



PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF AYODHYA CITY

Prahlad Madhukar

Research Scholar, Department of Hotel Management, Vivekananda Global University, India

Dr. Vikas Rana

Associate Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Vivekananda Global University, India

Dr. Tarun Bansal

IHM Lucknow

Senior Lecturer, IHM Locknow

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ABSTRACT

The capacity of people to preserve their individuality and distinction is essential to the development of a diverse and abundant cultural heritage." The tangible objects and intangible qualities of a civilisation that have been handed down over the years are collectively referred to as the cultural legacy of that civilization. The individuality of a civilization can be characterised by both tangible and intangible features, as well as by products made of physical materials. Ayodhya is a historic city that is abundant in cultural legacy, and its environment, in contrast to the environments of many other cities in India, possesses a personality that is uniquely its own. A cultural sacredscape, the city is home to people adhering to a wide range of religious traditions and belonging to a variety of groups. The qualities of a town or city are determined by both its physical and social fabric, and these traits are most clearly felt in the public places of the town or city. The town's streets are an example of this type of public space; they prominently reflect the town's cultural past. The goal of this article is to investigate the effects that the cultural heritage of the city has had, both positive and negative, on the city's social and physical fabric. It may be done by analysing a street located in the historic district of the city and assessing the influence that the city's cultural history has had on that street. As a result, the purpose of this article is to make an attempt to build a relationship between the cultural legacy and the physical and social fabric.



1. I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous researches have been conducted on the cultural and sacred landscapes of Ayodhya, as well as their implications on the city's economics, politics, and tourism, amongst other domains of influence. These studies have found that Ayodhya's holy landscapes have a significant economic impact. There has not been nearly enough study carried out so far to develop a comprehensive grasp of the ways in which the city's cultural history influences both the city's physical and social fabric. Cognitive maps were crafted as a reaction to a survey that was based on the imageability and perceptions of Ayodhya and were included in one of the publications that were published by Singh, Rana P.B. and Kumar, Sarvesh (2018). The survey was based on the city of Ayodhya. This survey was carried out with the help of Kevin Lynch's imageability hypothesis, which was developed over the course of the years. The constructed environment is influenced by a wide variety of components of culture, both those that can be seen and those that cannot. On the other side, there hasn't been any significant research done to show that cultural heritage and the built environment are connected. In Appadurai's (1987) words (found on page 14), "with the possible exception of the railway, streets capture more about India than any other setting." The streets of India's cities are used for many aspects of daily life, including eating, sleeping, working, moving, celebrating, and praying. "Indian streets bring people together socially and provide a physical setting for socio-economic activities" (Jacobs, 1993). This is according to research done by Jacobs. According to the studies that Jacobs did, this is the case. As a direct result of this, an exhaustive inquiry is carried out, and as part of this research, it is decided to look at the impact that culture and heritage have had on one of Ayodhya's streets.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted in two independent stages one after the other. The first thing that has to be done is a comprehensive research project on the community, which can be done by employing resources from the internet and already published works. Comprehensive investigation of the terms of the agreement based on

1. History of the settlement
2. Architecture and identity



III. COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT STUDY

History of Ayodhya:

"The people of the Soorya race selected the city of Ayodia as the location for their first permanent settlement. Even in modern times, the region is most frequently referred to by its abbreviated name, which is Oudh. According to James Todd (1873), "overgrown greatness" was a quality that was present in all of the ancient towns located in Asia, and the greatness of Ayodia was enormous. Since the year 800 BCE, the holy city of Ayodhya has been home to people nonstop. It is known for its rich history. It can also be referred to as the Sarayu River. It is situated on the right bank of the Ghaghara River. It is regarded as a sacred location not just by believers of Hinduism, but also by followers of a number of other religions that are practised in India, such as Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam. (Refer Fig 1) Some of the remnants of this culture's diverse history may still be observed today, when it existed in ancient times.

