1.1. Introduction

Architecture is the identity of people and civilizations. Across time and space, communities bounded by geography, ideology, language and spiritual path have created physical structures to represent their culture. A study of history of architecture shows that the meaning of architecture and its relation to human experiences have been expressed in a number of ways in the past. The intellectual and creative development of man manifested itself in the varied nature of architecture in different periods and across different civilizations (Rowland, 1953). Thus, all over the world, various civilizations and cultures have contributed greatly to the art of building construction and this is evident from the large number of historic monuments and archaeological remains.

Every Architectural style reflects an undoubtedly distinctive design element and construction principle that represents in a direct sense, cultural identity and philosophy within a physical context. In order to understand, appreciate and evaluate the architectural quality of a building, there is need to develop a sense of topography, climate, material, structure and proportion of the surrounding physical environment. This sense goes far beyond the building’s ability to serve utilitarian needs. For example, the geometric building design in Greek architecture exhibits a sophisticated aptness, whereas the Roman buildings, based on their advanced technology, are impressive even by modern standards (P. Brown, 1968). In the same way, the typical quality of Sikh architecture lies in the expression of spiritual contents through its Gurudwaras (the Sikh place of worship).

Sikhism, one of the youngest of world’s religions, derives its inspiration from spiritual and historical tradition. The Sikhs are unique people in the religious civilization of the world, practical and progressive in their outlook. They are deeply attached to their faith. They are no more confined to the land of Five Rivers or within the borders of the Indian Union. They have migrated to practically all parts of the world. Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikhism, was to some extent influenced by Kabir and Sheikh Ibrahim Farid (1450 - 1535), descendent of the famous Sufi saint Sheikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar of Pak Pattan whose hymns were later on incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. Significantly, he experienced both Hindu and Muslim religions and it was only after deep contemplation that he evolved his own school of thought as a new dispensation.
M.A. Macauliffe (1909) in his monumental work ‘The Sikh Religion’ writes that unlike the scriptures of other creeds, they (the Sikh scriptures) do not contain love stories or accounts of wars waged for selfish considerations. They contain sublime truths, the study of which cannot but elevate the reader spiritually, morally and socially. There is not the least tinge of sectarianism in them. They teach the highest and purest principle that serve to bind man to man and inspire the believer with an ambition to serve his fellow men, to sacrifice all and die for their sake.

W.O. Cole of the U.K. wrote more than half a dozen books on Sikhism (Cole and Sambi, 1980; Cole, 1984). In 1985, he visited India when communal disturbances created a virtual turmoil and thousands of people were killed. In a keynote lecture by him on the mission and message of Guru Nanak Dev, he gave a message to the Sangat there and through them to the humanity: “Remember the tenets of Guru Nanak, his concepts of oneness of God and Universal Brotherhood of man. If any community holds the key to national integration of India, it is the Sikhs all the way”.

Another scholar, Dorothy (1914) in her book, ‘The Sikh Religion’ writes: “Pure Sikhism is far above dependence on Hindu rituals and is capable of a distinct position as a world religion so long as Sikhs maintain their distinctiveness. The religion is also one which should appeal to the occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the pragmatic standpoint which is a favorite point of view in some quarters, it would rank almost first in the world. The religion of the Sikhs is one of the most interesting at present existing in India, possibly indeed in the whole world. A reading of the Granth strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world religion rather than a reformed sect of Hinduism”.

1.2. Present state of Research on Sikh Architecture

There is very limited literature available on the subject of Sikh Architecture. Moreover, the literature available is primarily concerned with the historical description of Gurudwaras and very little has been written about the Sikh Architecture. Thus, it is difficult to believe that such a style of architecture exists at all. It is ironic that the Sikhs, who are known the world over for their characteristic dynamism, bravery, versatility, and above all their distinct physical and spiritual identity, their architecture has remained unidentified and little known.

