

Within One Envelope: The Future Face of Worship

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Abstract—In a world with various Religions, it is important to create a common ground where diverse groups or individuals can come together as one, interact and grow in harmony while practicing their own individual religions. Such spaces are called Multi-Faith spaces. These spaces are designed to cater to the varying needs of different people and foster a sense of humanity to create a more sustainable lifestyle of acceptance. Multi-faith spaces are commonly seen in airports and other public areas in the form of a single cell. Independent multi faith structures are rare. This research paper focuses on studying the same, in an Indian context to gain an understanding on the connection between the symbolic expression and spirituality in these spaces. This is done with the help of surveys and literature studies of existing examples in India and around the World to help create an informed comparison and understanding. The religions that the paper focuses on are Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. This involves an understanding of the way of worship of each of these religions & the need and relevance of such spaces. The paper ultimately suggests design guidelines to integrate such spaces into society.

Index Terms— Harmony, Humanity, Religion, Multifaith, Symbolism, Design Features

I. SYNOPSIS

A. Aim

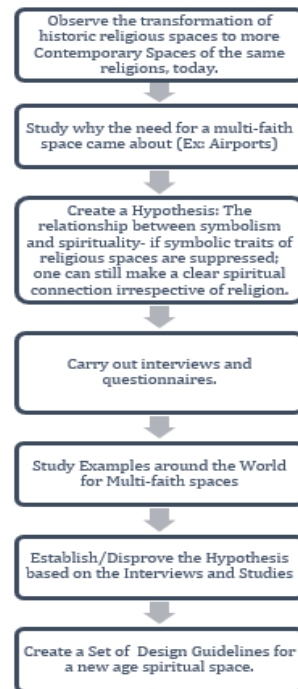
To understand the transition in traditional religious spaces into contemporary Religious/Spiritual centres & to identify the attributes needed in such centres for a person of any belief system to make a spiritual connect.

B. Objectives

- I. To Study the 3 different religious spaces and their established architectural attributes.
- II. To Study the relationship between a spiritual experience in conjunction with the architectural features of these religious spaces.
- III. To Study the common features and ideology between these religious spaces.
- IV. To Study how people, react to the concept of a multifaith spiritual space and how this will bring about a stronger sense of harmony and sustainable life.

C. Scope

In this paper, we examine the growing need for a space of personal connection to faith rather than a particular religion - a space wherein religious symbolism is subdued, and the focus is solely on making a spiritual connect. We have selected 3 religions for in depth study - Christianity, Hinduism and Islam based on India's religious demographics. Based on this and further study, the paper will ultimately highlight the main characteristics that are fundamental to the design of such a space which could be used for further proposals.



D. Methodology

Methodology of the Study.

E. Limitation

- Finding Suitable Case Studies of Multi-faith Centres in India.
- Due to Time Constraints, study has been limited to 3 religions - Christianity, Hinduism, Islam.
- The data is qualitative and subjective which prevents detailed accumulation of numerical data.

F. Identification of Examples to Study

- Literature Study 1: House of Religions, Switzerland
- Literature Study 2: Lotus Temple, India
- Literature Study 3: Multifaith Spaces in Public Areas

II. INTRODUCTION

In a world that is constantly subjected to change, the words 'harmony' and 'living as one' are some of the rising mottoes of today's generation. These words generally aim to combat the divisions created by our ancestors and often have to do with the age-old practice of religion. While the concept of religion-one's personal connection with a higher power-remains more or less the same across faiths- it is the symbolic attributes that categorize and segregate one form of worship from another. It is this understanding that has brought about not only a wave of acceptance of diverse religions but also the ideology of not aligning yourself to one faith but enjoying your own relationship with the forces that you believe in or are trying to understand [1]-[6].

With this in mind, the question arises- Can Spirituality be a concept enjoyed by religiously diverse individuals together? Can there be a safe space for people of all mindsets to experience a spiritual connect? If so, what are the physical and architectural ways in which this can be achieved?