Time Period	Events
	Tharus (Tribals)
	Rajputs
7th - 6th century BCE	References in Buddhist texts such as Digha Nikāya; marketplace
5th century BCE	Annexed into kingdom of Magadha; Commercial centre
3rd century BCE	Part of Maurya Empire; Trade through river
2nd century BCE	Sunga inscriptions found
CE 150-300	Kushana and Mitra dynasty
CE 4th - 5th cent.	Gupta Empire; Jainism spreads

CE 320	Chandragupta I
CE 455-67	Ayodhya made capital; Ghats developed
CE 11th cent	Pilgrimage routes established
CE 1192	Period of Muhammad Ghouri
CE 1226	Delhi Sultanate; Capital of Oudh Garrison and administrative town
CE 1527	Invasion of Babar;Mughal rule
CE 1658 - 1707	Aurangzeb's rule



Top to down: Fig. 1 is a timeline that was produced using information from Rana P. B. Singh's work "Hum sab Ayodhya." Detail from a folio in the Ramayana series dating to the reign of Akbar in the years 1587–588 AD Article titled "Hum sab Ayodhya" (source). Hieun Siang has successfully returned to China, as shown in Figure 3. He was one of the numerous travellers to Ayodhya who had written about the existence of Buddhism in Ayodhya. He had written about the presence of Buddhism in Ayodhya. The article may be found at Hum sab Ayodhya. Figure 4: The Valmiki Bhavan, where the whole Ramayana tale has been engraved on the building's walls The author is the source .

Architecture and Identity:

Ayodhya had grown into a lively town by the time the nineteenth century was nearing to a conclusion. It had a sizable commercial spine that ran roughly north to south, linking all of the main nodes, and terminated at the bank. The multiple architectural styles that are contrasted with one another in Ayodhya's structures and its relics offer a clear evidence of the

city's rich past. Ayodhya was ruled over by a number of different monarchs at various points in time, and this is reflected in the city's architecture. A substantial number of heritage structures can be seen dotting the skyline of the city, including examples of the Sharqi architecture, the Awadhi style, and Bengal Chhatris (Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 5 is an elevation of the Ram ki Paidi ghat that illustrates a variety of architectural styles. Hum Sab Ajodhya was the source, and the author made some additions. Figure 6 shows domes representing a variety of architectural styles that can be seen in the skyline. Figure 7: A wall painting showing Lord Saryu, located close to the riverbank. A view of Lakshman Ghat may be seen in Figure 8. Author is the source.

It is marked by its physical and intangible cultural history, which the people of Ayodhya continue to practise today, and the city's identity is that of a sacredscape, which transcends all religions. This identity is what gives the city its status as a sacredscape. The name of the city, which originates from the Sanskrit term ayodhya, literally translates to "city of devotion." It is believed that between 10 and 20 million people visit the city each year, solidifying its position as a prominent focus for religious tourism. While they are carried through time by the city's architecture, they do their best to find their ancestors so they may learn more about their family history. When people visit this site, it's possible that they'll develop a greater



connection not just to their own lineage but also to the culture in which they were reared. The second stage, which is completed as part of the main survey, is the investigation and examination of the many aspects, both physical and sociological, of one of the most important streets in Ayodhya. The selected street is found in one of the city's heritage cores (see figure 9) and goes along the city sacredscape. The sacredscape is made up of a number of different structures, such as temples, chavnis, and other buildings. part of the criteria for the study were derived from the paper "Identifying and measuring urban design qualities" which was authored by Reid Ewing, Otto Clemente, Susan Handy, Ross Brownson, and Emily Winston. This publication served as the foundation for part of the criteria for the study

Urban level study of street based on:

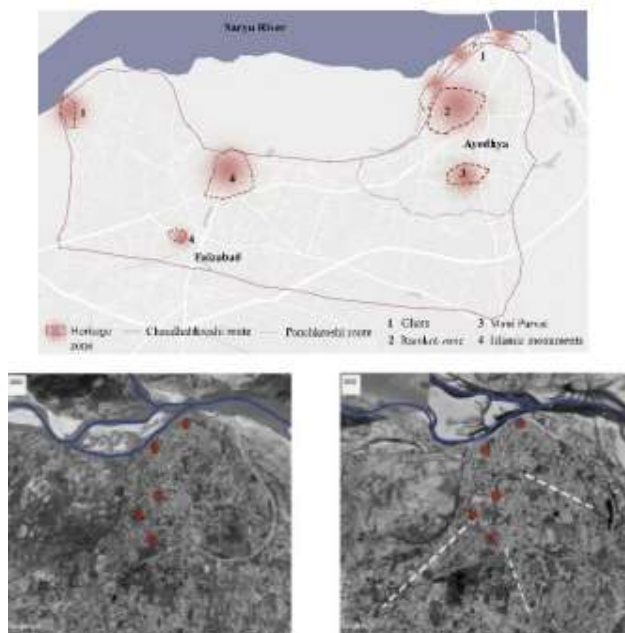
1. Morphology
2. Planning
3. Street network and accessibility
4. Building typology
5. Complexity
6. Image ability
7. Functions/ Activity Pattern
8. Informality
9. Transparency