In the history of Indian architecture, the contribution of the Sikhs as artists and as patrons has been routinely overlooked. People are fascinated by the incredible design
of the Gurudwaras and keep asking what makes a Sikh architecture? Is it the architecture that is made for and by the Sikhs to serve Sikhism as a religion? If the Sikh architecture exists, then it must be explained and the qualities and features that clearly set and differentiate this architecture apart from other architectural styles be defined.

The main purpose of the early building art in the Indian subcontinent was the representation of the existing religious perception of the people in a tangible form. Therefore early Sikh architecture in the form of various sacred monuments is essentially a representation of its religious beliefs. In the Sikh architecture, a Gurudwara in the opinion of most of the writers perhaps owes much to the Mughal style of architecture, as the artisans of the Punjab of those days had been trained that way (Bhui, 1999; Brown, 1968). However, in due course, it developed certain prominent characteristics, such as the repeated use of chhatris and ornamenting of parapets, corners, angles and other permanent projections.

The word ‘Gurudwara’ is compounded of guru (spiritual guide or master) and dwara (gateway or seat) and, therefore, has an architectural connotation. The Sikh Shrines are by and large commemorative buildings connected with the lives and times of the ten Sikh Gurus, or associated with certain places and events of historical significance. The main requirement being that of a room in which Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy book) can be placed and people can sit as a congregation to listen to the readings from the holy book and sing and recite its verses. In this context, the Gurudwara architecture is not only the abode of God and place of worship, but is also the cradle of knowledge, art, architecture and culture. Gurudwaras have greatly influenced the socio-cultural life of the Sikhs and gave continuity to traditional Sikh values. The evolution of Gurudwara architecture is marked by a strict adherence to the religious consideration, and that has continued over last few centuries.

Most of the historical Gurudwaras were built towards the end of the 18th century and the early 19th century, when the Sikhs gained political power in the Punjab. The period of Sikh rule surely led to the construction of some impressive religious structures. Some of these religious buildings have been rebuilt in recent years, with an extensive use of modern materials and marble for the purpose of embellishment and durability.
Another feature of a Gurudwara is langar (a free community kitchen) for pilgrims, travellers and others. The institution of langar came into being almost with the inception of the faith. Guru Nanak organised one at Kartarpur, where he settled down during the later part of his life. The third Guru Amar Das made it obligatory for anyone coming to meet him for his divine darshan to partake of meal in the common kitchen. Everyone, high or low, including Emperor Akbar, did that. The langar obliterated all distinctions of the rich and the poor, and of caste and creed, and promoted equality, brotherhood and social integration. On a visit to an important shrine, it is an act of piety for a devotee to put in some manual labour in the kitchen, to serve the meals and to take the food, sitting in a row on a mat.

The Gurudwaras generally have provision of the lodging of pilgrims. In a town with a Gurudwara, any Traveller can normally hope to find some food and a place to rest for a night or even longer. A Gurudwara can be spotted from a distance by a yellow triangular flag, called Nishan Sahib, hoisted from a pole in its compound. Water is an integral part of the Sikh Architecture. The use of water as an element of design has been frequently exploited in the Mughal and the Hindu architecture as well, but nowhere has it been used in so lively a manner as in the Sikh architecture. The most respected Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, is placed lower down than the structures in the vicinity, unlike a Mosque or a Temple which are usually placed on raised platforms.

As the Sikhs have moved beyond the Punjab across the oceans to all parts of the world, they have taken some aspects of the Sikh architecture with them. Many Gurudwaras in the west especially in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States were started in rented structures or bought as existing structures. But gradually, they have built impressive Shrines wherever they have settled. Some of these structures have evolved to include the architectural elements of Sikh Shrines in India thus creating a bridge across space and time to the prototypical Sikh architectural masterpiece, the Harmandar Sahib (or the Golden Temple).

