



Loss of Identity - The Disappearing Nizami Culture in Urban Hyderabad's Interiors

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Abstract

Emphasizing the element of Hyderabad, which is located in the state of Telangana, India and highly acclaimed for a vast search of cultural inheritance, especially that concerning the Nizami spirit which penetrated both the inner and outer architectural structures of the entire region over several generations during 1724 and 1848 CE. This study evaluates the reason for extinction of Nizami culture in urban innards, ranging from rapid infrastructural development to transforming demographics, many cultural shifts, the consequences of loss due to this impact on Hyderabad's cultural identity, heritage and how it would affect the local economy and tourism sector development along with conservative method were presented in the paper.

Keywords: Hyderabad Nizami culture, Cultural identity, Culture conservation, Tourist attraction & economy

Introduction

Hyderabad has been robustly built over time, with all modern architectural upliftment and interior decor added to historical and cultural backgrounds. The Nizami period existed between 1724 and 1948 CE. It was a period of splendor and greatness during which the interior design showed the kind of luxurious living practiced by the Nizam rulers. By contrast, urban contemporary interior design practiced in Hyderabad shows an amalgam of the traditional aesthetics and modern sensibilities (I.M. Rian 2022). This modern of design innovation has been heralded by theme based designs, sustainable living approaches, and revolutionizing technology breakthroughs which have transformed the speed at which the interior spaces around the city thrive (K. Bataineh et. al. 2022; L. Lu et. al. 2023; G.R. Vizcarra, et. al. 2025). Interiors of Hyderabad showcase changing dynamics from its past into innovation or rather out spiraling from the luxury palaces of the Nizam era to present designing trends in the main urban spaces. But now, the specialty of that Nizami essence has been slowly disappearing from these interiors due to the rapid urbanization and modernization of the city. Transformation is an important feature of development and growth, however this leads to disappearance of cultural identity of the city. Transformation should not seize characteristics and culture that define identity, as Jyosthna states it, "for a traveler, Hyderabad might give an awfully satisfactory image except for those residents (G.R. Vizcarra et.al. 2023). The World Health Organization oversees Hyderabad ever changing at such a high pace, the amendment isn't invariably welcome". In fact, within the winds of those changes, the fundamental nuances of Hyderabad culture are bit by bit missing (Jyothsna 2018). However due to inadequate focus of investigative studies in this area of research, attempts were made to bring forward this research work.

1. Historical Significance of Nizami Essence

Hyderabad's Nizami era had a wonderful mixture of Indo-European elements of architecture presenting a very unique and overwhelming style. The opulence of Nizam kings is evident in fine carving work, heavy ornamental work; large floor area palaces like Falaknuma and Chowmahalla. The zarithmic richness burst in the interiors with marble, elaborate wooden carving and opulent furniture which indicated that the place was filled with elegance and magnificence (M. Guo and Y. Shen 2022). Mughal and Persian design concepts exceedingly influenced the Nizami architectural style, fit well into local customs and that is processing through the art of skilled workmanship. Not only were they beautiful embellishments, however on the walls, ceilings, and furniture, they too captured with full richness of the artistic and cultural expressions of that period. These architectural wonders brought visitors and scholars from all over the world, awed at the fine craftsmanship and minute details, testifying to the city and its rich history (Michell et. al. 1999).

2. Current State of Urban Hyderabad's Interior

In the present era, interior design of Hyderabad contributes a fairly different view of the magnificence of the space that was formerly Nizam's with a blend of classic and modern aesthetics. While most of the interiors in the city have adopted a new era of design innovation, there still exists a few historical houses that reflect some elements of the Nizami culture. Theme based designs, ecologically friendly living, and technological advancement have now filled most metropolitan interiors of Hyderabad into a happening juxtaposition of past and present. All these changes such as a search for efficiency and functionality, global influences, changing lifestyles reflects Hyderabad's newest trends in modern interior design. Open floor plan, simple design, and amalgamation of intelligent home technology are basically the priorities in most modern residential and commercial spaces. To create a blend of the old and the new, efforts are being made to incorporate traditional Hyderabad design elements like elaborate carvings, rendering the big color palettes found in contemporary interiors (Rao 2016), (H. Zhou et. al. 2022).

