Mosque Development
04.	1759 AD	Battle of Palashi	Verandah Extension in The North and South Side
05.	1800 AD	British Colonial	Demolished Digghi, The Mosque was Abandoned
06.	1850 AD	Late Colonial	Conservation and Renovation of Old Mosque
06.	1900 AD	Pakistan Period	Square Mosque Added with New Rectangle Chamber
07.	2000 AD	Contemporary	Gate, Wudu Khana and Toilet
08.	Present	Modern Era	Extension Two Storied Building (Ongoing)

F. Site Surroundings of Yousufganj Mosque

To the East of Yusufganj Mosque:: Mograpara Bus Stand, Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, Royal Resort, Historical Sonargaon Town, Folk and Crafts Museum, Ancient Town Panam Nagari, Historic Galdi Mosque and many more versatile aesthetic buildings and townships.

To the West of Yousufganj Mosque - the ancient city of Dumdum, Grand Trunk Highway, Panch Pir Dargah and Mosque, Kaikartek Hut, Port.

To the North of the Yousufganj Mosque:: Meghna Industrial Economic Zone, Tomb of Sultan Ghiyas Uddin Azam Shah, Historic Langalband Bathing Ghat and Temple, Sanmandi.

To the South of the Yousufganj Mosque:: Pirijpur Union, Meghna Ghat, Meghna River etc.

G. Site Force

Yusufganj Mosque is a notable monument of the Sultanate period. Architectural features of this mosque are similar to other mosques in Narayanganj district. Another notable mosque is the Bandar Shahi Mosque. That is located in Bandar Thana of Narayanganj District. Also, the similarity of this structure with many other mosque structures in the country can be seen. *Other notable mosques with similar land designs like the Bandar Shahi Mosque are the Haji Baba Saleh Mosque (1505 AD) half a kilometer south-west of the Bandar Shahi Mosque,*

Bakhat Bintar Mosque in Dhaka (1457 AD), Goaldi Mosque in Sonargaon (1519 AD), Yusufganj Mosque (1500 AD), Rajbibi Mosque in Gaur (15th century), Chamkati Mosque (1475 AD), Gopalganj Mosque in Dinajpur (1460 AD), Sura Mosque (16th century), Navagram Mosque in Pabna (1526 AD), Mosque adjacent to Khan Jahan's Tomb in Bagerhat (15th century), Chunakhola Mosque (15th century), Ranbijaipur Mosque (15th century), Masjid bari Mosque in Barisal (1465 AD). [10]

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the course of completing this paper, the research has focused on the architectural and structural buildings' Heritage. The current study is an exploration of quantitative as well as qualitative methodology focusing on the unexpected early days of the Yusufganj Mosque at Sonargaon. Historical sources are collected to acquire documentation, maps, and texts about the same mosque. Architectural documentation and field surveys to assess characteristics of the mosque structure, material and architectural design. Historians and conservationists, key informants to this research project, offered qualitative information pertaining to that history. Historic preservation practices like structural reinforcement, materials' conservation, and restoration of original features, are obstacle.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. A Brief Overview Discussion of Mosque Architecture In Bengal

The mosque architecture in Bengal was built during the Sultanate province (1204–1576) and the Mughal period (1576–1757). The early examples of mosques were rather small, rectangular and its architectural features were quite simplistic, retained the construct of bricks and terracotta. Such mosques were topped with multiple small domes, or a single large dome at the top of the structure. The first example is the Adina Mosque in Pandua which was established in 1375 CE – Its architectural style has clearly Persian elements; at the same time it belongs to the region. There were also patterns of curved cornices with multi storey roofs reminiscent of Bengali thatched huts with fish scale like designs for rooftops. All these features proved the integration of Islamic architecture into the warm climate and cultural environment of the region. Among other interesting monuments, one should mention the Nine-domed Mosque and the Sixty-domed Mosque in Bagerhat (15th century) with the numerous regional features such as ornamentation in terracotta and multiple-domed structure. The Mughal architectural option brought in delicate and more artistic ways of designing the exteriors, for instance use of artwork on stone and marble can be seen in Lalbagh Fort Mosque in Dhaka. During this period, marshaled and large pray opening were also included which became the noticeable feature in the mosque architecture minarets and large prayer opening became the distinguish features of mosque architecture of Bengal during this period Mosque architecture in Bengal developed by integrating Islamic architectural elements with the local environment.

B. Historical Context of Sonargaon

The capital of ancient Bengal was Sonargaon. It is also said to be an administrative center of East Bengal. Historically, it was also a river port. Sonargaon was a major center of the muslim trade of Bengal with a large population of weavers and artisans. The place was part of the medieval Sultanate of Bengal and was a flourishing centre of trade, commerce and learning. They are various historical structures such as mosque, tomb, and fort which are scattered all over the region due to its rich past. Among these is the Yusufganj Mosque which historians opine was constructed in the 15th century in the reign of Sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. The mosque symbolizes the architectural works of the sultanate style and is built with bricks The mosque architecture is an amalgamation of Persian and the regional Bengali styles which was a trend of the period of Bengal Sultanate.

C. Overview of Ancient Damdama Nagari, Sonargaon

Ancient Domdom city belongs to Narayanganj district. It can be said that at this time it is an abandoned township but it is a city rich in archeological structures to a significant extent. Many things about the early civilization of ancient Bengal are covered in Ashteprastha. Here, what was initially part of an ancient settlement or city is evident. The ruins of Dumdum city still survive. From this it is clear that Dumdum was a prosperous city in the early medieval period. The settlement probably flourished between the 7th and 12th centuries during the Pala and Sena dynasties, known for their contributions to art, architecture and Buddhist culture in Bengal.

D. The Identity of "Yousuf Sowdagor" in the Light of History

Yusuf Saudagar is not a historical character. He is not a proper hero from history. He is a merchant. He came to Bengal to trade. But the greatness that can be seen in the character in judging the identity is that there was another Yusuf Dervish in Sonargaon at that time. One could hear the whispers and prayers of one's heart. *Hazrat*

Muhammad Yusuf, the famous dervish of Mogradpara, Sonargaon, could see the disaster of Yusuf Saudagar falling into the river and was embarrassed. [11]

E. Making Complex Decisions and Historical Issues

But judging by the architecture, this structure belongs to the Transitional period, so there is no doubt that its fort was built by Yusuf Sowdagor and the period is Emperor Awrango Zeb. Yusufganj mosque is an unique example of the both sultanate and mughal mosque.

F. Bengal Inscriptions

Inscriptions play an important role in identifying ancient architecture. Black basalt stone inscriptions were seen in the Sultanate and Mughal period mosques. However, it was not seen in Yusufganj mosque. There is no trace of the inscription of this mosque. The identity of this mosque can be given only by looking at the style of architecture. There are three white stone plaques outside the southern wall of the mosque. The plaques read "Bijne Janamgam" and "Andhare Alo" etc. But the writings on the white stone are very unclear.

