Fatehpur Sikri: A Reflection of Mughal Syncretic Statecraft

Niti Gupta, Daljit Kaur

University of Delhi, New Delhi, Delhi, India

DOI: https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.120500142

Received: 22 May 2025; Accepted: 02 June 2025; Published: 17 June 2025

ABSTRACT

The paper examines Fatehpur Sikri, an ancient city that was temporarily used as a capital by Emperor Akbar during the 16th century. It discusses the city's monumental architecture, design, and integration of Persian, Islamic, and Hindu styles of architecture. He constructed it to commemorate the birth of his son, Salim, and it gained recognition for its religious association with the Sufi saint Salim Chishti. The research discusses popular landmarks such as the Ibadat Khana, Diwan-i-Khas, and the Salim Chishti mausoleum, discussing their distinct designs and significance. Though the city was deserted shortly after its construction, it stays a testament to his progressive leadership and regard for other religions. The paper underlines in which ways religious tolerance, Sufi Spiritualism, and political legitimacy, converged in the built landscape. Overall, the research concludes that for all its brief period as a capital city, the city left an enduring mark on India's cultural and architectural heritage as its architecture is one of the finest of Mughal art. It is the symbol of political authority with syncretic architecture and influence from amalgamation of diverse cultures.

Keywords- a) fatehpur sikri, b) salim chishti, c) spirituality, d) syncretism and e) statecraft.

OBJECTIVE

It examines the role of Sufi patronage, specifically the role of the Chishti order, in the construction of the Mughal imperial identity and the socio-political texture of the empire. Based on the inter-disciplinary investigations, historical analysis, and cultural theory, the objective eventually is to seek a place for Fatehpur Sikri at the centre of the story of Indi-Islamic heritage and Mughal statecraft.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach to analyse the historical, spiritual, and architectural dimensions of Fatehpur Sikri. The methodology integrates primary and secondary sources to construct a nuanced narrative of the city's development and significance. *Primary Sources:* Key Mughal-era texts such as Akbarnama by Abul Fazl provide direct historical accounts and insights into Akbar's motivations and the socio-political context of the time. These sources offer valuable perspectives on the emperor's vision and the symbolic meaning behind the construction of Sikri. *Secondary Sources:* Scholarly works, peer-reviewed journal articles, books on Mughal architecture, and reports from institutions such as UNESCO inform the broader cultural and architectural significance of the site. Scholars like Catherine Asher, R. Nath, and Ebba Koch are cited to support interpretations of syncretism and imperial ideology. *Architectural and Visual Analysis:* Close visual examination of key monuments—such as Diwan-i-Khas, Ibadat Khana, and the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti—provides insights into construction techniques, spatial design, and symbolic architectural features. This component is essential in identifying the syncretic blend of Islamic, Hindu, Jain, and Persian elements. *Integrated Framework:* By combining textual analysis, architectural study, and cultural interpretation, the research aims to situate Fatehpur Sikri at the intersection of spirituality, political strategy, and aesthetic innovation. It foregrounds the city's role in articulating a vision of religious tolerance, spiritual experimentation, and imperial grandeur.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Fatehpur Sikri is a beautiful representation of Mughal urban design and Indo-Islamic architectural fusion. While often credited to Emperor Akbar, the history of the city may be traced back to his grandfather Babur, whose interest in the area set up the early