3. Factors Leading to the Disappearance of Nizami Essence

3.1 Rapid Urbanization and Infrastructure Development:

Also, most importantly, this brings to a close the speedy addition and development of Hyderabad as far as the urban space is concerned. Neo modern needs such as housing and commercial spaces require a shifting of a large number of old buildings, which are being replaced by new ones incorporated with modern themes devoid the traditional features and aesthetics with which buildings dating back to the Nizami era were designed. Increase in population, as well as the demand for efficient transportation systems in the city, is causing further loss to Nizami essence (K. Bataineh et. al. 2022).

Efforts towards new roads and flyways construction and moreover development of the metro rail system have also erased further perceptions of the Nizami facet of urban geography through demolition of buildings of heritage value and structural change of historical areas (Kamineni 2015). Further modernization and development concerns often overshadow the preservation of cultural heritage. The damage to many buildings of the Nizami era is, for the reason of several distinguishing features due to inattention and decaying priority to economic development and need for modern housing (Rani 2017).

3.2 Changing Demographics and Cultural Shifts:

The changes in population and culture in Hyderabad have contributed to the disappearing Nizami culture in the interiors of the city. Newfangled approaches with changing trends have overtaken the age old traditional Nizami style because of the arrival of different elements and the impact of globalization. City youngsters may not appreciate the rich culture and may not be exposed to and related to it due to modern influences in a fast changing world, eventually resulting in the less appreciation in preservation and continuity of the Nizami essence (Narayan 2017). In addition, Hyderabad has developed an urban cosmopolitan culture, contributing to the intermingling character of differences in architectural and design elements, thus homogenizing the Nizami style. Aesthetic treatment of heritage has often been set aside in favor of modern and foreign ones in such a way that Nizami feeling has been erased from the interiors of the city (Hosagrahar 2005).

4. Consequences of the Disappearing Nizami Essence

4.1 Loss of Cultural Identity and Heritage

The internal loss of Hyderabad becomes even more intense, when the cultural identity and legacy of the Nizami become nonexistent within the spatial precincts of Hyderabad. Today, the architectural form and the constructive features of the Nizami period marks an integral part of the history and culture of Hyderabad, their existence being vital to depth and variety in the city. The aesthetic loss results not only from detaching this legacy from the past but also from severing the connection

established between the two worlds that were the local context and the velocities at which the cities are changing. Rather, the sense of pride and belonging appreciated in the local space speaks of a rupture with that past. Hyderabad's memory is inextricably tied to the Nizam. Already, erasing that memory from the urban fabric may lead to gaping holes in collective memory as well as weak appreciation of varied cultural heritage elements that make Hyderabad an interesting place (Vennela et. al. 2018). Overall, however, one has to admit that this obliteration of the "Nizami essence" will homogenize cities into prototypes of generic, similar structures that lack local identity and character and overshadow what is a hitherto rule in learner construction principles. At last, it may erase the unique character of the city and take away the feeling of place (Jyothsna 2018).

4.2 Impact on Tourism and Economy

Nizami culture and their structures have significantly improved the existing position of the tourism industry in Hyderabad. The degradation of this cultural assets would have a negative impact on the tourism industry in Hyderabad since people visit the city to experience a rich cultural historic experiences. Declining tourist numbers can impair the financial situation of the region and employment opportunities (Shinde 2015). The palaces, monuments and other historical places of Nizami period have also been favorite tourist attraction and have brought in money and have been sustaining other businesses here such as restaurants, handicrafts shops, and hoteliers, etc.

The disappearance of these treasures will most probably cause a decline in tourists visiting Hyderabad, bringing direct effects on the livelihoods of many who depend on the transportation and tourism sector (Rani and Sharma 2017). It would also mean that Hyderabad can no longer be marketed as a cultural destination, and it possibly would not be competitive enough within the global tourism niche. Successfully preserving and promoting the unique cultural heritage of a city can attract more tourists and investment while providing good benefits to the local economy (Rao 2020).