It is these questions that lead to the curious, infant branch of religious building design- 'New Age Religious Architecture'. As the name suggests, this branch has to deal with the religious structures built in contemporary times. With the series of art and philosophy movements that have shaped the path for modern architecture; values of scale, ornamentation and form have evolved from intricate, monumental and ornate building facades to human scale masses with clean lines and minimalistic ornamentation. The same goes for religious architecture. New Age Religious architecture is an era of experimentation and abstraction of historical religious entities- be it creating an entirely fluid building mass like that of Bosjes Chapel/Steyn Studio in South Africa or the astoundingly minimal design of Shiv Temple/Sameep Padora in Pune, Maharashtra.

This paper focuses on one such brainchild- **Multi-faith architecture**. More specifically, multi-faith architecture in the Indian context; a philosophy that is yet to fully bloom in this subcontinent. Can one make a direct connect with a higher power without the peripheral ornamentation and literal perceptions? Further exploration will lead to the answer-How far can religious symbolism be suppressed without losing the spirituality of the experience? [7]-[13]

In India's current scenario, the new age buildings created are non-denominational and cater to the idea of bringing people together for a secondary, non-religious practice such as meditation (Eg: Art of Living, Bangalore). On the other hand, this paper investigates the possibility of creating spaces of different faiths in the same complex and providing secondary common spaces to nurture interaction between people of

different religious mindsets.

III. BACKGROUND

To study the religions in depth, it is important to create an understanding on the basic facts and background along the lines of their population in India, origin, practices and the evolution of their architectural features. According to the 2011 Census, over 79.8% of India's population follows the Hindu faith, 14.2% follows Islam and 2.3% adheres to Christianity[1].

A. Hinduism - Religious Spaces and Architecture

India is known to be the birthplace of Hinduism. Thus, it goes without saying that Hinduism is the dominant religion in India.

Hinduism is different from the western notion of religion, rather than being one faith that is applicable to every Hindu all over the world, it is subdivided into several parts based on a vast array of Gods and Deities. There are several variations of each sect of Hinduism, and these sects generally dictate the way of worship to that particular deity [2].

Every Hindu temple has one of these Gods enshrined as the main deity, and this deity is treated as though it is a living person- in terms of offerings and prayers. The Hindu Temple follows the concept of being the literal 'House of God' where the deity actually eats, sleeps and dwells.

B. Parts of the Hindu Temple:

The cardinal room, where the statue is set, is known as a **Garbhagriha**. The frontal hall, where priests and followers worship the god, generally consisting of a series of colonnades called a **Mandapa**, these together became the fundamental form of Hindu temples. Later additions of the temple gate or **Gopuram** came into play with the evolution of the temple complex form. The temple was generally surrounded by a circumambulation path known as the **Pradakshina Patha** [3].

Overall, the layout of the Hindu temple is derived from a geometric grid form known as the *Vastu-Purusha-Mandala*- a mystical diagram that dictates the ideal placement of certain elements of any architectural structure according to mathematical calculations and accordance with the 9 deities of the grid [4].

Way of Worship - The Hindu spiritual experience is an individual act of pilgrimage and involves making offerings such as water, fruit, and flower to the deity, chanting of names of deities and reflection. The architectural space massing sequence tends to diminish from the outside to within- a gradual withdrawal from the real world to the intimate individual connection with God himself.

The diminishing aspects are not restricted to massing alone but also span to aspects like lighting and scale.

C. Evolution of Temple:

The temple structures began with very minimal ornamentation and more experimentation in form (Eg: Temples at Aihole) however as time drew on, the skillset of craftsmen with the required materials (such as stone, or in some cases special variations of stone like Chlorite Chist in Hoysala Architecture) gave rise to extremely intricate carvings and ornamentation on almost every surface of the temple. However, in terms of contemporary architecture, temples like the *Shiv Temple by Ar. Sameep Padora* have taken the basic aforementioned elements of the temple form and made them plain and minimalistic giving importance to surrounding nature and complimenting its beauty rather than overpowering it-embodiment a rise in minimalist, vernacular and simple design ideas in a modern light [5].