G. Historical Significance of Yusufganj Mosque

The 15th century mosque Yusufganj mosque stands next to Shershah Road, the historic road of Sonargaon. [12] The ancient river flows along the south side of the mosque named Menikhali river. Now, this is not like as a river. It seems just as a long canal. This village was once crowded around the river. The name of the village is Majhipara. This village was probably the settlement of the boatmen of the capital Sonargaon. At one time, the sailors of this Majhipara village were the sailors of merchant ships of the Sonargaon fleet. [13] But, this history is not remembered by the residents of Majhipara now. It seems that these helpless-poor and lonely people are unable to retain that memory. However, the history of Yusufganj Mosque is still heard by local people. This is the history of Yusuf Saudagar building a mosque with his own hands. Sonargaon, the capital of ancient Bengal, at that time, many rich people, tourists, merchants and traders from different parts of the world came by ship for trade. Yusuf Saudagar was such a merchant. He was coming to Sonargaon by river in a wooden ship. En route, their merchant ship was hit by a major storm. The helpless sailor of the ship and Yusuf Saudagar continued to pray in vain to be saved from this great calamity. [14] Another saint heard Yusuf Saudagar's inner thoughts. His name is similar to Yusuf Saudagar. He was the famous Sufi saint and dervish Hazrat Muhammad Yusuf (RA) of Mogradpara, Sonargaon. He was busy with itching. In this situation, the dervish was taking a small cup of water and muttering a pray in it. He prayed for Yusuf Saudagar. The stormy river calms down. Yusuf Saudagar made a vow that he would build a mosque in the place where his ship would land, out of gratitude to Allah. At one time boat came to Yusufganj and Yusuf Saudagar built a mosque at the place where boat came. [15]

H. Crowded In the Mosque

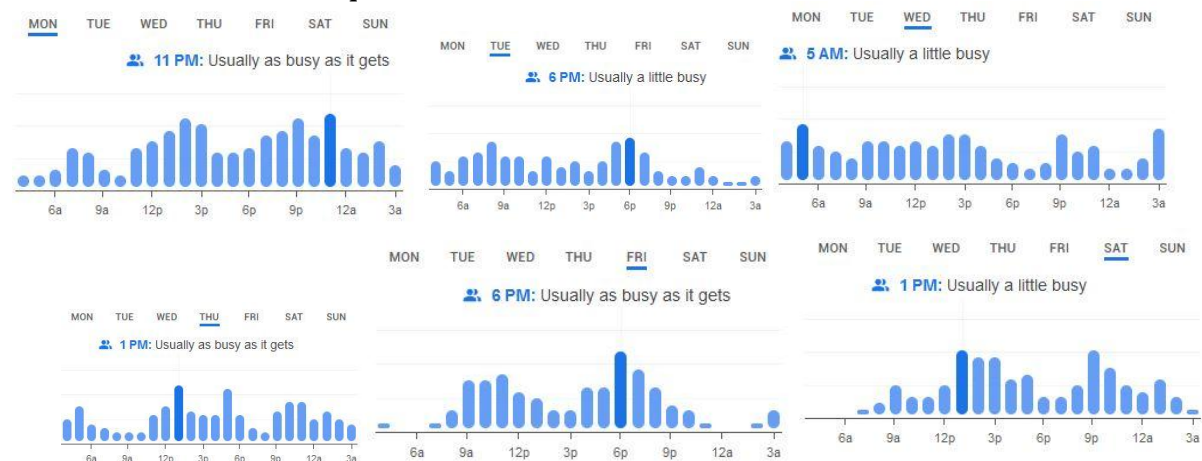


Fig.03 People and Tourists Crowded in the Mosque, Source by Google Survey

IV. ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTATION

A. Land Design and Construction Plan of Origin Mosque

From 1200th century, the procession of the Sultanate began. All Islamic architecture since that time has certain features and outlines that share a commonality and sincerity. Later, around the 1400s, these features and outlines took shape in a more elaborate form. That was recognized as a popular architectural style at that time. This magnificent structure of the Sultanate period is a mosque with a dome. It can be said that during the Sultanate period, mosques with a single dome were in vogue. This did not develop so much later. However,

structurally it is a miniature square mosque. Whose length and breadth are equal? The length of one side of this square mosque is 36 feet-2 inches on the outside and only 18 feet on the inside which is called the sanctum of the mosque.[16] The thickness of the walls of the mosque is 6 feet 4 inches.



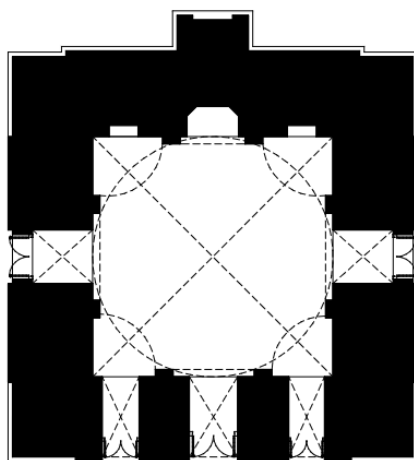
Fig.04 Interior Parts of Yusufganj Mosque, Photos by, 1st Author


Architectural features of such deep thickness do not seem to be seen in any other mosque of the Sultanate period. From that point of view, it is the first Sultanate architecture with such a high density that the mosque has entrances from three sides. The original mosque has 03 entrances on the east side and 01 on the north-south side respectively for a total of 02 entrances. The length of the north-south entrance is the same and is 4 feet. The eastern central entrance is larger than the two side entrances. Its length is 3 feet 7 inches and the length of the two side entrances is 2 feet 8 inches. Each quadrilateral entrance of the mosque is 08 feet high and each has a double wooden door which is currently painted ocher. There are four towers at the four corners of the original mosque, which are called corner torrents in architectural terms. These torrents are octagonal in shape. An umbrella is seen on the head of each bastion. These towers are very bare and simple. The corner towers do not raise much above the cornice as is evident from the actual survey. And these are the architectural features of the Sultanate period.