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

groundwork for its eventual fame. In 1527, having gained a resounding victory over Rana Sangha of Mewar, Emperor Babur stopped by at small town of Sikri. As a mark of thanks, he gave it the new name *"Shukri,"* and had a garden and some minor buildings constructed. Babur's activity in the region was short-lived, but the recognition of its beauty and strategic location pointed to its future development under his descendants. It was Emperor Akbar who envisioned Sikri as an imperial capital. In 1572, he shifted his court to the place and, with the conquest of Gujarat in 1573, renamed it *"Fatehabad"*- a name taken from Fateh, victory. Later, the name changed to Fatehpur Sikri. The site was strategically selected for its geographical benefits as a gateway to newly conquered western provinces, mostly notable Gujarat. Aside from strategic factors, the place was of great personal and religious importance to Akbar. Sikri was the site of the hermitage of the sacred Sufi saint, *"Sheikh Salim Chishti,"* whose blessings were thought to have eased the birth of his successor, Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir). In reverence for the saint and to celebrate the imperial birth, he ordered large-scale development of the place. His dream was fulfilled in an eclectic mix of Persian, Indian, and Central Asian building styles. The emperor personally supervised the planning and construction of the city, hiring artisans from all over the empire. Buildings were arranged around large courtyards and raised terraces. To counter the lack of water, an artificial lake was formed by damming the seasonal *"Khari Nadi,"* proving the engineering prowess of the empire. Despite its magnificence, Fatehpur Sikri's viability as a permanent capital was undermined by environmental constraints- most tensions also arose between him and Sheikh Salim Chishti, who expressed discomfort with the transformation of his once-secluded spiritual retreat into a bustling metropolis. In 1585 (10 Ramzan, 993 A.H.), less than fifteen years after its foundation, he abandoned the city permanently. Despite that, its architectural heritage is still, providing insight into the socio-political and spiritual currents of the time.[1] The scholarship on Fatehpur Sikri ranges from of the historical to architectural and cultural critiques. R. Nath and Catherine Asher are some of the scholars who have widely researched on Mughal architecture, and they have stressed Sikri as a singular instance of syncretic style. Naths's research emphasizes the urban design and imperial symbolism of the city, while Asher focuses on its architectural and its cultural levels. The Sufi presence, particularly the shrine of Salim Chishti, has drawn the interest of cultural historians investigating the blending of the mysticism and rule.

Figure 1: Akbar with a lion and a calf, by Govardhan, c.1630https://www.metmuseum.org/

Sufism And Statecraft: The Evolution of Chishti-Mughal Relations

The Chishti Sufis, in contrast to their peers like the Suhrawardis, intentionally adopted a posture of distancing themselves from political power. This self-conscious abstention from state patronage heightened their spiritual

[1] Asher, Architecture of Mughal India.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

and moral authority even more paradoxically. According to Simon Digby, the Chishtis' reluctance to directly involve themselves in court politics endowed them with the image of spiritually independent and incorruptible persons. Their blessings and symbolic sanction then became extremely valuable to rulers who needed legitimacy. Saints such as Ajmer's Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and his spiritual successor Nizamuddin Auliya did not seek political office or worldly gain but saw their khanqahs become sacred pilgrimage centres and powerful sites of moral authority. Rulers often sought their blessing—or at least kept respectful distance from their shrines—aware that the Chishtis' moral capital could powerfully influence judgments about their right to rule. Conversely, the Suhrawardis order went in a different direction. Their leaders like Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan received land grants and administrative positions from the Delhi Sultans. Though this accommodation of the state brought them short-term political and material gains, it undercut their religious autonomy and limited their influence on regional politics. The Chishtis' refusal of overt royal patronage, though continuing to enlist mass devotion, including that of elite castes, allowed them to exercise a lasting moral impact that survived through successive dynasties. This dynamic changed under the Mughal Empire, especially under Emperor Akbar. His journey to the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer stands for a critical change in the state's relationship with the Chishti order. Akbar looked to ground his rule in a fusion of spiritual legitimacy and imperial authority, with Chishti Sufism providing a vital ideological bridge. His reverence for the Chishti saint Shaikh Salim Chishti—after whom his son Salim (later Jahangir) was named—signalled how the order became central to Mughal statecraft. Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar’s capital, was constructed near the dargah of Salim Chishti, a decision heavy with symbolism. It linked his throne physically and ideologically to the shrine of the saint, underlining the notion that his sovereignty was divinely ordained. Under Akbar and Jahangir, state patronage was granted to the Chishti order while it enjoyed considerable spiritual autonomy. This was not a relationship of co-option but one of strategic utility: the Mughals used the Chishti order's charisma to support imperial legitimacy, and the Chishtis used royal patronage to extend their social and charitable activities. This synthesis proves how a Sufi order might be outside official politics yet contribute centrally to the ideological heart of empire. Abul Fazl, Akbar's court historian and counsellor, reaffirmed this description in his Akbarnama. Abul Fazl depicted Akbar as a spiritually advanced ruler whose sovereignty extended beyond governance. In Abul Fazl's account, Akbar's piety toward Sufi saints, particularly Salim Chishti, showed respect for spiritual traditions beyond religious divisions. By publicly honouring Chishti saints, Akbar positioned himself as a fair and tolerant monarch, held in high regard by Hindus and Muslims alike. His religious tolerance and symbolic gestures of devotion served to further set up his reputation as a universal king. In this way, therefore, the Chishti-Mughal interface shows how spiritual power and political authority were inextricably linked in early modern South Asia, influencing both imperial ideology and popular legitimacy.