D. Islam – Religious Spaces and Architecture

A study into the Religions in India without Islam remains incomplete. Despite being a minority, it is an important part.

Before the Prophet Muhammad, religion focused on idol worship. Once he began preaching Islam, people moved towards focusing their prayers to a particular direction that is towards the **Qibla** (Mecca- towards **WEST** for India). All Mosques are oriented in this manner. In the past, the focus was on a mosque in Jerusalem called Golden Dome Mosque. With time and variation in religious practices, the focus turned towards Mecca.

E. Worship and Architectural Features:

The believers enter through a grand entrance to a space where they wash their hands and legs. After cleaning, they can enter into the prayer hall and stand behind the **Imam**-the priest-facing the **Mecca**. The space where the Imam stands is separated from the rest of the congregation by an arch - **Mihrab**.

With time, Islam developed its own architecture which is used in the construction of Mosques- Islamic Architecture. This style is also noticed in many Indian Monuments like Taj Mahal and Humayun's Tomb. With time, it developed its own unique characteristics such as **arches, ornamentations by geometric shape and Islamic Calligraphy**. In the recent times, the style has been more flexible & adaptive. Abstraction has been noticed by retaining of basic characteristics like **minarets, dome** in the modern Mosques. Faisal Mosque in Pakistan is one example for this new beginning.

F. Christian – Religious Spaces and Architecture

While Christianity has been known to be one of the largest religions worldwide, its journey in India- both architecturally and historically has been more of a secondary emergence.

Christianity was first introduced to the Indian subcontinent along the coasts of Kerala with the arrival of Thomas the Apostle. However, the evolution of Church architecture began to be seen with the later arrival of different sects of this

religion (Eg: Portuguese Churches in Goa represent the Roman Catholic style of building at the time) & each one catering to their needs of worship with slight variations from the whole.

Christian way of worship generally comprises of praising God in the form of speech, prayer, hymns and the celebration of the sacraments of Christianity (Eg: Receiving of the Eucharist). While it is often thought that Christian worship is restricted to solely congregational worship, this is a misconception. In reality, Christians can worship God on their own, too- in any place [6].

In terms of architecture, Churches cater to the congregational aspect of worship. This generally consists of a raised **altar** upon which a form of the crucifix is placed or hung (often termed as a **Sanctuary**). The priest conducts his liturgy/mass in the **presbytery**- a part of the church that may vary in design but is generally located in front of the sanctuary, upon the same raised platform. The congregation sits around these two elements in a part of the church called the nave; with the altar as the focal point of the seating arrangement. **Aisles and Ambulatories** act as means of circulation.

Stylistically speaking, early churches followed the European style of intricate ornamentation, classical elements such as Corinthian columns, corbelled door jambs and floral carving patterns. Planforms generally consisted of Greek or Latin crosses. However, with the passage of time, churches have seen a journey of evolution in terms of architectural mindset- from buildings creating the incomprehensible idea of the almighty to today's more humanist approach of clean architecture, Churches are now being constructed with the human scale in mind, making them and the spiritual experience more relatable [14]. In terms of form, Christian architecture has broken away from the regular cross plans and moved into a phase of experimentation- be it fluid forms or contemporary flat roofs. A good example of a modern Church in India is St. Vincent Pallotti Church, Bangalore.

IV. LITERATURE STUDY

'New Age Religious Architecture', spans several categories of both requirement and social evolution- be it a retaliation against the past norms of construction and form ideologies or just the implementation and experimentation of new innovations. In the same way, the concept of '*Multi-faith*' spaces have come into this realm of architecture with the understanding that the world is at a point where religion cannot be a discriminatory factor in society.

A. Literature Study 1 : House of Religions

Keeping the above ideologies in mind, a brilliant initiative has been taken in Bern, Switzerland in the form of "**Haus der Religionen – Dialog der Kulturen**" (Translation: House of religions-dialogue of cultures). This single building houses the worship places of 5 different faiths (including Christianity, Islam and Hinduism) [15] while simultaneously

allowing for the participation of three other faiths in events and knowledge outreach programmes. This initiative acts as a cultural hub of Bern, raising awareness rather than being an association of missionaries out to change the world.