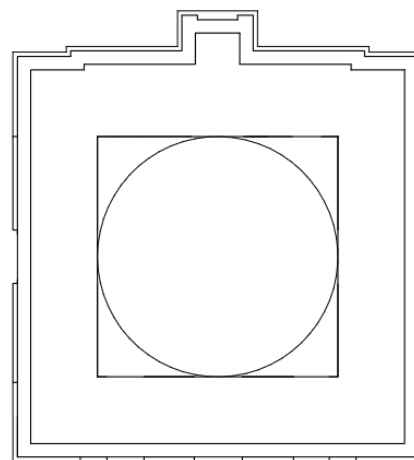


Fig.05 Exterior Parts of Yusufganj Mosque, Photos by, 1st Author

B. Yusufganj Mosque Plan



 Ground Floor Plan of Yusufganj Mosque (Original)




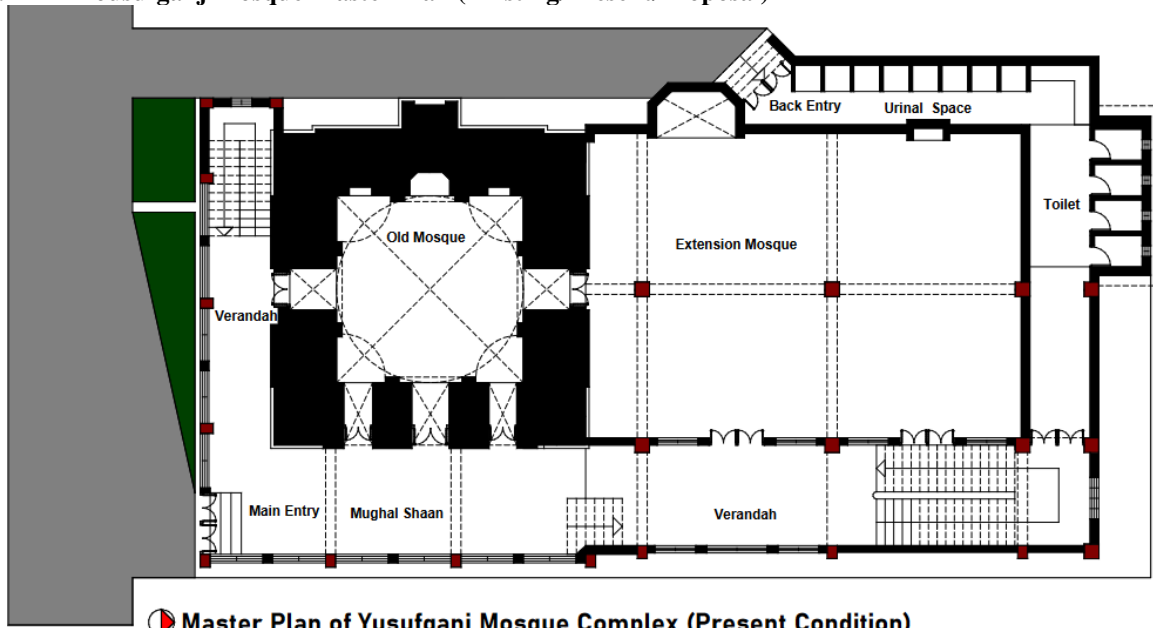
 Roof Floor Plan of Yusufganj Mosque (Original)

Fig.06 Ground Floor Plan & Roof Floor Plan of Yusufganj Mosque (Origin), Drawing by 1st Author.

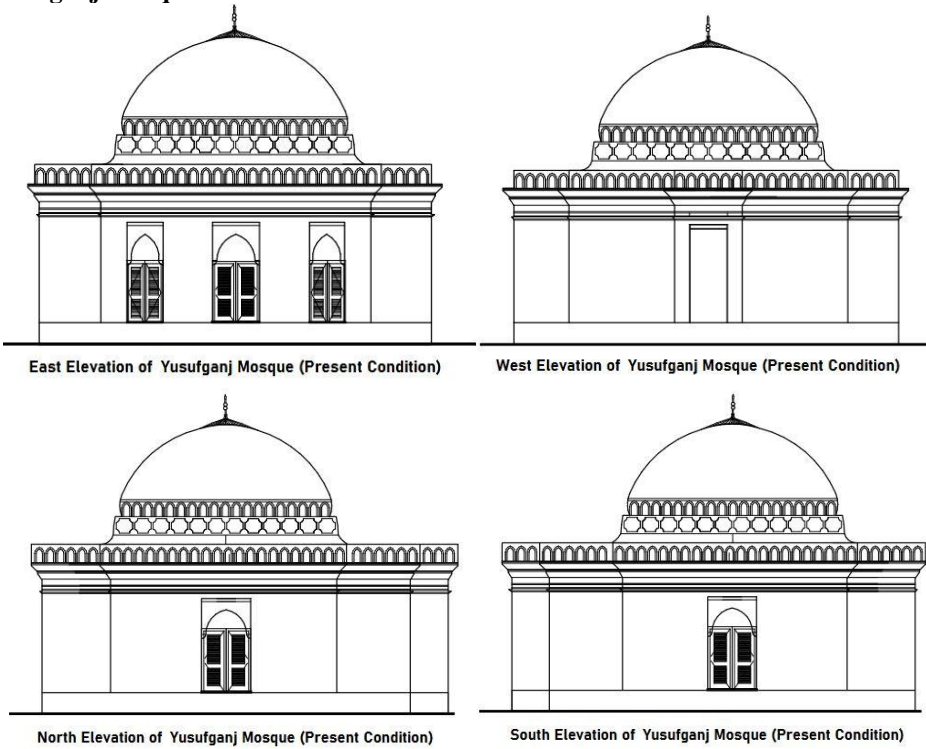
C. Yusufganj Mosque Master Plan (Existing/Present/Proposal)



Master Plan of Yusufganj Mosque Complex (Present Condition)

Fig.07 Master Plan of Ancient Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition), Drawing by 1st Author.

D. Yusufganj Mosque Elevation



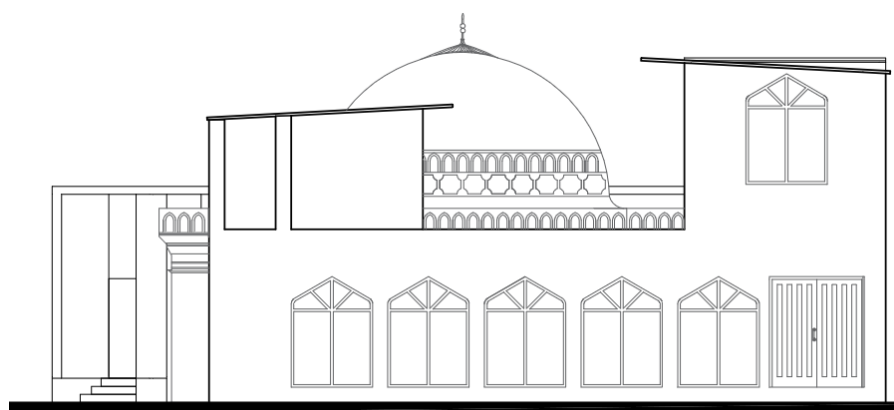
East Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition)

West Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition)

North Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition)

South Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition)

Fig.08 Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque (Present Condition), Drawing by 1st Author.