Peripatetic Emperor and Pious Pilgrims: Patronage and Kinship in Motion

Between 1562 and 1579, Mughal Emperor Akbar undertook about fifteen pilgrimages to the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer. Whereas known as religious pilgrimages, they were multifaceted political performances that served to constitute Mughal imperial power. Historian Pratyay Nath refers to them as a mode of "peripatetic kinship"—those traveling manifestations of sovereignty that combined spiritual symbolism and imperial power. Akbar's first pilgrimage, camouflaged as a hunt, quickly acquired profound religious significance. He prayed before the shrine, dispensed alms, and visited repeatedly, intertwining his political persona with the saint's religious magnetism. The Ajmer shrine, both Hindu and Muslim sacred place, formed the centrepiece of Akbar's policy of borrowing religious legitimacy to bolster imperial authority. Ajmer's proximity was also strategic. From there, Akbar set out on military campaigns against local rulers such as the Rajputs and Afghans. Triumphant returns from the conquests at Chittor and Ranthambore were followed by pilgrimages to the shrine, where spoils of war were presented as sacred offerings—indicative of divine approval for his victories. Pilgrimages, usually done barefoot, were indicative of his humility and submission to Sufi authority, projecting his persona as a pious Muslim as well as an upright ruler. Aside from symbolism, Akbar employed these journeys to govern his empire. He received local rulers, oversaw building, and implemented administrative reforms. Roads, forts, and cities grew along these routes, serving to integrate and administer newly occupied territories. These traveling courts allowed Akbar to deal directly with subjects and allies, exercising justice, generosity, and power in public sight. The religious-political terrain he created by these actions led to the establishment of Fatehpur Sikri, just near the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti. The new capital was an immobile extension of his pilgrimages—a symbol of religious guidance and imperial ideology. Salim Chishti was particularly responsible for shaping Akbar's

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

religious and political ideology. When Akbar, who longed for a male heir, came to the saint at Sikri, Salim Chishti foretold the arrival of a son. When the prophecy was fulfilled, Akbar gave the child the name Salim (eventually Jahangir) in honour of the saint. This intimate relationship further enhanced Akbar's regard for the Chishti order. Akbar rewarded Salim Chishti with a magnificent white marble mausoleum in Fatehpur Sikri, transposing the saint's spiritual image into imperial memory. Spurred by Sufi values of tolerance, compassion, and inner piety, Akbar set about remoulding his religious policy. The Chishtis stressed service to humanity and devotion to God rather than strict rituals—principles that resonated in a religiously diverse empire. These doctrines shaped Akbar's revolutionary policy of Sulh-i-Kul (Peace with All), which advocated religious harmony and non-discrimination. In contrast with orthodox clergy, the Chishtis followed a universal spirituality that enabled Akbar to invite Hindus, Jains, Christians, and others to his court and administration. Although divisive to some, this endeavour was not a plan to develop a new religion but to bring unity to his empire through a shared spiritual ethic. Akbar's pilgrimage practices eventually ended after 1579, as he transitioned toward a more universal notion

of kingship that no longer depended on Sufi intercession. But the legacy of those trips—lived in architecture, policy, and ideology—is still key to making sense of the Mughal Empire's formative period. In combining mobility, piety, and statecraft, Akbar redescribed kingship during early modern South Asia, with Sheikh Salim Chishti as both spiritual mentor and symbolic foundation for an inclusive imperial ideal.