IV. URBAN STREET STUDY AND ANALYSIS

Morphology:

Because of the natural contours of the land, the settlement eventually sprang up on the bank of the Sarayu river. Figure 9 on the map outlines each of the city's key heritage centres, which can be located across the city. The city is made of four primary heritage centres. Within Zone 1, you'll find the Riverfront Ghats. Within Zone 2, you'll find Ramkot. Within Zone 3, you'll find Mani Parvat. Within Zone 4, you'll find Gulab Bari and Bahu Begam Makbara. It has been observed that the city has developed around the heritage centres, and this phenomenon connects with the existence of a number of different religious groups inside each heritage zone. There are five distinct pilgrimage routes that pass through the city. These routes are known as Panchakroshi yatra, Chaudahkroshi yatra, Chaurasikoshi yatra, and Antargrahi

yatra. Ramkot ki Parikrama is the fifth pilgrimage path. Along these pathways of pilgrimage, a wide variety of houses of worship of various denominations have been built. Because of this, the pattern that had been established for the evolution of the town has been disrupted. (Respectively Shown in Figures 10 and 11).



Starting from the top (going anticlockwise) Figure 9 is a map that illustrates the many historic centres located throughout the community. Rana is the source. P.B. Singh and the inclusion of the author Figure 10: The Google Earth map from the year 2003 The author is the source. Figure 11 is a depiction of the progression pattern using Google Earth in the year 2020. The author is the source.

Planning:

The study focuses on a roadway that may be located inside historical Zone 2 (Ramkot) (see Fig. 9) and that connects three key cultural sites. This roadway is the focus of this investigation. The Dashrath Mahal, the Raj Dhvar Mandir, and the Ram Janmabhoomi are the names of these three structures. The street network has been built in such a way that the positions of the heritage sites correspond to the descriptions given in the Hindu epic known as the Ramayana (Fig. 12). The Raj Dhvar Mandir (Figure 13), which can be located in the midst of the city, is considered to be the entry to all of these monuments because of its central placement in the city and acts as the city epicentre. This is owing to the fact that the Raj Dhvar Mandir serves as the city core. This serves as a point of reference, and other monuments are located to the south and west of it respectively. The planning of the

settlement is influenced by the culture, which in turn results in an impact having that effect.

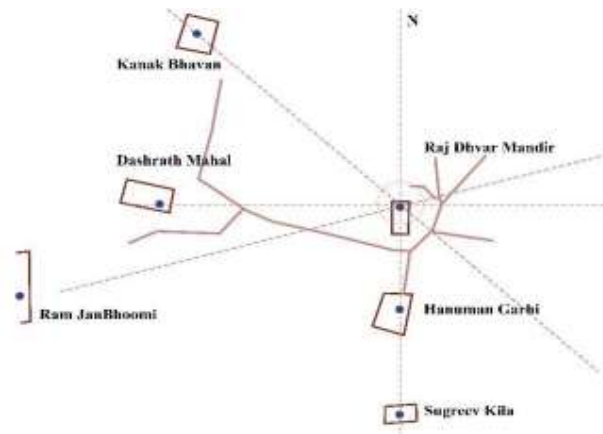


Fig. 12 The locations of Ramkot's historically significant sites are shown on this map. The author is the source.



From left Fig 13 Hanuman garhi viewed from raj dhvar mandir. Figure 14: The view from the Raj Dhvar Mandir looking down the street that leads to Dashrath Mahal. The author is the source.