ENTRY ELEVATION OF YOUSUFGANJ MOSQUE 2024 [PRESENT CONDITION]

Fig.09 Present Elevation of Yusufganj Mosque, Drawing by 3rd Authors

E. Yusufganj Mosque Section

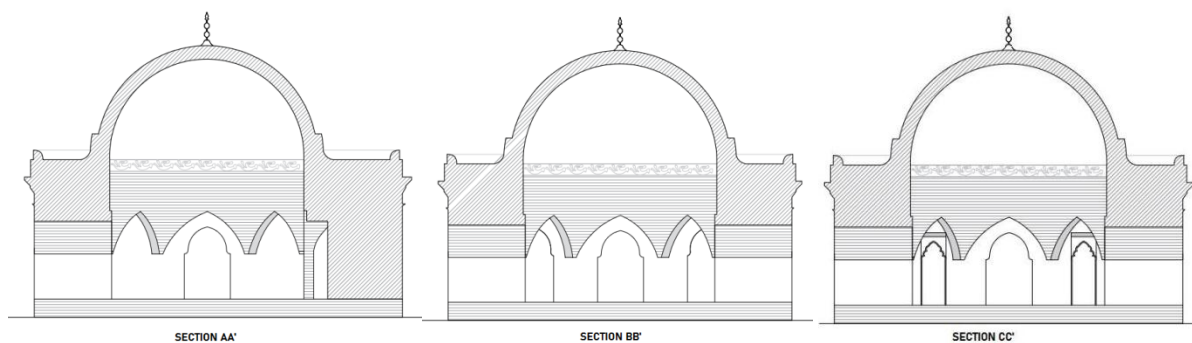


Fig.10 Different Section of Yusufganj Mosque, Drawing By, 3rd Author

F. Architectural Documentation of Yusufganj Mosque

Yusufganj Mosque is the only one dome building with rectangular configuration of the prayer hall. The exterior of the mosque splendour features of extraneous terracotta plates of floral designs, geometrical designs and Arab calligraphic works are other characteristic features of the Sultanate style. The dome situated above the prayer hall was carried by squinches and pendentives in order to transition from a square base to a circular dome. Mihrab of the mosque is also adorned with fin and the minbar indicates the level of workmanship of the artisans of the period. Thus, the socio-religious life of medieval Bengal is another important facet of architectural importance of the mosque existing in a state of both compatibility with and contrast to the aesthetic form. It as well acted as a religious institution where people went to pray, for social purposes and also a forum where they discussed matters. It is located in Sonargaon, a modern city therefore placing it as a religious and cultural landmark of the society today. The features of the Mughal, Turkish and Persian architecture dominate the entire outlook of the Sultanate mosque.

G. Dome::

The main attraction of the ancient mosque is the dome. At this time it was possible to plan and build a mosque without a dome, but at that time a mosque without a dome was unimaginable. One or more domes are seen in mosques of the Sultanate period. Yusufganj Mosque is a mosque with a dome. This dome is huge. The semi-circular drum of the dome rests on a circular base. The dome is placed in the squinch style which is very common in the Sultanate period. *The dome of the mosque is carried on squinches, and its outer merlon decoration appears to be modern.* [17] From the inside the mosque looks semi-circular but from the outside it looks smooth like a guava. *Both the interior and exterior of the dome are lime washed.* [18] No colouring on the outside but light colouring on the inside. However, it is easier to clearly determine the antiquity of the mosque by looking at this dome.



Fig.11 Exterior and Interior View of Yusufganj Mosque Dome, Photography by, 1st Author

H. Squinch System In Roof::

Squinch is an architecture, any of several devices by which a square or polygonal room has its upper corners filled in to form a support for a dome: by having the courses of the masonry so constructed that each course overhangs the one beneath; by constructing one or more arches in a diagonal manner across the corner; or by constructing a small recess in the corner with a half dome above it; or by constructing a small conical dome the diagonal face of which is an arch and the apex of which is at the corner of the bay. *In architecture, a squinch is a structural element used to support the base of a circular or octagonal dome that surmounts a square-plan chamber.*[19]

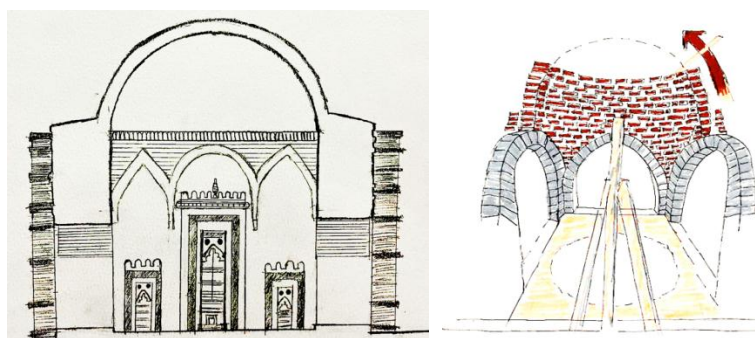


Fig.12 Squinch Methods In Roof, Sketches by 5th Author

I. Use of Marlon::

There is absolutely no use and application of Marlon on the inside of the dome. It is inward facing in the most popular architectural style of the Sultanate period. However, Marlon's use is seen in one serial, rounded to the outside. These Marlons are quite tall. Marlon's external appearance shows thickness. Marlons are colored progressively turquoise and green. Also, multiple marlons can be seen around the front of the roof. The size of this marlon is quite small compared to the dome marlon. These marlons are gradually colored white and maroon.



Fig.13 A Series of Marlon In the Exterior Part of Dome. Photography by, 1st Author

J. Gombuz Srinkha or Kalaschura::

On the outside of the dome, the presence of a lotus is seen at the apex. This lotus is again inverted and very mid-conjunct oriented. From the outside, it looks like a round flower arrangement. At the center of this asra is a pitcher. During the Sultanate period, the presence of such urns was seen in many mosques. It is basically a motif special. *This pinnacle was determined by placing one pitcher on top of the other, either big or small.* [20] Discussion, the existence of two kalas can be seen at the kalaschura of the mosque. Two pitchers are of the same size and supported on top of each other by an iron bar. A semicircular apple is present at the bottom. This is another pitcher fraction that looks like an apple. At the top of the pitcher is a piece of brass like arrowhead mounted and decorated.

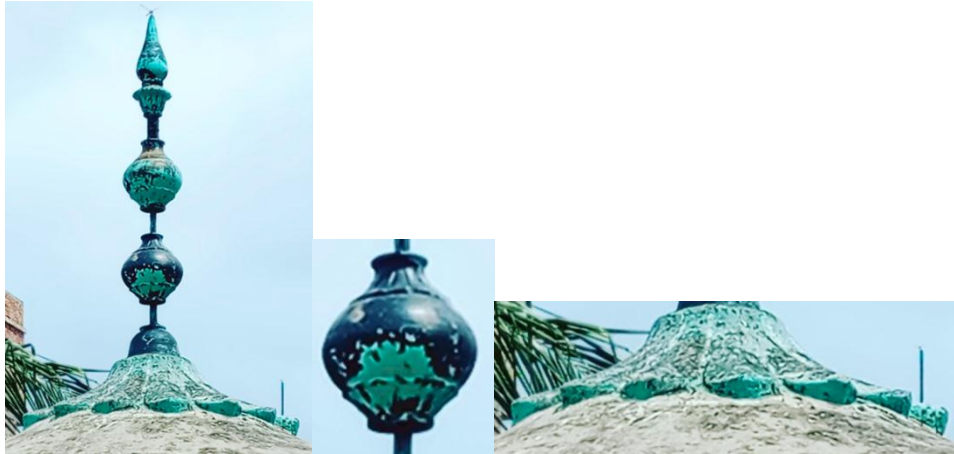


Fig.14 Mosque Shows Kalas-chura on the Top of the Dome, Photos by, 1st Author

K. Mihirab::

Three mihrabs can be seen on the west side of Yusufganj Mosque. However, three Mihrabs were seen in many contemporary mosques.