Akbar's Visits to Sheikh Salim Chisti's Dargah

S.no.	Year	Event	Spiritual Significance
1.	1562	First pilgrimage; while on hunting expedition	Visit Dargah, alms distribution, beginning of association with Ajmer.
2.	1567-68	After conquest of Chittor	Walked to shrine, war offering
3.	1569	Birth of Prince Salim	Foot pilgrimage to Agra.
4.	1570	Regular devotional pilgrimage	Daily visits, mosque ordered.
5.	1571	After saint's death	Strengthened shrine ties.
6.	1572	On route to Gujarat campaign	Prayers and planning.
7.	1573	Post-Gujarat victory	Thanksgiving visits at Ajmer.
8.	1573 (later)	Emergency march to quell Gujarat Revolt	Brief prayer at Ajmer en route.
9.	1574-1575	Routine pilgrimage	Regional visits.
10.	1575	Establishes Ibadat Khana	Venue for Interfaith spiritual dialogue.
11.	1576-1577	Mewar and Hajj	Victory Hajj
12.	1578	Hajj support	Pilgrimage and governance overlap.
13.	1579	Final visit	Marks shift in kinship ideology, Conclude pilgrimage cycle.
14.	1582	Introduces Din-I-Ilahi	Personal spiritual philosophy promoting unity and tolerance.
15.	1585	Abandons Fatehpur Sikri as Capital	Shift due to practical reasons, but spiritual legacy stays.

Figure 2: Akbar's spiritual journey timeline from 1556-1585

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

The Spiritual Foundation

Dargah of Sheikh Salim Chishti

The Dargah of Sheikh Salim Chishti (Fig. 3) is a sacred Sufi shrine found in Fatehpur Sikri. It is famous for its fine architecture and spiritual importance.[2] Situated within the grand Jama Masjid complex, the Sheikh Salim's white marble mausoleum was built by Mughal Emperor Akbar in the memory of his spiritual guide, Sheikh Salim Chishti, a saint of Chishti Order.[3] This is one of the finest examples of the Mughal architecture, visited by all religions who wish to take blessings and receive divine intervention.[4] The Dargah is renowned for its beauty in the architecture combining Persian, Hindu, and Mughal design. It is built from white marble. Standing majestically against the red sandstone backdrop of Fatehpur Sikri, its buildings stand out.[5] The tomb stands on a raised platform with steps going up to its entrance. Its single-domed roof adds glory to the monument, while delicate lattice, or jalis, screens around the tomb are carved with the finest works of pattern, allowing light in and creating beautiful shadows inside. The lattice screens are highly iconic, adding to the beauty of the structure but also carrying a special purpose in relation to spiritual practices related to the dargah. Devotees tie threads on the lattice screens, carrying wishes and prayers for themselves, in this tradition believed to provide blessings from God. A tomb covered by rich cloth and floral offerings made by devotees is surrounded by carved wooden canopies. The dargah also organizes a special prayer session every Thursday, to which hundreds of devotee's flocks. During Urs, the annual commemoration of Salim Chishti's death anniversary, the place becomes even more vibrant with special prayers, qawwali performances, and gatherings that celebrate the life of the saint, filled with spiritual music and poetry that form the heart of the Sufi tradition. With its exquisite marble architecture, inclusive spirit, and time-transcending rituals; it continues to inspire not only pilgrims but attracts tourists too. A place of worship, devotion, and breathtaking beauty, the dargah epitomizes enduring Sufism in the heart of India and in the past and present.