Street Network and Accessibility:

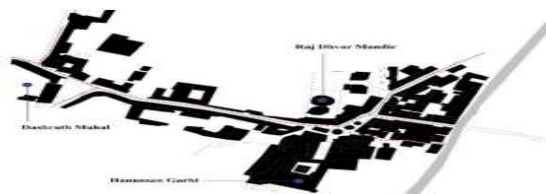


Fig 15. Figure ground map of the area of study. Source: author



From left: Archway leading from Chowk Ayodhya Road to the street shown in figure 16. Fig 17 Archway heading to Hanuman garhi. The author is the source.

On the figure ground map of the study area (Fig 15), it is clear that there are no open areas in the region that is immediately close to the roadway. This is something that is reflected in the reality of the situation. The figure ground map (Fig. 15) of the area under investigation indicates that the region immediately surrounding the street is densely populated and does not contain any open areas. This is something that can be observed by interested parties. Figure 16 illustrates a path that may be taken to go to the Hanuman garhi from the Chowk Ayodhya Road. On its journey to the Hanuman garhi, which is where two further streets intersect to form a node, this route winds its way through the residential areas as well as the religious buildings. Because of this, nodes are formed around heritage sites, which brings attention to the significance of the areas in question. Each of the roads that lead to the monuments has its own elaborate archway at the beginning of it, which helps to highlight and differentiate the journey. Because of this, the configuration of the streets has evolved throughout the course of time to take into account the history of the area.

Building Typology:



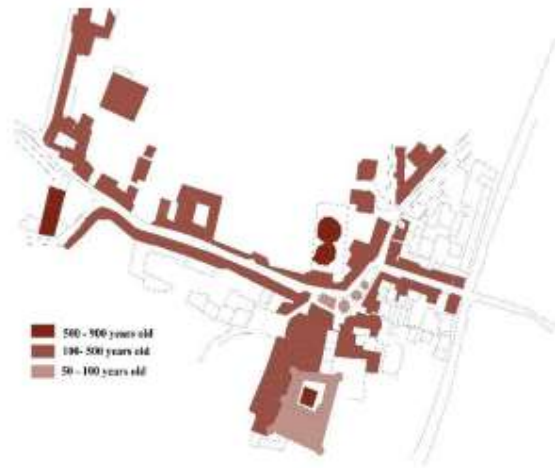
Fig 18. Building Typology map. Source: author



From left (clockwise Fig 19 Raj Dhvar Mandir Fig 20. Chavni Fig 21. Commercial zone

Source: author

The great majority of the plots that are situated in the region surrounding the ancient monuments are owned by a variety of distinct temple trusts. Every one of these temples has retail space on the front façade of their buildings, and they rent that space out to local companies. It has been three hundred years since this method was first implemented, and during that time, the shops have been handed down from one generation to the next. The utilisation of such a strategy has ensured that the lifespan of the buildings would be preserved in its entirety. The shops along the street create a bustling environment and serve as a bazaar that links the ancient attractions in the area. Homes that also function as chavnis may be found tucked away in the back of these places of commerce (see Figure 21), and these chavnis are religious communities. These are locations that are accessible to members of the public, but the only way to get there from the street is through corridors that are far smaller. The most essential element of the architectural form in Ayodhya is a courtyard home, which fits to the climatic needs and cultural standards of the area. This is because Ayodhya was built on the site of an ancient temple. A temple acts as the focal point of the courtyard, and the courtyard itself functions as a gathering place for people who are gathered for festivals as well as those who are there to pay their respects at the temple. Nearly all ashrams and chavnis (the Hindu term for "houses") include a temple on the premises, and many temples are built in the shape of homes, with the major chamber of the temple being devoted to the deity who is believed to reside there permanently. The cultural practises of that place gave rise to a one-of-a-kind architectural typology that mixes public and private functions inside the same space. These functions are combined since the space is used for both public and private purposes. This kind of structure can be used for either public or private purposes.