Fig.15 Central Mihrab and Both Sided Mihrab in the Mosque, Photos by, 3rd Author

This Mihrab is very simple. It is evident that at one time the Mihrab embodied considerable ornamentation. However, the mihrab is quite large. It currently sees the use and application of light colored tiles. The use of different colored tiles everywhere makes it quite eye-catching. There is no presence of marlons, pillars and patra Pallava in Mihrab.

L. Mimbar::

This mosque has a small mimbar. To the right of the mihrab is this simple mimbar with three steps. The pulpit is painted green.

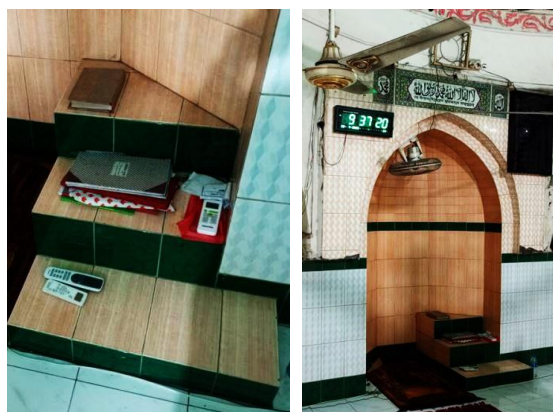


Fig.16 Mihrab In The Mosque, Photos by, 3rd Author

M. Use of niches::

Small and large niches of different sizes are seen in mosques of the Sultanate period. Two niches are seen on both sides of the central Mihrab in Yusufganj Mosque. The height of this niche is equal to the height of the Mihrab. Niche penetration is very low. Wooden shelving system inside the niche. In order to keep the necessary

items. Suchalo Patra Pallava is present at the top of the niche. Niche front paneling. Its interior is painted pink. Currently, the niche is caged.

N. Use of Cornice::

A unique feature of Sultani Mosque is the presence of slightly curved cornice on the outer wall of the mosque. In the Yusufganj mosque, this trend has completely disappeared. Here, reformation over time has simply transformed this curve. This cornice is also adorned with many marlons.



Fig.17 Curved Cornice (Sultani) Converted to Straight Cornice (Mughal), Photographs by 3rd Author.

O. Structural Elements of the Mosque::

A wonderful combination of Islamic architecture and ancient Bengal architecture has been seen in the architecture of the mosques of the Sultanate period. This developed much later, i.e. during the Mughal and colonial periods, through extensive additions. At that time, brick and terracotta were mainly used as the main materials. Yusufganj mosque is basically made entirely of bricks. Here, the presence of terracotta can be seen in the interior. Brick is a unique feature of ancient mosque architecture. This has an aesthetic reflection. Mosques followed square and rectangular designs.



Fig.18 Present Condition of Yousufganj Mosque,It's Effects, Building Materials. Photos by, Author.

Discussion, the mosque is square and has a dome. In the rectangular mosque, there are smaller domes next to the main dome. Although the four torrents around the mosque are a notable feature of the Sultanate period, this is not the case in the Yusufganj mosque. The mihrab and pulpit of the mosque are very simple. Clearly, it appears that there was a spirit of artistic carving which is absent today. The presence of terracotta is not seen on the outer walls, but some floral, vine-leaves and geometric designs can be seen on the inner walls. The arch that leads to the three-way entrance has wooden doors. These doors are basically the Louvre doors of the classical period. The inscription above the door is missing. Yusufganj Masjid has no windows, no minaret but had a courtyard which was later used as a balcony. It can be said that the use of essential colors in the mosque during this period has made the architecture and decoration style of the mosque visible.

P. Chemical Organization of Structural Materials::

Brick was the most common material during the Sultanate period. At that time, brick jointing method or connection technology was quite advanced in construction work. This was unimaginable for that time. A special type of lime-surki, natural extract was used as mortar. Some features of brick jointing method of Yusufganj mosque are highlighted.

A. Application of Versatile Materials:: Brick and Terracotta. At that time, handmade bricks and terracotta were used and applied. There were different specialists in this work.

B. Application of Mortar:: Lime, Surki was used as the main mortar. Surki is basically powdered brick. A smooth mixture was made by mixing lime, lime and burnt earth. This connection is much more sustainable.

C. Waterproof properties:: The solid material made by mixing lime-sourki together is quite waterproof. Tamarind juice was also used as an additional additive.

D. Terracotta Tiles:: Sometimes burnt clay tiles or specially prepared bricks were used to make the brick joint more solid and strong. This would increase the beauty and durability of the structure. The architectural style of the Sultanate period is still of interest to researchers today, as their method of joining bricks made the architecture durable and watertight.

Q. Aesthetic Elements of this Mosque::

Old mosques are the biggest victims of renovations and renovations. Due to many renovations and renovations in this mosque, the antiquity has been lost. Sultanate ornamentation, customs and variations are very much present here. The outer elevation of the mosque has no name, only a sign of decoration. Little ornamentation is visible on the inner elevation. This is visualized using pink color. The outer wall of the mosque does not have the curve of the parapet. It has now been simplified. On the outside the arches are engraved with Islamic calligraphy. It has "Allahu" written in Arabic. The Mihirab of the mosque is currently very plain. There is no ornamentation in the Mihirab. Mihirab has niches on both sides with leaf arches. Niches are arranged like wooden shelves to store many things. However, these mihrab and niches were supposed to be decorated with more flowers, rosettes on vines and spandrels. A lot of turquoise color and tiles are used inside the mosque. The dome features Marlon's presence on the exterior, while the interior features an ornate creeper pattern. A floral design can be seen at the inner apex of the dome. *The inscription of this mosque has not been found.* [21]