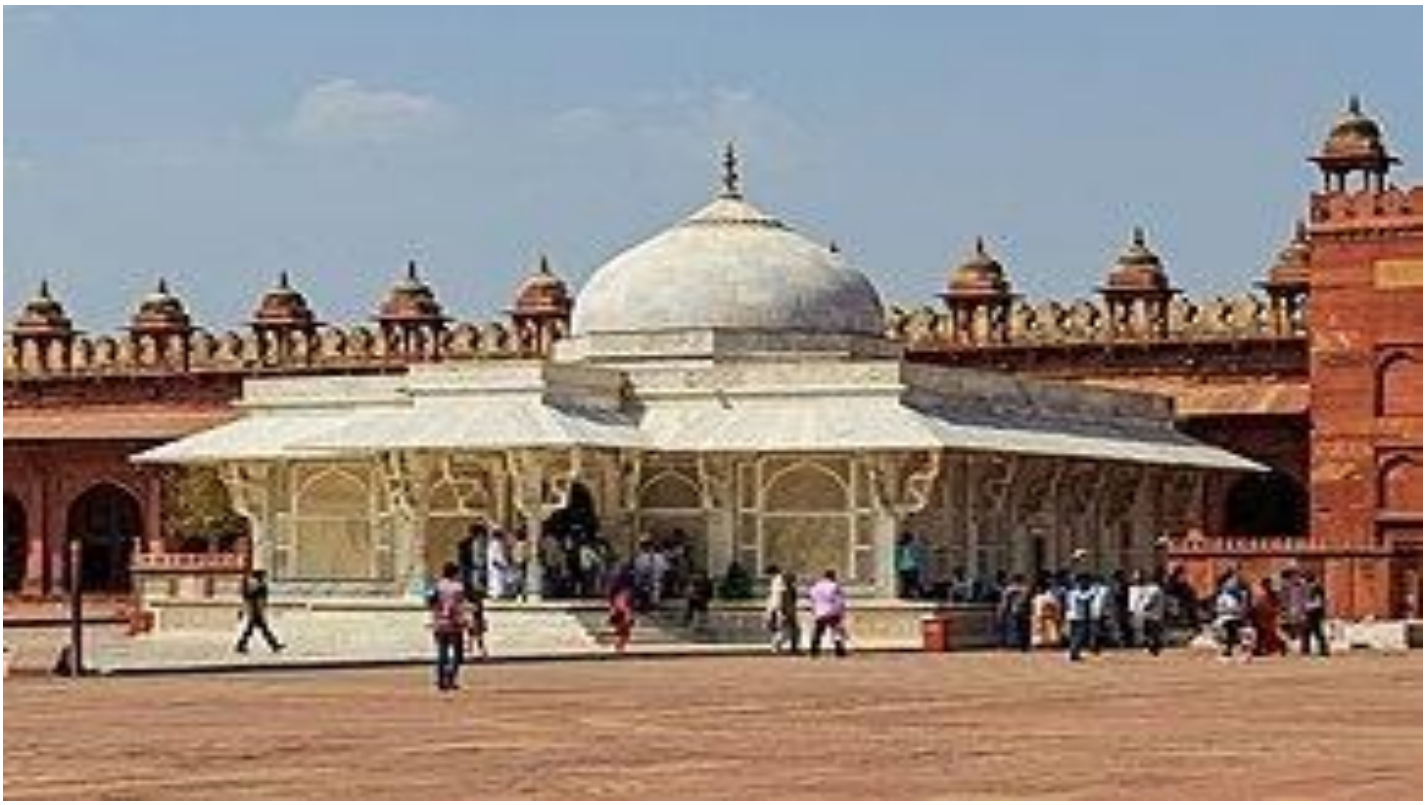

Figure 3: The tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti is one of the finest examples of Mughal architecture in India https://whc.unesco.org/

[2] Michell, G. (1995). *Architecture of the Islamic World*. Thames & Hudson.
[3] Eaton, R. M. (1993). *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*. University of California Press.
[4] Nath, R. (1982). *History of Mughal Architecture: Volume II*. Abhinav Publications.
[5] Asher, C. B. (1992). *Architecture of Mughal India*. Cambridge University Press.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

Ibadat Khana

Ibadat Khana (house of worship) (Fig. 4), a peculiar institution founded by Mughal Emperor Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575. A place of religious and philosophical discussion, the Ibadat Khana was a structured place of interfaith dialogue where intellectuals and spiritual masters from different schools of thought-including Sunni and Shia Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and others-participated in debates moderated by the emperor himself. Initial sessions started with Muslim theologians alone but eventually included representatives of several faiths, as his vision of a more inclusive religiosity evolved. Framed with four avyans (porticoes), the Ibadat Khana was setting for nightly Thursday evening debated that would often continue till dawn. It also formed the foundation for his eventual formation of Din-i-Ilahi, a syncretic religion based on his tolerant worldwide.

Figure 4: The Ibadat Khana https://whc.unesco.org/

Interfaith Dialogues

Syncretic Architecture of Fatehpur Sikri: A Blend of Islamic, Hindu, Jain, And Christian Influences

Influences from Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, and Christianity can be seen in its 16th century Mughal architecture built by Emperor Akbar. This syncretic society was the vision of him when his religion tolerance policy, Sulh-i-Kul or Universal Peace, is focused on.