5. Preserving and Reviving Nizami Essence

5.1 Revitalization of Traditional Architecture and Design

It becomes really imperative to relieve and restore the historical architecture and design features into the urban interiors of Hyderabad, thus preserving and reclaiming the Nizami character. The integration of the Nizami design aesthetics and principles into newly constructed projects as well as the restoration and conservation of previously existing historical buildings would complete this rejuvenation. Architects and designers collaborating with local crafts visitants would ensure that the Nizami style will be properly represented yet modified to suit today's needs.

One of the ways to use the reformed Nizami buildings is adaptive reuse, which implies that the heritage properties now serve new functions and assemblages (Rao 2020). The architecture of the old construction still remains the same, but it serves modern purposes. This not only ensures a sustainable development trend but also reduced demand for new structures, keeping in mind the aspersions of the cultural heritage of the city. Just as simply, the features of Nizami design such as elaborate carvings, arches, and traditional patterns can be added to modern construction in order to create a seamless blend of old and new while still embracing the Nizami spirit as an important fibers characterizing the urban fabric (Gupta et. al. 2019).

5.2 Promoting Cultural Education and Awareness

A quantitative approach was chosen by means of a self administered survey instrument. A Google Form was established to receive data collection from a target audience within Hyderabad. We pursued a semi structured interview. The objective aspired to gain a diverse range of views and experiences. They were focusing mostly on people according to their age group, gender, and occupational and residential locations of the urban area of Hyderabad. This method provided a lot for understanding, to the extent of Nizami culture has preserved or disappeared and also its variable related to that. The present state of Nizami culture in the urban interior of Hyderabad was studied by using survey, interviews, and literature analysis. The first actual activity of this research is thus the conduct of an extensive literature search from the academic journals, books, and other documents, which throw light on the historical significance of Nizami culture; the interiors and architectural aspects of the Nizami period; and the transformation of Hyderabad as an urban landscape.

29 individuals consisting of 19 male and 10 female respondents including 1 non Telangana respondents aged between 23 to 63 years were selected through purposive quota sampling technique from Telangana, India, to understand their perception toward the current status of Nizami culture. This survey also let the concerns arise regarding awareness of the residents in the Nizami architecture and, Nizami design perception towards the conservation of this important heritage, and observation about the changes taking place in the physical environment of city. This survey was done using google forms. The merging of the literature review with the surveys as well as the interviews made available a very intricate and well rounded method towards

the exploration of the research problem as shown in figures 1 and 2. The findings were analyzed and synthesized into a holistic proposition towards the present state of the Nizami culture in Hyderabad's urban interiors, accompanied by actionable solutions to preserve it.

A majority of the respondents in overall scenario appear to have appreciation and awareness about Nizami culture and most of the respondents are in agreement with the proposition that Nizami culture is relevant and necessary for its sustenance in the urban Hyderabad as shown in figures 1 and 2. Well, besides all this, factors like urbanization, socio economic change, and gradually changing demography have been accepted for their vital roles in gradual disappearance of cultural symbols from core city area. In their responses, many respondents state that urbanization has had an impact on the sustainability of Nizami culture in Hyderabad's inner city. These results show that a collective approach with the help of coordinated actions for the preservation and revitalization of Nizami character, including support in cultural education, preserving historical architecture, and encouraging local craftsmen, can be involved.

5.3 Measures to preserve disappearing Nizami cultural heritage of Hyderabad:

Conservation of Nizami architecture can be facilitated by renewing and maintaining facades of Nizami district, finding and reconstructing historical buildings and houses from the period of Nizami madrasa using non modified bricks and other filling materials. Consequently adaptive reuse through conversion of old structures into community centers, museums, and cultural spaces while retaining their architectural essence, serves the purpose (Rao 2020). Also enforcement of urban planning through policies and strict rules of urban development physical planning, safeguards Nizami heritage areas against intrusions of modernity.

Craft and design revival can be achieved through encouragement of local talent and employing bidri work, kalamkari, wood inlay and the related policy framework to promote workshops, fairs and subsidized artisans. The later should appeal to modern architects and designers to introduce Nizami design, motifs, jaalis, and persian style tiles into urban interiors. Preservation has to be carried by documenting and making of the designs, patterns and processes and availed through the use of digitized media for future use.