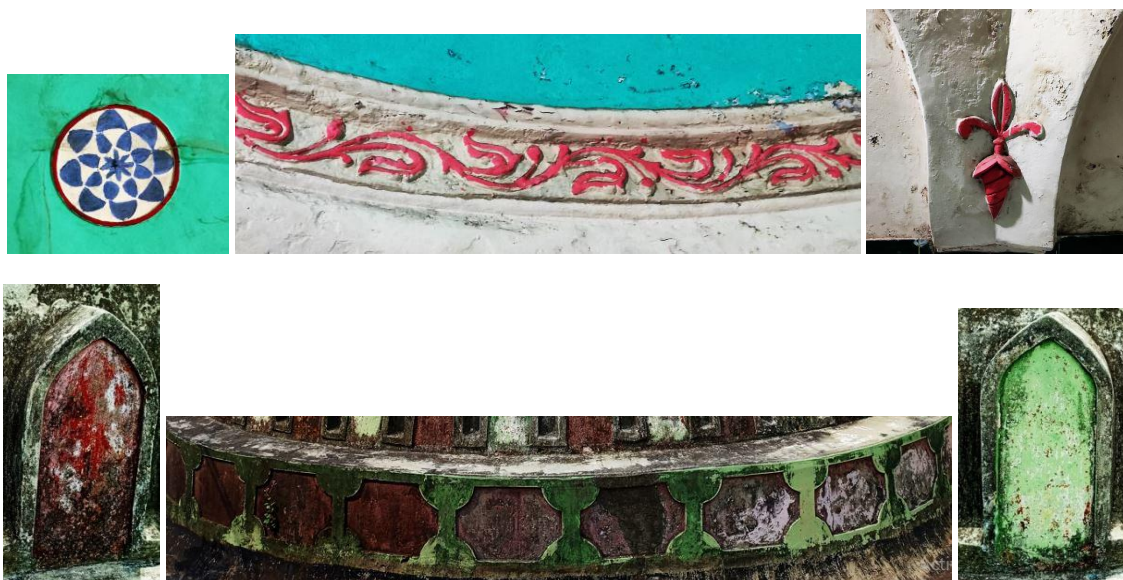


Fig.19 Different Floral Patterns in the Mosque, Photos by, 2nd Author

V. OBSERVATION

A. 1st Phase Changes in Old Mosque (Sultani) ::

Yusufganj mosque is an unprecedented example of Sultanate architecture in its original condition. The mosque is a square. This is a single domed mosque. It is massive and simple. No ornamentation. But, there are no torrents around this mosque. This was clearly seen during the Sultanate period. No marlon around the dome, no dome horn, Andhra marlon, inverted lotus. Made of lime, surki and brick, this mosque had no plaster in the beginning. At that time, it was seen as another mosque built by Khan Jahan Ali. The mosque had a total of five entrances. Three from the east and one each from the north and south. The outer quarter wall had a curved parapet. How many line ups and dances were there in sequence? Andhamarlon was absent above the parapet. There was a road between the mosque and other buildings adjacent to the mosque. Many flowers and fruit trees were arranged around it. There were ponds and ghats adjacent to the mosque. There were many decorations everywhere in the mosque. There were three mihrabs. All in all it was a beautiful and beautiful structure.

B. 2nd Phase Changes in Old Mosque (Mughal)

Important Features of Yusufganj Mosque in Mughal Period: The front porch is extended. This is called Mughal Shan. Back then there were railings on the balcony. Brick-built mosque walls are plastered over. The presence of bricks which could be seen from outside was covered with plaster during the Mughal period. The surface and

interior of the dome are plastered. Giant Dome. Andhra marlon, inverted lotus and pitcher pinnacles are attached to the dome. The dome is superimposed. There were no torrents around the mosque. Three entrances to the east are kept. The north and south entrances are converted into windows. The curvature is simplified at the parapet of the outer quarter wall. Andhamarlon is attached above the parapet. The setback around the original mosque is avoided. The road disappears. A lot of flowers and fruit trees around come down. There were ponds and ghats adjacent to the mosque. There was a lot of decoration everywhere in the mosque. is further increased. A mihrab is kept. The two side mihrabs were converted into niches.

C. 3rd Phase Changes in Old Mosque (Colonial)

Important features of Yusufganj Mosque during the colonial period: : Terraces are provided with roofs. Cast iron beams are attached to it. More space is extended on both the north and south sides. The surface and interior of the dome are painted. Painted over plaster. There were no torrents around the mosque. Three entrances to the east are kept. The windows of the north and south entrances are converted into lattices. The parapet is painted in dark marlon. Andhra marlon on the dome, inverted lotus and pitcher top are all painted on. Full setback is avoided. The area for the new mosque was increased by filling the ponds and Ghats adjacent to the mosque and the mosque was built.

D. Present Conditions of Old Mosque



Fig.20 Present 3D View of Overall Yusufganj Mosque Complex, 3D Modeling by, 3rd Author

E. That's Why Yusufganj Mosque is Called Transitional Mosque

The Yusufganj Mosque is referred to a transitional mosque. That represents an architectural shift from earlier mosque designs (Bengal Sultanate) to more evolved forms seen in later periods (Mughal Periods). This transition often includes a combination of traditional regional styles with influences from new architectural trends, usually resulting from changes in political, cultural, and religious circumstances. The period from the end of the Sultanate period to the beginning of the Mughal period is called the transition period from Sultanate to Mughal. While some of the hundreds of features were carried over from the Mughal era to the Mughal period, it can be seen that attempts were made to modify it according to Mughal intent, as in examples of curved cornices, terracotta ornamentation, corner turrets, and prayer rooms with Sultanate front porches. *The Transitional Period of the Sultanate and Mughal Period is 1500 AD.* [22] Examples include the Kusumba Mosque, Naogaon (1558 AD), Bagha Mosque, Rajshahi (1523 AD), Atiya Jame Mosque, Tangail (1609 AD), Choto Sona Mosque, Chapainawabganj (1519 AD), Kheruya Mosque, Sherpur, Kadam Mubarak Mosque, Chittaganj etc. As for the transitional features, for Yusufganj Mosque, these most probably could be addressed to the following features. It was possible that the mosque could have blending of Bengali style with the Mughal or Sultanate which was introduced later on. This super imposition defines a phase of architectural evolution and change. Something about the layout, material or methods of construction of the mosque depicts evolution from some of the preliminary simple mosque which might have been simply constructed as small square structure with single dome and no minarets at all to more complicated structures which involved larger prayers hall, additional domes and / or minarets at later period of architectural history of Bengal when architectural style of the region started experiencing

This combination of different styles and innovations reflects a transitional phase in the development of mosque architecture in the Bengal region. Yusufganj Mosque is called Transitional Mosque because although this mosque was born during the Sultanate period, it developed during the Mughal period. Yusufganj Mosque was born at the end of the Sultanate period. This original mosque was originally born in the 1500s. It flourished till the 1700s. By the 1800s it had again fallen into disrepair.