1. Islamic Influence- The style of architecture is mostly Islamic in nature because of sheer use of domes, minarets, arches, and the red sandstone, which is quite characteristic of Mughal architecture. On both the sides of main entrance Buland Darwaza are used the Islamic calligraphy, geometric patterns, and Quranic inscriptions on the Jama Masjid.

2. Hindu Influence- Hindu elements are integrated into the buildings that are emphasized by such things as brackets, beams, and columns with the floral and animal designs. The Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, is seen as a Hindu and Jain- influenced feature, specifically in its ornate central pillar bearing brackets supporting a circular platform. Chhatris or dome-shaped pavilions are also another Hindu architectural feature.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

3. Jain Inspiration- Jain-influenced motifs, for example, the carvings and ornamental detailing that are seen on several pillars as well as brackets, are found in the palaces and courtyards. Geometric and floral inlays, interlaced with floral and jali work borrow ideas from the familiar aesthetics for Jainism, which explain each minute detail in detailed symmetry.

4. Christian Impact- Akbar's court allowed Jesuit priests to enter from Goa, though the existence of Christian buildings is not documented. There is some influence in art and decoration. The murals and paintings seen in the palace walls might have been influenced in the representation of scenes and use of perspective, which was prominently introduced in Mughal miniatures later.

5. Persian and Central Asian Influences- Persian styles were incorporated through decorative arts and garden layouts in the manner of Persian traditions. In this way, without being a separate religion, Persian was influential within city's layout the Charbagh (four-part garden) is that style of paradise according to Islamic tradition.

Koch interprets the architectural diversity of Fatehpur Sikri as an intentional move to create a unified empire under a common cultural heritage. This design has Hindu motifs such as chhatris (raised domes) and jharokhas (overhanging balconies) but, in form of intricate geometrical patterns and arches, integrate Islamic motifs. The Ibaadat Khana was a hall that intended to be a place for discussing religious matters; it was one of those attempts at making mutual understanding where disparate faiths under him could gather. Asher also stresses the eclecticism of it, in as much that the motifs of architecture do reflect Persian influence and indigenous Indian motifs as well. She shows structures such as Panch Mahal, a structure, quite strictly an adaption of traditional Indian Temple architecture, and the Buland Darwaza, the grand gateway in elegant Islamic architectural tenet. These architectural choices reflect Akbar's attempt at a *"syncretic faith,"* which was an amalgamation of the cultural and religious usages of various communities to create a more homogenous and inclusive society. The styles blended into a whole made Fatehpur Sikri not only an architectural marvel but also a symbol of his commitment towards harmony across boundaries of religion and culture.

Art And Spirituality

The walls of Fatehpur Sikri are decorated with beautiful Arabic Calligraphy, displaying Quran verses. The inscriptions are both decorative and spiritual in purpose, leading visitors through the holy areas. The application of intricate the Islamic focus on unity and the limitless nature of creation. Such patterns, commonly appearing in jali screens and floors, represent the concealed order of the universe. Lotus blooms and enlacing vines are common motifs, standing for purity, renewal, and the interconnectedness of living things. Buildings such as Diwan-i-Khas, with its central column covered in ornated carvings, and tiered Panch Mahal are reflections of the constructive interaction between aesthetic beauty and spiritual symbolism in Mughal architectures (Fig. 5). The building's design uses a few symbolic elements that have their origins in Hindu tradition. The most prominent of these include the Padma (lotus flower) in the center of arches, Kirtimukha motifs at the column base, and the Satkona or six-pointed star, which all have diverse cultural and spiritual connotations.[6] The surrounding Anup Talao, a square water tank with a platform in the center joined by four walkways, is an imitation of the design of Mughal Charbagh (fourfold garden), a spatial icon of paradise used in Islamic and Persian garden design.[7] The building commonly called Diwan-i-Khas has an ambiguous historical purpose. While it is described as Emperor's private audience hall- with the emperor at the center and ministers around him- it is doubtful if the narrow balconies would be able to hold ministers for any length of time. Instead of being used for a strictly utilitarian purpose, the radiating balconies can be seen to symbolize the coming together of various religious and philosophical schools, reflecting the syncretic ideology of the Mughal court.[8] Also noteworthy is the relief depiction of two elephants flanking the entrance gate, the Elephant Gate, which is stylistically reminiscent of classic Rajasthani gateways in which such iconography was ubiquitously used to stand for strength and good fortune. One of the pavilions on Akbar's private quarters' terrace is covered in floral motifs and figurative art, looking much like a Chitra Shala or picture gallery, a commonly used feature in royal