Complexity:**Fig 22. Building age map. Source: author****Fig 23,24 Details of Raj Dhvar Mandir. Source: author**

The findings of the building age map, which can be shown in Figure 22, indicate that the area that is the subject of the inquiry does not contain any structures that are younger than fifty years old. Although they date back more than 900 years, the historical monuments have evolved significantly throughout the course of that span of time. These monuments, which are a living testimony to the nation's long history and culture (Fig23,24), have a wide range of architectural styles, which results in a juxtaposition of aspects that provides the building



with a greater degree of complexity. It is currently recognised as having a unique character and personality that sets it apart from other streets as a result of the complexity of its layout. Because there has been no change in ownership for a lengthy amount of time, these historic buildings have not been taken down, and some of them have even been reconstructed according to their original specifications. This is because there has been no transfer of ownership for a considerable amount of time.

Imageability:

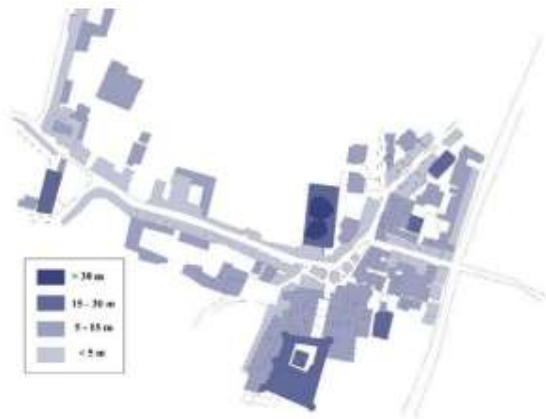


Fig 25: Building Heights map. Source: author

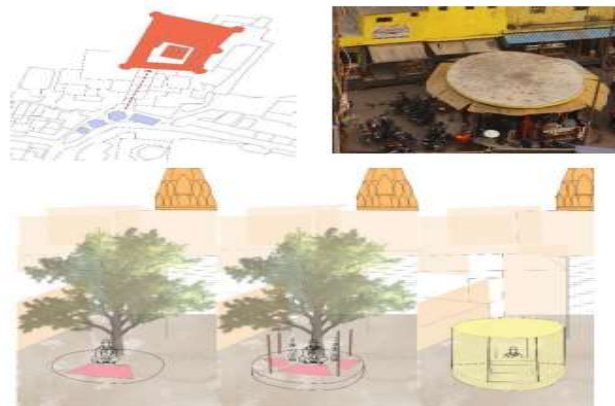


From top: Fig 26: Raj dhvar mandir seen from the street. Fig 27: View of Hanuman Garhi Source: author

Due to the fact that they are taller than the other buildings in the city, the historical monuments dominate the skyline. According to the Ramayana, the Raj Dhvar Mandir is the tallest structure in the city, and the structure that has been built lives up to the expectations set by that description. There are no other structures in the city that can compare in size or stature to the ancient monuments, and their majesty can be seen and felt all around the city (Figure 26). The structures that are located behind the street frontage tend to have greater heights than those that are located in front of it. The structures that are located closest to the street have the shortest heights. There is a straightforward connection between this and the history of the neighbourhood. Because of this, the imageability of the roadway has been improved, and members of the public who walk along it will have access to a wider range of vantage points than before.

FUNCTIONS/ACTIVITY PATTERN:

A node with three peculiar circular stores that serve dual duties as a public and a commercial space may be seen at the entrance of the temple Hanuman Garhi. This node serves as a landmark for visitors. Three hundred years ago, these areas were tree positions where merchants sold their wares, according to the story that was taken down from one of the businesses. After some time, the behaviour evolved into a custom, and in the years that followed, a significant number of people migrated into these regions and erected poles to mark the boundaries of their domain. Since its founding, the retail establishments have been run by members of the same family over many generations. A decade ago, it was converted into shelters, and each individual merchant who had a shop was granted the same clearly demarcated perimeter around their property (Fig 30). This is considered to be a part of the area's intangible history, and it has had an impact on the built fabric of the street as a result.



From the top, moving clockwise: a map indicating Hanuman Garhi and its façade may be found in figure 28. Figure 29: Commercial establishments arranged in a circle. Figure 30 shows the development of circular commercial stores over time. The author is the source.