F. Anomaly Transitional Mosque

Yusufganj Mosque is called an exceptional transitional mosque. The origin of this mosque was born during the Sultanate period. During the Mughal period, this mosque underwent extensive development. This mosque goes to a certain stage which is called transitional phase. The Sultanate period and the Mughal period have many characteristics and significance. Yusufganj Mosque is missing the Sultanate architecture torrent. Four torrents can be seen in the four corners of each Sultani mosque. On which many ornaments were inserted during the Mughal period. *This masjid is called an exception due to the absence of torrents and looks like a square.* [23] This kind of mosque is not seen anywhere else in Bengal. However, such mosques can be found in ancient Sonargaon. Sultan Jalal Uddin Fateh Shah Durbar Sharif's Mosque, Mohjampur Mosque etc.

VI. CONSERVATION

A. Damage Mapping & Monitoring

Damage mapping is the process of systematically documenting alteration, detailing the extent of physical injury to buildings, and determining the likely reasons behind the progression of harm in which case it applies to the Yusufganj Mosque. Indentation, abrasion and surface roughness are usually used to measure mechanical wave surface properties like cracks, erosion and material loss. The viewpoints of architectural structure include the refurbishment of foundations and walls, domes, and pallets of artwork. Other parameters include relative humidity, growths, and previous interventions with regards to the building environment. It helps in arriving at specific restoration plans so that every restoration is historically correct and structurally feasible allowing the mosque to maintain the original architectural and cultural values.

B. Geo-Technical Investigations on Old Mosque

Geotechnical studies of old mosques are important to determine the state of the building constructions and their foundations. *Geotechnical investigations are very important before any structure can be built.* [24] These investigations are intended to reveal the state of the ground to the proposed structure, which affects its safety and durability. It often includes the geotechnical investigation comprising of soil testings, and boring soil tests as well as geophysical surveys test. For old mosques, which may have been built on varying types of soil, it is important to assess the potential risks posed by soil settlement, erosion, or liquefaction. The foundation's bearing capacity is also evaluated to ensure that it can support the weight of the mosque over time.

Also, geotechnical interventions may reveal potential influence from construction in the neighbourhood, subterranean water movement, or earthquakes, on the stability of the mosque. These investigations offer pertinent information concerning the physical distinctiveness that define a mosque that is important in directing the conservation process to match with the structural requirements of the mosque to warrant a restoration project. Moreover, they can recommend remedial measures which include the following ones: foundation reinforcement and drainage works in case of risks' identification. In general, geotechnical investigations are the crucial elements of long term protection of historical religious structures and their infrastructure from various natural effects.

C. Conservation, Preservation & Renovation

In order to sustain any ancient structure, reconstruction, conservation and maintenance are very important and important. These tasks cannot be handled by a single person. In this regard, the government, ministries, departments, city corporations and local bodies and various NGOs all need coordination. A concerted effort and initiative of all can welcome this great initiative. Yusufganj Mosque is an indisputable sign of the Sultanate and Mughal period. Meanwhile, the mosque is suffering from an existential crisis. The mosque has lost its ancient appeal. The present time is constantly fighting against the weather and adverse environmental conditions. One thing is clear that this mosque is completely hidden from the eyes of experts. Therefore, it becomes difficult to understand the shape of the mosque even from the outside. In order to sustain Yusufganj Masjid, it is essential to follow international norms along with domestic procedures. Everyone must understand the history of this mosque; it is an early and prehistoric mosque, its present condition, detailed reasons for its existence crisis and eventful timeline. If the work of reconstruction, conservation is fully implemented, its maintenance should also be looked at. Maintenance of this mosque in one day or temporary development is impossible. Regular maintenance can sustain this mosque.

D. Old Mosque Development::

Yusufganj mosque has no original appeal. It continues to fight relentlessly. The most common phenomenon in Bangladesh is the gradual addition and subsequent modification of new mosques, ignoring the original mosque. In some cases change is good. However, in the case of these mosques, anomalies are created in the name of change. There should also be specific formulas to change and it is essential to follow whether such formulas have been applied in ancient structures before and are working accordingly. It is a monument of ancient Sultanate period. With which the front porch was extended during the Mughal period. But, it has no aesthetics appeal. So it is necessary to verify exactly how much is needed. In the other sides of the mosque, the extension is made in such a way that there is no setback, there is no light and air circulation system, there is no limit - range. This mosque is caught in the trap of stupid mentality of the people of local mosque committee so that this mosque is shown as a failure. They are pushing towards destruction in the name of conservation. They did not leave even a little space to take photos from outside. Local authorities and religious people are sitting blind today. He pretends not to see.

E. Finding the Inscription & Preserve It

Ancient inscriptions carry a lot of importance. There is no trace of Yusufganj mosque inscription. No one knows about it. Where is it or how is it? Their existence is more or less found in the rich museums of the country. So it is important to search there. The inscriptions of most of the old mosques in Sonargaon have been found like this. Again, their existence has been seen in local historic lakes. The white stone slab found in Yusufganj Mosque. Their cultivation, conservation and maintenance is very important.

F. Archaeological Restoration & Preservation

Due to the need of time, the original mosque was enlarged and converted into a new mosque. But it is not in a systematic way. And this is not what we want. This work is against the rules of the local antiquities department. It is important to restore the heritage by following the rules and regulations of the Directorate of Archaeology. Yusufganj Mosque has been largely destroyed from the outside, but inside, many things remain the same. This mosque has not fallen into such a dilapidated condition as other contemporary structures. Analysing the structural elements of the mosque, it can be seen that it does not have four pillars in its four corners. This square mosque houses a dome and has come to dominate a particular period. Or that is the transitional period of Sultanate and Mughal period. Just as it is important to keep the architectural features of the mosque, it is also important to check its structural elements and keep its main flow intact. Due to carelessness, neglect and lack of culture, the decoration of the mosque is damaged. The simplicity of the Sultanate period gained lustre during the Mughal period. Currently, many parts of this mosque are in a very bad condition in terms of structure, colour and diversity.

G. Design changes and preservation of quality::

The analysis of the design of Yusufganj Mosque shows that there is a clear difference between the original design of the original mosque and the current design. However, the mosque is very small in plan. The original design has entrances on three sides. The eastern entrance is the main road. This cannot be avoided in any way. One entrance each on the north and south sides, these were converted into windows. It became necessary to avoid these windows and incorporate the original arched door design. Because, if it rises from the main mosque, there are balconies on the east, north and south sides of the entrance. The combination with this balcony will be good in connecting the door. The use of wooden louver doors at every entrance would be considered a timely move.

H. Verification And Recommendation of Purity of Materials::

The outer and inner walls of the original mosque are now composed of tiles. In the Sultanate period we see unlined brick insertions, in the Mughal period plasters are seen. So the use of tiles without the use of brick and plaster in such a traditional structure at this time is a completely careless conservation method. Therefore, the purity of the material must be verified. Subject to the conditions of the transitional period, these tiles can be removed and plastered on the walls of the mosque. In some cases, terracotta motifs can be created for special needs. Instead of which mosaic or Chiknia can be used.