This religious nucleus was initially founded to act against the growing stereotype of all Muslims being part of Jihadist terrorism- a beacon of hope in times of despair [16].

There are 5 main faiths that have their own spaces in the House of Religions. They are *Alevi, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu*. While at the same time, secondary affiliations are made with the Jewish community, the Baha'is and Sikhs. They are known as 'Dialogue Partners'.

Other than the aforementioned, the House of Religions also acts as an open platform for cultural/religious discussion [7]. ranging from a one to one scale to a community outreach or gathering [17].

While the House of Religions conducts regular services of all the 5 faiths in their respective niches of the building, there are several other cultural services provided [8]. They include exhibitions, performances and tours.

A Note on the Singular Faith Rooms:

Each niche of the religious spaces caters to the architectural/symbolic requirements of each particular religion and have area requirements based on the average community sizes in Bern. For example, the Mosque sector establishes the second largest sector spanning over the two floors in order to accommodate prayer rooms for both men and women that are still interconnected [9].

Architecture in Focus-Analysis Form

The building plays to the modern architectural palette with a minimalistic two storey glass and concrete structure. The only indication of its intended function lies in a large entrance signage. On closer look, the glass is decorated with applied geometric patterns, much like that of Islamic Mosques and tombs. The fact that this building inculcates the contemporary aesthetic rather than religious symbolism allows the structure to both look and feel open to people of any religion belief.

Function

While a significant sector of this building caters to the House of Religions, it is not a standalone function. The building includes 88 apartments, shops, catering services & offices. While the success rate of a large-scale multi-faith Centre like this would generally be questioned, the organization adeptly ensured that the space was already going to be in use and lively- creating a factor of convenience and curiosity in the primary users of the building.

Planning

A balance between privacy and nurtured interaction was essential in design. In order to achieve this, the 5 established faith spaces are buffered with 'Dialogue Zones' that all spill

into one main common area that is often referred to as 'the heart' [10].of the Centre. The faith spaces are staggered strategically along 2 storeys.The idea of creating a vertical division of spaces cleverly allows spaces that may conflict in values to be away from direct contact (For example: The vibrant and colorful celebrations of the Hindu niche may be upsetting to the more minimalistic philosophy of the Alevi faith). This ensures harmony within the multi-faith space.

Common

Common spaces/ Dialogue spaces are given a function rather than just being empty spaces that may be used. Functions of such common spaces include libraries, exhibition spaces and a restaurant. By assigning a heavily used function to a common space, interactions between different cultures and faiths are bound to happen whether intentionally or unintentionally.

B. Literature Study 2 : Lotus Temple

In Indian religious architecture, one can almost always identify the Deity that a temple or structure is dedicated to- due to rich symbolism imprinted on the structure in the form of carvings and ornamentation or even carefully placed idols. This norm was not followed in the design of the Lotus Temple, New Delhi- a rising monumental structure, in its white marble glory; designed by architect Fariborz Sabha. Instead, Sabha has gone against the traditional Indian style of religious architecture and has tried to foster appreciation and acceptance of the building through the creation of a form never before seen architecturally- The Lotus. While the fundamental concepts of the design are the earthly elements - *light and water*, the building stands as a feat of Biomimicry [11].

The Temple was initially set to be solely a Bahai icon, but now opens its doors to people of all belief systems. This wholistic approach to spirituality can be observed in the approach to the design interior of this spiritual entity- a well-lit space, lit by carefully designed skylights in order to illuminate the congregational seating that lies within. Although there is no access restriction to the temple, the practice of any particular religious ritual is strictly prohibited- in order to maintain harmony and respect between the diverse range of people [18].

Symbolism of the Lotus:

It is said that in the Baha'i faith, the Lotus represents the direct manifestation of God- a symbol of purity and tenderness. It is interesting to observe the contrast this idea has to the well-known association of the Lotus flower In Hinduism and other faiths around the Asian continent. The several layers to this symbolism still hold relatable value to almost everyone who visits it- making the building awe striking but not intimidating.