The Sikh religious structure is a Gurudwara, a place where the Guru dwells. A Gurudwara is not only the all-important building of the faith, as masjid (mosque) of the Islam and mandir (temple) of the Hindus. It is also, like its Islamic and Hindu counterparts, a key-note of the Sikh architecture. Apart from the buildings of a religious Order, the Sikh architecture has other types of buildings as well such as forts.
(Gobindgarh fort, Amritsar), palaces (Rambagh Palace, Amritsar), bungas (Ramgarhia Bunga) and institutional buildings (Khalsa College, Amritsar) etc. Among the other types of buildings of the Sikh architecture, Khalsa College at Amritsar is the one of most outstanding example. The Baolies (stepped wells) are also common in the Sikh architecture. Baolies have been provided in Sikh Shrines at Katalgarh Sahib, Chamkaur Sahib, and Gurudwara ‘Baoli’ Sahib at Goindwal (in Amritsar district) as well as at Gurudwara Anandgarh Sahib at Anandpur (in Ropar district).

Brick, lime mortar, lime or gypsum plaster, and lime concrete have been the most favoured building materials, and white marble, has also been used extensively in the Sikh Shrines. The white marble has been used for flooring and cladding or decorative material than for meeting structural needs. Nanakshahi (of the times of Guru Nanak) brick was most commonly used for its intrinsic advantages. The brick-tile made mouldings, cornices and pilasters etc. are easy to work into a variety of shapes.

1.3. Review of the Existing Literature:

So far, the study of the art and architecture of the Sikhs has not attracted the adequate attention of the architects, art historians and the critics. Even the scholars of temple architecture of India have not shown serious interest and they have just made passing references to the Sikh architecture. Moreover, most of the references which are available relate to the Golden Temple, Amritsar alone. The only work which gives comprehensive study of the Sikh Architecture is by PS Arshi (1986). He has studied the subject minutely and in detail. Most of the other scholars of the Sikh art and architecture have confined their studies to the architecture of the Golden Temple alone (P. Brown, 1968; Kaur, 1983).

Percy Brown (1968) has done commendable work on the Indian architecture, but he has not explored the subject of Sikh architecture comprehensively. His studies are limited to the architecture of the sacred Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar. He interprets the Sikh architecture as a continuity of Mughal style of architecture. In his view, the architectural features of the Golden Temple, the design, character and fabric of most of these elements, seen in isolation, has strong resemblance to those of various monuments and buildings of the Mughals and Rajputs as could be seen in Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Jodhpur, Bikaner, and Jaipur.

PS Arshi (1986) has devoted a large part of his book on ‘Sikh architecture in the Punjab’ to the growth of the Sikh architecture and its aesthetic excellence. He has
described Sikh Gurudwaras as ‘the last flicker of religious architecture in India’. But while taking the Sikh architecture to be an extension of the Mughal architecture, and as constituting the lifeless repetition of the past, one cannot but appreciate that the Sikh architecture contains many distinctive elements by virtue of which it is original and counts of certain basic constituents. The utilisation of the floating architectural traditions and techniques in terms of the functional requirements of an emergent religion and a community of people aspiring for the rightful place in the society and politics of the country is what one can read in the architectural expressions of the Sikhs. Not only that the concepts of Sangat (congregation) and Pangat (dining together) are vividly characterised through the Sikh Gurudwaras, these otherwise religious buildings had quite often taken the character of military edifices in view of the then politico-religious situation of the country.

PS Arshi (1986) further writes that the Sikh Shrines originated with the idea of devotion. But, in view of the confrontation that the Sikhs had with the Mughals, the fraternity had to acquire some amount of military character. A number of other distinctive characteristics of some of the Gurudwaras also point to the creative genius of the various artisans who contributed, over a period of time, to the Sikh architecture.

Fergusson (1891) on the other hand has considered the Golden Temple as an example of the forms which Hindu temple architecture assumed in the nineteenth century. In his view, many attributes of the architecture of the Gurudwaras could perhaps be related to the pre-existing forms of expression.