[6] Smith, Vincent A. History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon. Oxford University Press, 1911.
[7] Nath R. Architecture of Fatehpur Sikri. Heritage Publishers, 1982.
[8] Asher, Catherine B. Architecture of Mughal India. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

Hindu houses of the period. The Birbal House has intricately carved interior and exterior with high-relief emphasis on prominent features. The Turkish Sultana's home is richly adorned from floor to ceiling with floral patterns, human beings, and Hindu Swastikas, implying the work of Gujarati craftsmen. Domed kiosks (chhatris) topped with lotus designs (Mahapadma) and pitchers (Kalasha) are found in each corner of the Diwan-e-Khas, which are typical Indian temple architectural ornaments.

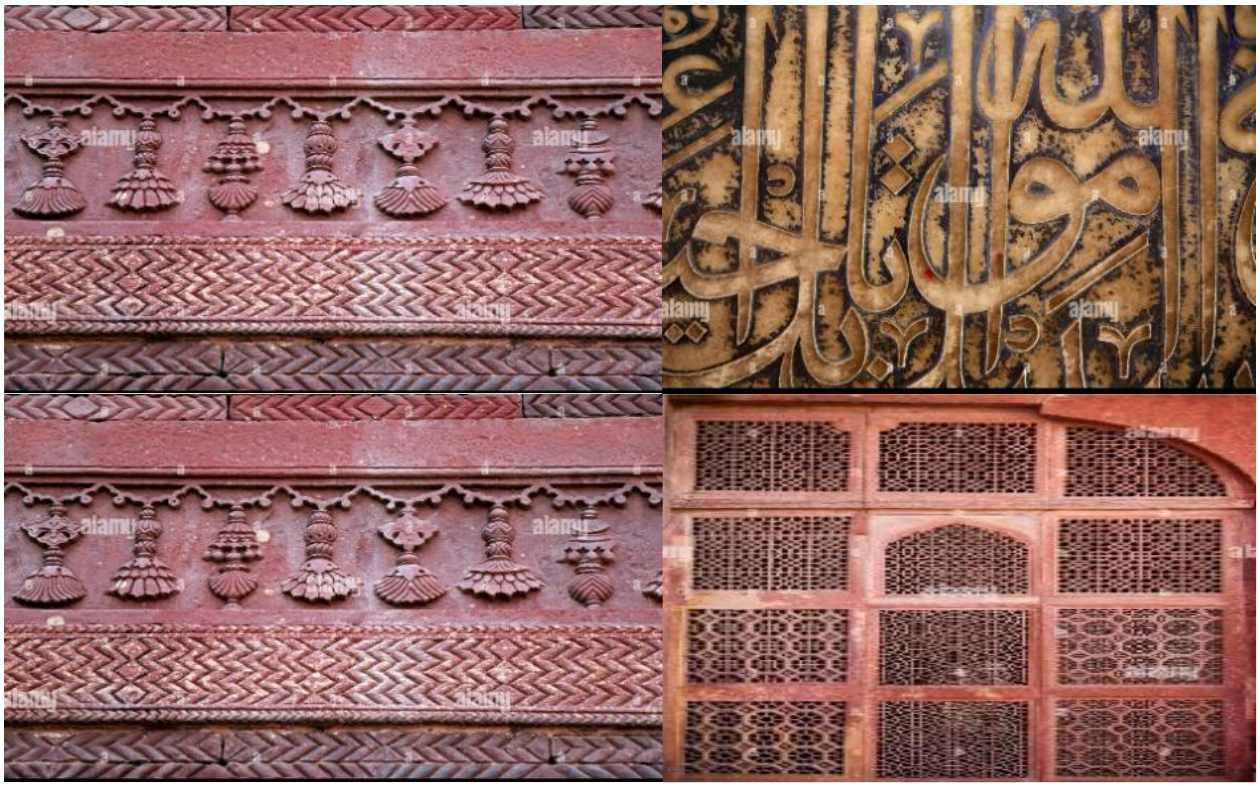

Figure 5: The art and spirituality https://whc.unesco.org/

Conservation Efforts and Challenges Ensuring Fatehpur Sikri's Legacy

Fatehpur Sikri was once high-spirited capital city of the Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar, a significantly unique UNESCO World Heritage Site with ultimate architectural and historical importance. Its decline began merely some 15 years since it was built in 1571 due to following major factors:

1. Location and Climate- The city was built on a ridge; thus, its high location and extreme climate presented many difficulties to it. It was thus, challenging for the Mughals to maintain it as a permanent capital.

2. Political and Military Needs- Akbar eventually shifted his capital to Lahore and later to Agra to be closer to the regions of political and military importance.

Although it is an abandoned city, it stays a treasure of heritage because its architecture is one of the finest of Mughal art, a blend of Islamic, Hindu, and Persian styles. It included such distinctive monuments as Buland Darwaza, Jama Masjid, and the palace complex. The historically significant example among many of India's historical landmarks and a testament to the glory of the ancient Mughal Empire that made it. Now, it pulls visitors from all over the world who appreciate the excellence of this artistry, its historical importance, and architectural brilliance. For historians, it offers clues to the Mughal empire's administrative and religious priorities. For urban planners and architects, the city is an early prototype of planned urban growth that combined functionality, beauty, and symbolism. In South Asian heritage, it is an important monument in the development of Indo-Islamic architecture. Additionally, the ongoing preservation of the site and its