2.8 INFORMALITY

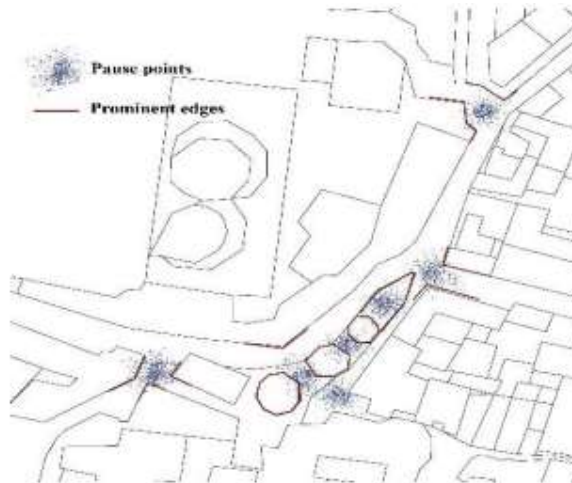


Fig 31: A map displaying the boundaries and the pause points that surround them. The author is the source.



Fig 32: Around the edge of shops. Source: author



Fig 33: Edge of a street. Source: author

As can be seen on the map (Figure 31), the open areas that run along the margins of the business buildings serve as halt places and locations for the public to engage in social interaction with one another. This is because the open areas are next to the commercial buildings. The boundaries that have been developed on the street as a consequence of the influence of culture and heritage also have an effect on the social fabric of the city. This is because culture and heritage play a role in the establishment of these edges. They not only provide the passengers with a space to relax and interact socially with one another, but they also help to alleviate the boredom that is caused by the lengthy stretch that is travelled continuously. Introverted borders of the street (Figure 33) are used as doorways to the preceding residences and temples. As a consequence of this, they do not interrupt the flow of public traffic to the cultural institutions, which allows for an easy flow of circulation across these streets. The street has been given a more relaxed atmosphere as a result of the borders and gaps that have been constructed around the ancient places.

Transparency:



Fig 34, Fig 35 Depicting various facades through the street. Source: author

The unusual aspect of the street's façade is due to the fact that higher historic structures are present along their lengths. Over the commercial stores there is nothing except an overhang that can be collapsed, and beyond that there is nothing else visible. The businesses have been organised such that they are in close proximity to one another, and the storefronts have been designed so that as much of it as possible is visible to consumers. There is no superstructure constructed on top of the dwellings and temples that are located before the shops. All of these buildings have a setback from the street, and the width of the setback is the same as the width of the shops themselves. In turn, this is employed as a terrace for the people so that they can see the activity and processions that take place in the street during the celebration of age-old festivals. In addition, this provides a location for people to congregate.



(Fig 34) As a consequence of this, the terrace acts as a component of transparency for the individuals who live there by enabling them to see the activities that take place on the street below.

VI. CONCLUSION

The cultural heritage of every city is considered to be its "heart and soul," since it is the major source of the city's life. It can be deduced from the multiple characteristics that were used to examine the social and physical fabric of the city that the impact of culture and heritage has an effect, either directly or indirectly, on the city. This can be concluded from the fact that these characteristics were used to research the social and physical fabric of the city. It is a common misconception that the mere fact that anything is inspired by a culture or tradition necessitates an investigation into whether or not it is true. However, this is not the case. This study report is an effort to demonstrate that a belief or tradition, regardless of whether it is factual or erroneous, may have an influence on the created fabric if it is followed by people. Specifically, the goal of this endeavour is to demonstrate that a belief or tradition may have an effect on the constructed fabric of a community. The built environment in places like Ayodhya has its own unique personality and is distinguished by a life and energy that is lacking in many parts of today's society. This is in contrast to the situation in many other parts of the world. In the meanwhile, it is essential to pay some consideration to maintaining and cultivating the city culture and history because these features contribute to the character of the city. It is of the utmost importance that steps be taken to preserve the physical heritage through a variety of conservation and restoration initiatives, which, in turn, will enrich the social fabric of the area. These steps should be taken as soon as possible. Any future development in these regions should take into account the significance of the cultural heritage of those sites and should contribute to the quality of that heritage rather than detract from it in order to preserve the worth of the cultural heritage associated with these places.

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