Khushwant Singh in his foreword of the book Sikh architecture in the Punjab (Arshi, 1986) has written that everywhere in the world you can spot a Sikh Gurudwara as a building apart from others. It has its own flag mast (Nishan Sahib) draped in yellow or blue with triangular flag with the Sikh insignia fluttering in the breeze. Its dome is different from domes of mosques or Hindu temples, so are its arches, balconies, columns, interiors and the general layout. And yet one sees infinite variations in their architecture.

D. S. Bhui (1999) in his article ‘The Golden Temple: A Synthesis of Styles’ published in an edited work ‘Golden Temple’(Singh Parm Bakhshish et al., 1999), writes that by the time the Sikhs started building their Shrines, the temple plan had completed its architectural evolution. From the simple one roomed structure it had evolved into a four chambered complex consisting of the Bhog Mandir, the Nat Mandir, the
Jagmohan and the Garbha Griha. The evolution of the Shikhara was also complete and the evolved paradigm was being repeated in most of the temples of north India.

Bhui asserts that the general architectural style adopted by the Sikhs is influenced by late Rajput and the Mughal forms. The adaptations are summarily from the architecture of 17th century Rajasthan. The historical buildings of Rajasthan Amber, Bikaner, Jaipur, Udaipur such like, are therefore of great significance. These buildings had been influenced by the Mughal architecture. The buildings constructed during the periods of Mughal influence have architectural features such as pillared kiosks with fluted cupolas, projecting eaves, curved cornices arcuade in shape and balconied windows. Much of this was absorbed by the Sikh architecture. Pilaster is an important element in the Sikh architecture, derived from the Indo-Islamic style. Some buildings such as Jodha Bai’s palace at Fatehpur Sikri, reflects the use of pilasters at the corners.

Madan Jit Kaur (1983) in her The Golden Temple: The Past and Present’ has opined that the architecture of the Golden Temple is marked by the beauty of its superb setting. The overall effect of the temple is very striking. The main shrine raising its head in the middle of a big tank, with its enchanting reflection in the clear water with only a single bridge to reach, imparts the building a heavenly look. The temple was pulled down by the Afghan invaders thrice. However, it was rebuilt with renewed energy each time. It may be, therefore, presumed that the original design has adequately been retained in its present structure barring, of course, minor alterations and architectural decorations. The architecture of the Darshni Deodi (the entrance gate) is extremely impressive. The air-house, on the top of the Deodi, stands modelled on the Rajput and Bengal Mughal chhatri style.

The square building of the main shrine is a two-storeyed structure over which rises a low-fluted majestic dome in copper covered with gold. The dome, which resembles the shape of a lotus, is the crowning feature of the Temple. The petals of the dome present a very harmonious setting. Architecturally, the dome presents neither exclusively, the Hindu form nor the Muslim one. It shows an evolution of its own, called the, synthesis of the two styles. The central dome puts up splendidly sparkling appearance in sunshine.

A number of varieties of smaller domes drawn in a line decorate the parapet. Four chhatris (kiosks) with fluted metal cupolas stand at each corner. The floor of the upper storey is paved with Nanakshahi bricks. The frequent introduction of windows
supported on brackets and the enrichment of arches with numerous foliations on the first floor gives a picturesque appearance.

She further writes that the architecture of the Golden Temple testifies to the fact that the Sikhs enthusiastically patronised the architectural embellishments of their Shrines. The embossed metal work of the Golden Temple is a specimen of the excellence attained by the Sikh craftsmanship in the skilful harmony of brass and copper. The same is the case with frescos, *naqqashi* and applied arts displayed at the temple. The wood-carving and the ivory mosaic work of the temple displays admirable perfection of the Sikh artists in this craft. The Sikh artists had a genuine sense and appreciation of nature in the setting and architecture of the Shrines.

On the whole she argues that the architecture of the Golden Temple is the most celebrated example of religious monument in which all the characteristics of the Sikh style of architecture are fully represented. It is an excellent expression of the doctrines, ethics, world-view and ethos of the Sikh community. It is the achievement of the collective effort and the voluntary services of the Sikhs, the devotees belonging to other denominations and the artisans engaged from outside the Sikh community.