Planning:

The Complex includes water bodies (a series of nine ponds surrounding the temple) and native vegetation. The temple complex is organized as a nine-sided circular structure that comprises of twenty-seven “leaves” which has been organized in groups of three on each of the temple’s nine sides. These leaves are categories as entrance leaves, outer leaves, and inner leaves. The outer leaves serve as the roof to the ancillary spaces, the inner leaves form the roof of the main worship space [12].

Architecture in Focus-Analysis: Ornamentation:

The temple’s facade and interior treatment plays a contrast to the intricate carvings generally found in traditional religious structures. Instead, it exudes minimalism and highlights the idea that religious symbolism is not an integral part of the spiritual experience [19].

Interior Space:

Other than the aforementioned minimalism highlighted by well-designed skylights creating a Godly aura; the congregational seating appears quite similar to that of a nave of a church, however it is not arranged or gathered around any focal point, but instead a simple podium with the serene backdrop behind the plain white structure.

Built Environment and Visual Aspects

A strong visual axis is created by a pedestrian pathway at a lower level than the raised temple podium. The avenue created by the axis is carefully designed in terms of landscape and water bodies around it to emphasize its serenity.

Natural Ventilation:

The building interiors are kept cool by creating natural air circulation wherein the air travels into building after flowing over the cool water. This is also a key factor in the sensory experience of the spiritual journey and comfort zone that is required to be at ease when trying to have a religious/spiritual experience [20].

C. Literature Study 3 : Multifaith Spaces in Public Areas

Most of the times, people are not in the comforts of their own homes or religious spaces due to travel, social life, health and studies. This brought about a need to create spaces in public areas which can be used by people to practice their different religions, in a comfortable setting. These spaces are not meant for a full mass or worship with hymns but instead a space to offer short prayers according to need. Nowadays it has become an important part of all public spaces like Airports, Hospitals, Shopping Centres, Schools and Universities to provide such spaces. Often these spaces are just a poorly designed room located in a corner.

Multi-Faith Spaces in Airports:

Religious spaces were earlier designed in airports with a singular religion in mind. With time and change in need, multifaith spaces were soon brought in place for different group of people. One of the oldest Multi-faith spaces is **John F Kennedy International Airport in New York** [13]. Originally it began with a Chapel called Our Lady of Skies with white marble altars and stained-glass windows. With time, a Protestant Chapel was started. It was designed in the shape of the Latin Cross. By 1960s, a Jewish Synagogue followed them. Presently, the airport has a Protestant, Catholic Chapel, Synagogue and a Mosque.

By 1990s to 2000s, these Single-faith spaces were being replaced by multi-faith spaces by removal of any symbols/features pointing towards any religion and creating reflection or meditation rooms.

One of the other examples of such spaces is the Chapel at **San Francisco International Airport** also called **The Berman Reflection Room**. This room is designed with features that resembles more like quiet waiting room than a religious space with usage of plants and connected chairs. Hence this space has no religious character to it like symbols and idols [14].

Multi-Faith Spaces in Airports:

In a Hospital, when one’s loved ones are not in the best of health, one often turns to their religious beliefs for hope. In the past, spaces were designed to cater to the need for a single faith by usage of stained windows for catholic chapel or a small space provided with an idol to focus on. But as time passed and needs changed, these spaces have been designed using neutral and non – denominational symbols. In some places, movable chairs, kneelers are provided for the Catholics and rugs for Muslim believers.

With time, hospitals began to renovate their single-faith spaces to accommodate the different religions. For example, In **Massachusetts General Hospital**, A mihrab was installed to help Muslims orient themselves toward Mecca during prayers.

In **Georgetown University Hospital**, Muslim rugs were added in a catholic chapel and the cross was removed to make the room open to a broad group of people.