I. Building Aesthetics and Ornamentation::

In the early mosques it was essential to have simple ornamentation according to the rules. Again, it was appropriate to have the use and application of this heavy ornamentation during the Mughal period. But, over time, there is no sense of beauty. No creativity and embellishment. The interior of the mosque is rich in ornamentation and motifs. It is important to apply aesthetics for the conservation and development of this mosque. Ornamentation can also be used if needed. The application and use of some terracotta motifs can give

new appeal and life to the mosque. In this regard, some examples of conservation of original mosques may be considered or followed as ideals. For example:: Hajiganj Shahi Mosque, Talla, Narayanganj.

J. Extension of the Mosque and Related Constructions::

The mosque is the house of Allah. Every day many people gather in the mosque for prayers. From time to time the influx of these people increases. Then it is not possible to reduce the space in the small square mosque. In that case, the mosque needs extension. However, it must be done in a systematic way. Not that I built a new mosque over the original mosque. There must be a gap between the original and the present mosque. That would represent two times. The gap can be a tunnel or elastic material. This can be an inverted beam in many cases. The new mosque can be made of modern materials such as glass, iron in keeping with the times. The original mosque can be seen through the glass. Two shows two times. Not only the construction or development of the mosque, but all the supporting functions related to the mosque should also be included. For example - lavatory, toilet etc

K. Need for Documentation

It can be said that documenting historical monuments like the Yousufganj Mosque is significant for several reasons. In the first place, it is useful in retaining the spatial appearance and past architectural features of the structure in question that may otherwise erode over time due to other factors such as weather elements or human endeavor. Documentation focuses on the preparation of records regarding the aspects of the mosque's design, the materials used in construction, processes of construction and the inscriptions and other artwork available on the structure. This information is necessarily inestimable for historians, architects, and other professionals who work in the sphere of monuments' restoration. Second, documentation is very essential in the process of creating appreciation of the value of cultural property among the populace as well as the policy makers. Through the documentation of Yousufganj Mosque it becomes easy to explain its historical value and therefore gain support for its preservation. It also aids in the development of other cultural tourism-related businesses which may offer the needed funds for the preservation of such monuments. Finally, documentation to some degree becomes the backup for any sort of conservation or restoration effort. It serves as a bench mark for conservationists so that any future restoration that may need to be done is done to the best of the current ability and in strict accordance with the original structure. In this respect, precise documentation of the Yousufganj Mosque would mean its mufti – its intricate work could be preserved.”

L. Importance of Conservation of Yousufganj Mosque

The preservation of the Sultanate period Yusufganj Mosque, like other historical structures of the country, has now become an important issue. This mosque has been carrying the historical, religious, social and cultural importance of the area. So its conservation should be an imperative commitment.

A. Historical Value:: This single mosque in Majhipara area represents the Sultanate period in the area since prehistoric times. The identity of Mughal architectural style is very evident around. This mosque has been serving as a historical marker. The preservation and maintenance of this mosque helps researchers and scholars to study the structure, understand the socio-economic development, cultural observations and religious developments of the time.

B. Preservation of Architectural Significance:: Viewing and researching ancient architecture has multifaceted learning. These structures offer many complex shapes that are not seen in normal structures. The mosque's inscriptions provide much unknown information. As well as documentation of construction techniques, including site observations and surveys, art and depth are taught.

C. Preservation of Cultural Heritage:: Yusufganj Mosque analyzes the cultural heritage, religious customs, traditional myths, community history of Majhipara area. Conservation efforts preserve this heritage for future generations, maintaining a real connection to the past.

D. Educational and Research Opportunities:: Historic buildings play a far-reaching role in the field of education and research. They allow scholars, students and tourists to learn about architectural preservation, Islamic history and the wider historical context of the area.

E. Community Identity and Continuity:: Oriental architecture provides community identity. This identity again maintains continuity, providing a sense of pride and belonging.

F. Tourism and Economic Impact:: Well-preserved historical monuments attract tourists, contributing to the local economy. By preserving the mosque, it can become a source of cultural tourism, generate revenue and create awareness about the region's heritage.

M. Conservation Challenges

In order to preserve historical monuments, multi-faceted challenges have to be overcome. Among the challenges faced are lack of financial resources and expertise for conservation work. It is also a complaint that it has not received the attention it deserves compared to other architectures. In our country, these historical structures are

also facing challenges due to environmental degradation and climate effects. Due to natural disasters and calamities, the structures are vulnerable. The Yusufganj Mosque, an old and fragile structure, is particularly vulnerable to such threats. In addition, environmental factors such as humidity, pollution, and vegetation growth can accelerate the deterioration of the mosque's materials, thereby ruining its architectural features. Human activities, such as unauthorized construction, vandalism, and encroachment, are also significant threats to the preservation of the Yusufganj Mosque. The rapid urbanization of Sonargaon and the lack of strict regulations have led to encroachment of historical sites including mosques. This not only compromises the integrity of the monument but also hampers conservation efforts.

VII. CONCLUSION

Bengal's own architectural style combined with the Sultanate style of architecture gave birth to a new entity in Bengal that is called the Bengal Sultanate. Till now, many structures of that time have been preserved. Alochya, a new genre in writing which has long been known but hidden among many, makes its debut. It will be a source of pride for the Bengali. With these distinctive architectural features, intricate decorations, and historical significance, the Sultani mosques are a testament to the lasting legacy of Islamic culture in Bengal. To sustain it for the next generation, the above measures should be taken. And this requires extensive documentation, backup procedures and concerted efforts.

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[23] Photograph of the tomb and mosque of Khundar Muhammad Yusuf, at Sonargaon in Bangladesh, from the Archaeological Survey of India Collections, taken by W.Brennand in 1872. The province of Dhaka was brought under Islamic rule in the 13th century, first by the Delhi Sultanate then by the independent sultans of Bengal, after which it was taken by the Mughals in 1608. Sonargaon was the capital of sultans of Bengal from the 13th century until 1608 when Islam Khan, the Mughal Governor, transferred the capital of the whole province to the nearby city of Dhaka, now the capital of Bangladesh. In the 18th century the city of Dhaka was eclipsed by Murshidabad under the Nawabs of Bengal and its population diminished. In 1858 all the territories held by the East India Company (including Dhaka) were brought under British rule. This is a view of a domed mosque and two tombs with curved, Bengali-style eaves, off to the left. The buildings are described in J. Wise, Notes on Sunargaon, Eastern Bengal (Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. XLIII, part I, Calcutta, 1874), p. 89: '...This latter is called the dargah of Khundar Muhhamad Yusuf. It contains the tombs of the saint, of his father, and of his wife. It consists of two elongated, dome-roofed buildings, each surmounted by two pinnacles covered with or formed of gold...These tombs are destitute of any ornament inside...Close to the tombs is a modern Masjid with a 'kitabah', or inscription, dated A.H. 1112 (A.D. 1700). It was probably erected by the Pir Muhammad Yusuf...' (2018)

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