S. S. Bhatti (1995) in his Article, ‘The Golden Temple a Spiritual Marvel in Architecture’, explains that a Gurudwara is built particularly for congregational worship. The building could be as simple as a temporary shack, or a small room in a house, depending upon the resources of the local community. The Sikhs built several beautiful and imposing Gurudwaras some of which can accommodate hundreds of devotees. The Gurudwaras have entrances on all the sides signifying that they are open to one and all without any distinction whatsoever. Many Sikh temples have a *deodi*, an entrance or gateway, through which one has to pass before reaching the shrine. A *deodi* is often an impressive structure with an imposing gateway, and sometimes provides accommodation for office and other use. The visitors get the first glimpse of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* from the *deodi*.

According to Bhatti, the buildings of the Sikh Shrines, when classified according to their plan, are of four basic types square, rectangular, octagonal, and cruciform. On the basis of the number of storeys, the Gurudwaras have structures which may be one, two, three, five or nine storeys high. One comes across several interesting variations of the Gurudwara designs worked out on the permutations and combinations of the aforesaid basic plan and elevation types. As a rule, a *gumbad* (dome) is the crowning
feature of a Gurudwara. Rarely, a shrine may be flat-roofed. Apart from a larger central dome, there are often four other smaller cupolas, one on each corner of an unusually cuboid structure of the Shrines. The parapet may be embellished with several turrets, or small rudimentary domes, or replicas of arcades with domical toppings, or strings of *guldastas* (bouquets) or similar other embellishments. Minarets - the symbols of royalty commonly used by the Mughals and Rajputs are rarely seen in a Gurudwara.

A recurrent element of the Gurudwara design is the preferred usage of two storeys to gain sufficient elevation for the shrine. However restrained the design may be the elevation is usually treated by dividing the facade in accordance with the structural lines of columns, piers and pilasters, with vertical divisions creating areas of well-moulded surfaces. The most important division is, of course, the entrance which receives more ornate treatment than other areas. The treatment often creates bas-reliefs of geometrical, floral and other designs. Where magnificence is the aim, repose work in brass or copper gilt sheathing is often introduced with a note of extravagance.

Brick, lime mortar as well as lime or gypsum plaster, and lime concrete have been the most favoured building materials, although stone, such as red stone and white marble, has also been used in a number of Shrines. The latter found use more as cladding or decorative material than for meeting structural needs for well over two hundred years. Nanakshahi (from the times of Nanak) brick was most commonly used for its intrinsic advantages. It was a kind of brick tile of moderate dimensions used for reinforcing lime concretes in the structural walls and other components which were generally very thick. The brick-tile made mouldings, cornices and plasters etc. are easy to work into a variety of shapes. More often than not, the structure was a combination of the two systems, viz, trabeated (post and lintel), and arcuated (based on arches). The surfaces were treated with lime or gypsum plaster which was moulded into cornices, pilasters, and other structural as well as non-structural embellishments.

Bhatti (1995) argues that the Sikh architecture is a lively blend of the Mughal and Rajput styles. Onion-shaped domes, multi-foil arches, paired pilasters, in-lay work, frescoes, etc. are of Mughal extraction, more specially of Shah Jahan’s period, while balconied windows, bracket supported eaves at the string-course, *chattris*, richly ornamented friezes, etc., are derived from elements of Rajput architecture such as is seen in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and other places in Rajasthan. The Sikh architecture
expresses the characteristic resilience of the Sikh spirit and its inviolable freedom to deviate from the artistic exuberance, aesthetic magnificence and creative fullness. The curious mannerist emphasis on creative freedom makes the Sikh architecture the Indian Baroque, with its characteristics of sculptured skylines, variegated wall treatments, interesting juxtaposition, and disposition of recesses and projections - at once bold, vigorous, and tastefully sumptuous. Water becomes an integral of the Sikh architectural design, as in the Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar or Darbar Sahib at Tarn Taran, and not merely an add-on to the main shrine.