While these spaces are more focused on two specific religions, there are other hospitals that are working towards creating a secular space for a broader group of people like the **Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins Hospital** which already has a Christian style chapel and an interfaith meditation room is also planning to open a non-denominational chapel which has a vertical rod in the floor that have different religious emblems making the space usable for various religious activities. In Various locations, it is also noticed that images of nature are being used instead of religious emblems which makes the spaces open to both religious and areligious people [15].

Multi-Faith Spaces in Universities:

Universities need to be able to cater to the different needs of these people especially their religious needs where they can offer prayers and connect individually without discrimination.

In **University of Toronto**, there are more than one such space due to the huge scale of users. These spaces are provided with Quiet rooms, Meditation Rooms, Activity Halls and Multi-Purpose Rooms. Activity Halls and Multi-Purpose Halls are used as a common space where functions, lectures and conferences can take place and it provides a space where smoke and fire can be used. Meditation Rooms are available to conduct meditations, prayers – Provisions of Mats, Rectangular tables and chairs have been made. Similarly, it has quiet rooms [16]. These spaces have tiled floors and large windows which creates an abundance of light. Few rooms are also provided with partitions which makes it usable at all times – i.e., even during bookings by other groups. The central architectural feature of these spaces is its lighting by usage of large windows, translucent white onyx, backlit walls and ceiling [21].

Architecture in Focus-Analysis:

Design Features:

The spaces are often kept simple and neutral. Therefore, there is no symbolism or aesthetic features externally indicating religious spaces. Internally, features integrating different religions are used like kneelers and mats which are required for conducting personal prayer and often nature images or religious emblems are placed.

Lighting: Abundant lighting is provided in these spaces so that the rooms feels less congested and dark and instead more inviting and comfortable.

Natural Ventilation: Proper air flow is needed so that the people can focus and offer prayers.

○ **Inference**

INFERENCES FROM LITERATURE STUDY

<i>Features</i>	<i>Description</i>
Building Facade	Simple and Secular Facade
Proximity	Close to other Public Structures with high Footfall
Other Spaces	Spaces like Cafes and Libraries can be added to increase interaction between groups
Religious Features	Focus on similarities and design carefully to avoid conflict
Design Features	Abundant Lighting
Symbolism	Minimal and Integrating all Religious Emblems
Contempo	Biomimicry, Abstraction of

<i>Features</i>	<i>Description</i>
rery Concepts	Symbolism in Facade
Religious Needs	Integrating spaces with features like Kneelers and Mats
Ornamentation	Religion Neutral

The People’s Perspective - First Hand

A large part of this study focuses on the degree of acceptance of several new age concepts in a still relatively orthodox community- namely India. In order to do this, with a valid quantifiable response, a survey was conducted online and shared with people across the Indian community. The questions were framed to answer three broad questions- How accepting is the community of the idea of Multi-faith Centres, would they be open to the idea of a spiritual space without symbolism, and finally- what architectural features attribute to a more meaningful spiritual connect in a space like this?

The survey was carried out over the span of two weeks and reached a total of 308 people ranging from the age groups of 18 to 60 and above with the vast majority being from the age group of 40-60 and the groups of 18-25 and 25-40 collectively- giving us an idea of the mindset of both the older and younger generations of society

In terms of religious background, the survey ranges across the population’s three most practiced religions- Hinduism, Christianity and Islam- in that order of response. However. Owing to India’s diverse culture, there were also responders who practice Zoroastrianism and Sikhism and a smaller group that did not conform to a particular religious identity.

Analysis from the Results

Based on the numerical findings from the questionnaire, a deeper insight on was found on several subcategories of the three aforementioned broad questions. The analysis of these subcategories has been divided into 4 parts- *Spirituality and Symbolism, Building Form, Building Setting, Attributes and Features.*

Spirituality and Symbolism:

The idea of Multi-faith Centres can be achieved in several different ways, be it a common space opening out into separate niches for each respective religion, or a single space with attributes of each [22]. But in accordance with the paper’s hypothesis- the option explored here is to suppress symbolism altogether in order to elevate one’s direct spiritual connect with the higher power or their own belief system.