categorization as a UNESCO World Heritage Site reinforce the world significance of cultural preservation. Scholarly, the learning about it crosses subjects such as history, art history, religious studies, and archaeology. So, the legacy of the city surpasses its physical existence, with enduring relevance both in scholarly and socio-political arenas. It continues to inspire curiosity and admiration, reminding us that cultural synthesis is both possible and powerful.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue V May 2025

CONCLUSION

Although it is an abandoned city, it stays a treasure of heritage because its architecture is one of the finest of Mughal art, a blend of Islamic, Hindu, and Persian styles. It is the symbol of political authority with syncretic architecture and influence from amalgamation of diverse cultures weaving the tapestry of Akbar's Mughal Empire. An Empire sewed through syncretic architecture wandering around the nucleus of Sufi Saint Sheikh Salim Chishti's influence on him which he showed through ideology of Akhlaq and Sulh-i-Kul. It serves as an invaluable resource for understanding the spatial organization and cultural amalgamation that define it. This structured planning exemplifies the Mughal approach to urban development and their emphasis on order and harmony. It stands out as *Akbar's personal spiritual laboratory*—a place where political power, personal devotion, and inter religious understanding intertwined. Unlike Delhi or Agra, which were more traditional or symbolic in their spirituality, it was deeply intimate, experimental, and reflective of a ruler's *quest for spiritual universality.*

Spiritual Themes of Akbar-

- **Sufi Devotion**: Centred around reverence for Sheikh Salim Chishti.
- **Interfaith Dialogue**: Through Ibadat Khana, Akbar promoted spiritual inclusivity.
- **Philosophical Experimentation**: Din-i-Ilahi aimed to unify diverse religious ethics.
- **Architectural Symbolism**: Sites like the Buland Darwaza and Diwan-i-Khas reflect spiritual ideals through design.

REFERENCES

1. Nath, R. (1972). Fatehpur Sikri And Its Monuments.
2. Asher, C. B. (1992). Architecture Of Mughal India (The New Cambridge History of India). Cambridge University Press.
3. Richards, J. F. (1993). The Mughal Empire (The New Cambridge History of India). Cambridge University Press.
4. Rezavi, S. A. N. (2002). Fatehpur Sikri Revisited. In Proceedings of The Indian History Congress (Vol. 63, Pp. 405–416).
5. Koch, E. (2006). Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526–1858). Prestel Publishing.
6. Unesco World Heritage Centre. (N.D.). Fatehpur Sikri.