From this critical review of the existing literature on the Sikh Architecture, it is clear that most of the authors have just taken up the architecture of the Golden Temple as a case study for understanding and explaining the Sikh architecture as a whole. They have not taken pains to go into the detail of other religious structures or Shrines of the Sikhs which are scattered all over the Indian sub-continent in general and the Punjab in particular. Only PS Arshi (1986) has discussed the cases of some other Gurudwaras, but the detailed analysis of the various architectural elements of the Sikh architecture has not been studied by him. This is partly due to the fact that he is not a professionally trained Architect though he has expertise in the field of Fine Arts. So, there is an urgent need to expand and update the study done by PS Arshi by covering other historically important Gurudwaras as well as to take up an indepth analysis of architectural elements of the Sikh Gurudwaras.

Moreover some other important aspects which are found lacking in most of the above mentioned writings relate to the quality of the drawings of various Gurudwaras and their architectural elements. Most of the available drawings are of poor quality and in sketchy form. The drawings are the language of architectural expression without which we cannot identify and explain any architectural style. Therefore, the emphasis of this study was to, cover prominent Gurudwaras of historical importance, apart from the Harmandar Sahib, and to present the proposed work with a good quality of drawing work and detailed analysis of various architectural elements to bring out the uniqueness of the Sikh style of architecture.

1.4. Rationale of the Study
Art and architecture for long have acted as vehicles of expressing identity of a particular community or culture through their particular styles and characteristics. An architectural style helps in maintaining historic continuity within the boundaries of a
particular culture, while on the other hand it also confers distinctiveness to the form in comparison to the surrounding built environment. By and large, throughout the world, religion has inspired architecture which is evident from the archaeological records simply because religious monuments were often built from more permanent building materials.

The Gurudwaras are, as such, an integral part of the Sikh religious and social life. The Gurudwaras are more than a place of worship. They serve as centres of education, meeting place and a rest house for the travellers in addition to embodying the Guru Granth Sahib. Though, the Sikh rule lasted for less than a century in the sub-continent, there are hundreds of Gurudwaras all over Pakistan, India, and in other neighbouring countries.

The study of the art and architecture of the Sikhs has, unfortunately, remained a subject of unconcern for architects, art historians, and critics. Awareness and education alone can assure the continuation of our link with the religious symbols and icons of our past. Once we recognise their true importance, we may move into action preserving and integrating them into the future fabric of our towns and cities as major cultural and visual anchors. By knowing our own legacy, creativity and spirit, the future generations too, may be inspired to add their own signature to the future survival of our historical architecture. Since little work has been published on the Sikh architecture, the present work may prove to be a pioneering effort by an architect and of a great value to the scholars of other fields as well.

In this ever reducing global village, the acute identity crisis faced by the minority cultures can only be countered by revitalising and preserving their traditional forms and resources. The study of the art and architecture of the Sikhs has, unfortunately, remained neglected by the architects, art historians and the critics.

This study is concerned with a critical examination of the living testimonies of architectural developments of the Sikhs. It attempts to provide the unexplored knowledge and methods for promoting critical inquiry into the history and theory of the Sikh architecture. This study attempts to produce informed insights into the varied factors and influences that have shaped design decisions over time. There is a need for preserving our tradition, and for extending it through a continued process of modernisation. Undoubtedly, there is an urgent need for exhaustive documentation, in-depth study and thorough research in the field of the Sikh Architecture.
1.5. Aims of the Study

This dissertation focuses on the study of the Sikh Gurudwaras. There has been a little research into Sikh Architecture and this subject is still unexplored. This study attempts to gather the existing research that has been undertaken in this field, and potentially contribute to the existing body of knowledge through an architectural analysis of Gurudwaras.