However, one would find it difficult to believe that such a religion-based community like our own would be accepting to this idea. On the contrary, the results of the survey came to show that 72.7% of responders would be comfortable making a spiritual connect without symbolism. Thus, a space like this would be well rounded and inclusive [23].

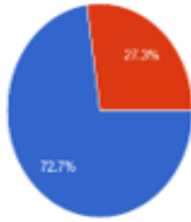


Fig.2 Importance of Symbolism.



Fig. 5 Interior Design Style.

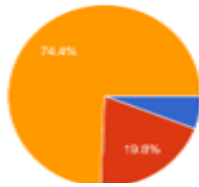


Fig. 3 Space to create Spiritual Connect.

Building Form:

Building form is an extremely important factor of one’s spiritual journey in a religious space- it can either make a person feel one with the space and the higher power or make them feel alienated. According to the results of the survey, 69.5% of the sample found minimalism preferable in terms of building form- allowing the scale to be more relatable rather than ominous. Another important architectural factor of a spiritual space is the interior treatment and ornamentation. Most historical buildings have extremely detailed, intricate mouldings, carvings and paintings- however, the response to the survey shows that 78.8% of respondents would again prefer minimalism in the interior structure (simple walls and design features). Finally, the sample was asked whether they’d prefer an open air structure or an enclosed space- while a small fragment (only 5.8%) preferred an enclosed space, the vast majority preferred to practice their beliefs in an open space or a combination of open and closed (72.4% and 19.800% respectively). Thus, one could draw the conclusion that an open space with several viewpoints or step out/spill out spaces would be ideal. In turn, it could be analysed that the minimalistic approach allows for one to have an undistracted spiritual experience and attain inner peace without what one may feel is an overwhelming atmosphere.

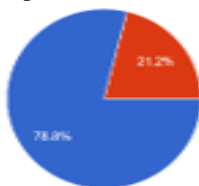


Fig. 4 Form Of the Spiritual Space.

Building Settings and Proximity:

The building setting and the location plays an important role in these spaces, as they seek to satisfy their physical, psychological and spiritual needs. There is a belief that these spaces must be quiet and within nature and according to the survey (84.4%) of the respondents prefer building in landscape setting and only (15.6%) prefer stand-alone building hence it is recommended to create a space which has constant contact with nature. For this the building must be planned to create interior courtyards and the gardens around which attracts birds, allow the wind flow, and including water, all these improves the spiritual sense, creates peace of mind and also upgrades the ecosystem. The proximity of the space is an important aspect as it influences the frequent use of spaces, The survey says (73.7%) will be influenced by its proximity and (26.3%) says it doesn’t so the ideal Location of these spiritual space would be close proximity to the cities and could be easily reached, and also it must be away from the central city traffic which creates disturbance.



Fig. 6 Proximity



Fig. 7 Built Environment.

Design Features

Spiritual spaces need to be designed to provide users with the features that help them find comfort. One of the important design features to be considered is Lighting Provisions. Types of Lighting can be mainly divided into natural and artificial lighting. According to the survey, 90% responded

that natural light is an important feature to feel comfortable and to create focus in a spiritual space. The background study indicated that water bodies play an important role in most religious was confirmed during the survey with 75% responding with a yes. Survey reports confirm that with time and development people have become more comfortable in small intimate spaces where they can feel more closely connected to one another and themselves over monumental buildings.



Fig. 8 Waterbody for Spiritual Experience
Natural Light for Spiritual Experience
Building Scale.



Fig.9 Natural Light for Spiritual Experience

Aim from Multi-Faith Spaces:

People tend to have some factors that they aim to achieve from their ideal Spiritual Centres. As we short listed the factors that users most expect to achieve from a Spiritual

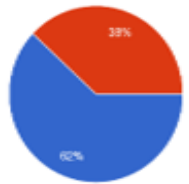


Fig. 10 Building Scale

Centre, we noticed that a high percentage of people aim to achieve inner peace and a sense of community in such spaces more than offering prayers. This probably owes to the modern-day change in social values from community-based living to an individualistic lifestyle that may not be as wholesome as the former.