This dissertation presents the philosophical and practical aspects that govern the construction of a Gurudwara building with the aim to understand how it influenced the form of the Gurudwara in its evolutionary process. Gurudwara construction, since the Guru period, has been studied not only though secondary sources but also through a documentary study of Gurudwaras. Finally the dissertation aims to present an analysis of the evolution of Sikh Shrines, various forms, and architectural elements used in Sikh Shrines taken from different time periods.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study would be to ascertain and assess, on the basis of documentary research, the actual contexts within which a given building or the architectural phenomenon would have originated in its time and space as well as have exhibited any subsequent changes over time. A critical examination of past and present bodies of knowledge on various aspects of architecture may be advanced for the purpose of working out and testing new theoretical bases for the Sikh architecture. Main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand the basic concept of Sikhism and its relevance to the Sikh Gurudwaras.
- To trace the development of the Sikh architecture since its inception with examples spread all over the Punjab.
- To study the architectural forms and dimensions of various Sikh Shrines of historical importance to prove the emergence of new architectural style.
- To identify and establish the architectural character of the Sikh Shrines.

1.7. Hypothesis

- Sikh Architecture as a distinct and unique style of architecture.
1.8. Research Methodology:
The flow chart (Figure 1.1) clarifies the various aspects of the study and the methodology followed for the study.

This dissertation is based on the studies not only though secondary sources but also through a documentary study of Gurudwaras. This dissertation outlines the main elements and principles of building design of Gurudwara with a view to give an overall picture of an architectural style which can undoubtedly be called the Sikh architecture. Analysis of the elements of Sikh architecture has helped to identify and establish its distinctiveness as a new form and style of architecture. It attempts to bring
out the differences in the form and scale of the Gurudwaras, highlighting that some of the elements of Gurudwaras may differ across regions, but all of these are based on a single philosophy of design. Things have been referred to as observed onsite visits during the course of study, and from references of historians and scholars of Sikh religion. This study involves critical evaluation of the existing literature on the Sikh Shrines and other religious structures of the Sikhs and cross-links it with the case studies of historically important Gurudwaras to identify key elements of the Sikh architecture.

The research is focused on studying the forms and architectural elements of the Gurudwaras across Punjab. This study has also adopted the method of building surveys and documentation. Forty five Gurudwaras selected across Punjab were documented and analysed. The common characteristics of all these Gurudwaras have been discussed to provide a better understanding of their architectural styles and the factors which influenced their style.

A study of the Gurudwaras situated in East Punjab (Indian Punjab) and their various other elements along with the forms and sizes in which they evolved over last five centuries forms the basis for understanding the Sikh Architecture. It carries out an analysis of the drawings and the information documented during this period of study.

1.9. Scope of the Study

The scope of this dissertation is mainly to look into the aspects of the origin of Gurudwaras and their development, the philosophy which created these structures and the way in which this philosophy can be interpreted for better understanding of the structures, and the time and society that created them. This study discusses the various architectural elements, dimensional analysis, forms and shape of the Sikh shrines. However, Sikh Gurudwaras located outside East Punjab (Indian Punjab) as well as in foreign countries are out of the scope of this research work.

1.10. Research Questions

Following research questions were analysed before the finalisation of thrust area.

1. Why do we need to take Sikh Architecture as a viable unit of study?

2. What is lacking in the existing studies on the proposed area of research conducted so far.

3. How is Sikh philosophy different from other religions of the region?
4. Do we see any impact of the Sikh philosophy on the evolution of Sikh Architecture?

5. What were the Socio political exigencies responsible for the development of the Sikh architecture?

6. How has the Sikh architecture evolved through different phases of Sikh history?
   i. The Guru period (1499-1708)
   ii. Post Guruperiod (1708-1748)
   iii. The Misl Period (1748-1799)
   iv. The period of Sikh Rule (1799-1849)
   v. The colonial Punjab (1849-1947)
   vi. Post independence period (1947 till date)
   vii. Sikh Diaspora and the Sikh Shrines

7. What are the broad categories of the structures constructed by the Sikhs?

8. What were the needs/thoughts behind the construction/ creation of such structures?

9. What are the elements which the Sikhs have inherited from the continuing or existing architectural styles of the period?

10. What are the elements and features which clearly differentiate the Sikh architecture from the rest of the architectural styles then prevalent?

11. Who were the artists and patrons of the Sikh architecture and what was their socio-economic and political background?

12. What are the current trends and practices of the Sikh Architecture?

13. What impact do we see of globalization on the Sikh Architectural pretentions?

1.11 An Overview

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Brief History of the Sikhs

Chapter 3: Evolution of the Gurudwara

Chapter 4: Art Work in Historical Sikh Shrines
Chapter 2: Brief History of the Sikhs

This chapter gives an overview of the Sikh history starting from inception of the Sikhism till the post-independence period. Sikh history is studied by dividing it into five phases as follows:

- The Guru Period (A.D. 1469-1708)
- The Post Guru Period (A.D. 1708-1748)
- The Misl Period (A.D. 1748-1799)
- The Sikh Kingdom (A.D. 1799-1849)
- The British Period (A.D. 1849-1947)
- The Post Independence Period (A.D. 1947-till date)

Chapter 3: Evolution of the Gurudwara

In the initial phase of Sikhism, the abode of the Guru, where sangat congregated was called Dharmsal. Historically, Gurudwara succeeded the Dharmsal. The Sikhs started with very simple abode may be huts or other such types of dwelling units, which had no particular architectural merit. As the earlier structures were simple, small and constructed from less durable materials such as timber, mud brick and plaster the early examples of Sikh architecture and art have mostly disappeared. There is hardly any authentic reference material as well as documentary proof of their shape, size and style. But once we leave this primitive starting point, we find that their religious architecture developed along paths of their religious beliefs (Brown, 1999). This chapter tries to trace out the idea of Dharmsal and its historic growth and evolution as a Gurudwara. This chapter also discusses the case study of the old Shrines from the secondary sources.

Chapter 4: Art Work in Historic Sikh Shrines

This chapter throws light on the various types of art forms used in the Sikh Shrines. It was during Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s rule that peace prevailed in Punjab after a long period of turbulence. When peace and normalcy returned to public life in the region, it brought wealth and prosperity to the residents. With this, art received
lavish patronage. During the period of Sikh supremacy in Punjab, the art and cultural atmosphere drew master craftsmen from different areas and from various religions.

This chapter takes a close look at the various art forms which add to the ornamentation of the Golden Temple in particular and other Sikh Shrines in general. The Golden Temple was gilded under the patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh during his reign. Apart from gilding, the various art forms which added to the ornamentation of the Sikh Shrines include *jaratkari* (inlaid stone), *mohrakashi* (frescoes), *gach* work, *naqqashi* work, *tukri* work and gold embossing.

**Chapter 5: Case Studies of the Historical Sikh Shrines**

This chapter discusses the case studies of forty five Sikh Shrines based upon primary research and documentation and tries to bring out the concepts that have been adopted for the construction of the Sikh Gurudwaras. There are numerous varieties and types of the architectural elements, the literal description of which is insufficient to express properly the architectural ideas, forms and imageries they represent. The most consistent of Sikh architectural vocabulary is represented by the Gurudwaras across Punjab. This chapter attempts to describe, document and analyse the important Sikh Shrines, architectural features and symbolic meaning of the structure. Thus, it presents conclusions from the primary surveys, historical, and formal information.

**Chapter 6: Results and Analysis**

This chapter analyses the various architectural elements and features of the Sikh Shrines. It also discusses and analyses the results of the dimensional study of the Gurudwaras, materials and construction techniques used by the Sikhs.

**Chapter 7: Conclusions and Future Directions**

This chapter presents the research formulations or findings and discusses the prospects for further studies in the field of sacred space or architecture of the Sikhs.