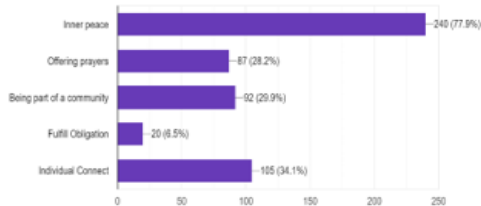


Fig. 11 Aim From a Spiritual Space.

Success Rate:

To bring the survey to a conclusion and to give the study a purpose, the participants were asked about how comfortable they would feel to use a multifaith space regularly along with others from variety of religious groups, a majority of the people were comfortable to use and share multifaith spaces. Therefore, Multifaith spaces have a high success rate in the future if they can provide the users with the features that they can connect with and create a connection around.

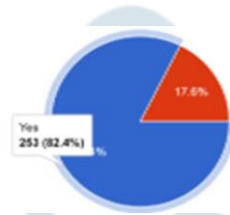


Fig.12 Comfortable with Multifaith Spaces.

Table 2. INFERENCES FROM LITERATURE STUDY

<i>Features</i>	<i>Expected Response</i>	<i>Received Response</i>
Symbolism	Important	Not Important
Form	Monumental	Minimalism
Ornamentation	Grandeur	Minimalism
Proximity	Close	Close
Waterbody	Not Important	Important
Aim	Offering Prayers	Inner Peace, Community
Built Environment	Stand Alone	Landscaped
Scale	Monumental	Intimate

V. CONCLUSION AND GUIDELINES

All in all, from our studies we have come to find that a large sector of the Indian community is mentally prepared and ready for a shift in ideals and religious ideologies. While we may not be able to make a stark movement to buildings completely stripped of identifiable religious symbolism- the idea of a Multi-faith space is definitely a step in the right direction towards sustainable and harmonious community development. Keeping in mind the comfort factors of each religious identity, the questionnaire responses have come to show a greater need for interaction with our existing natural environment rather than overwhelming structures. Based on

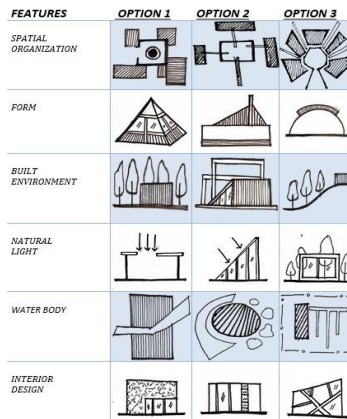


Fig. 13 Guidelines For Multifunctional Space

the responses culminated in the above People's perspective, below is a graphical representation of guidelines & options for Multi-faith Spaces in the future.

Prior to this Survey, were you aware of Multi-faith Spaces? *

- Yes
- No

Which of the following would you feel best to make a spiritual connect? *

- Enclosed Space
- Open Space
- Elements of Both - (closed spaces opening into Courtyards/Views)

Would you be Comfortable making a Spiritual connect without Symbolism?(Crucifix/Gopuram/Archways/Idol) *

- Yes
- No

Does the proximity of the spiritual centre influence your use of it? *

- Yes
- No

Is Natural Light an important factor to your spiritual experience? *

- Yes
- No

Are Water bodies an important factor to your spiritual experience? *

- Yes
- No

Which of the following Building Scale will enhance your spiritual experience? *

- Intimate
- Monumental

What design style in terms of FORM do you prefer in a spiritual space? *

- Minimalism
- Monumental

What interior design style do you prefer in a spiritual space? (Ornamentation) *

- Minimalism
- Grandeur

What kind of Built Environment would enhance your spiritual experience? *

- Stand-alone Building
- Building in Landscaped Setting

What do you aim to achieve in a spiritual space? *

- Inner peace
- Offering prayers
- Being part of a community
- Fulfill obligation
- Individual Connect

Would you be comfortable offering prayers in a Multi-faith space in the Future? *

- Yes
- No

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