Cultural education and awareness programs can be done through organizing cultural fests devoted to Nizami poetry, enhancement of music such as Qawwali music and dance education. Conducting workshops and talks in schools and colleges about Nizami culture among the younger generation of students and employ internet tools, social networks and websites in order to communicate the variety of Nizami culture of Hyderabad to the world is an another step forward.

Culinary heritage can be preserved by means of capturing in black and white traditional methods of Nizami food and the food recipes such as Hyderabadi biryani and haleem in books and videos. Popularization of Nizami food may be done through food festivals, propagation of professional culinary schools, and government establishment of local fast food badges. Involvement of community to promote heritage tours and narration of the story of places in the old cities of Hyderabad to encourage and evoke interest from the residents for constructing and sustaining a cultured look within the hood.

Government and institutional support should be availed to the respective students and research scholars through various scholarship programs, grants and subsidies for the conservation of homes and art. Specific suggested recommendations regarding the management and protection of homes and artifacts were to ensure conservation programs involving partnership with both local, international organizations and the private sector, in terms of funds as well as human resource and integration of syllabuses on Nizami history and heritage into school education system.

Art and literature can be preserved with popularizing Urdu and Persian to promote literature festivals for these language courses to help spread both the languages of Nizami poetry and literature. Manuscripts need to be conserved by digitization and preserve manuscripts and documents of historical importance related to Nizami tradition. Integration of Nizami style garden creation into environment, lay down of Persian style garden throughout public and personal places promotes further. Incentives to Nizami style interiors to create honorary awards and certificates for hosts and companies who decide to decorate their interiors with beautiful, meaningful, and harmonious design according to Nizami's concepts engages more number of people to follow. Combined efforts of respective stake holders will serve the purpose of long term maintenance of Hyderabad's Nizami heritage and incorporate in contemporary Hyderabadi structure with historical element.

Conclusion

A major challenge witnessed in the study is the ability to sustain the culturally unique identity of Hyderabad and extinction of the inner city suburbs of the Nizami feel. By using survey data and reaching conclusions in this research paper, it can be stated

that the widely known, strong necessity of the conservation of Nizami culture regarding demographic, urbanization, and socio economic changes of this cultural heritage is obvious. The architectural features of the Nizami are key to the comprehension of the identity of Hyderabad and, thus their absence in the region entails the loss of place and people's memory. Also, this heritage was under threat, which means that its absence is bad for the spots linked to the Nizami era since the neighborhoods and the buildings have performed as cultural attractions.

It would require a varied strategy to address this challenge. These will be so because by reconstructing and reconstructing the aged erecting structures, and by integration of new Nizami style parts in new constructing processes, such cultural heritages are going to be preserved and propagated. Organizations and individuals who carry out construction works may engage architects and designers as well as local craftsmen so that local architectural styles such as Nizami style is upheld even if indeed it is adapted to fit the modern generation.

In addition, through education projects, awareness raising, and community learning initiatives, appreciation and possessive stakes may be cultivated regarding the Nizami spirit in the young and the local public to generate the feeling of collective responsibility for the preservation and reactivation of Nizami spirit through a daily understanding of and an appreciation of the cultural values of the city.

To provide an assurance for such wealth in customs and capacities that generated denseness in ornamentation and designs from the Nizami period, there is also a need to support and encourage these local artisans with their handicrafts. Artisan workshops, training programs, and synthesis of places to demonstrate and sell traditional crafts can aid in preserving and handing down these priceless cultural treasures.

Nothing less but the fact keeping Nizami character in its urban interiors of Hyderabad goes beyond merely safeguarding the city's built and design heritage; it includes protecting the city's sense of place, cultural identity, and collective memory. Hyderabad has that opportunity to adjust with the realities of modern urban life but will have the character that where it is and whose claim it rightfully bears by adopting a comprehensive strategy that balances tradition and innovation. All of these will have to combine efforts to ensure that this very future of Hyderabad is woven into the rich tapestry of Nizami culture from policymakers, urban planners, architects, designers, cultural organizations, and the populace.

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29 responses

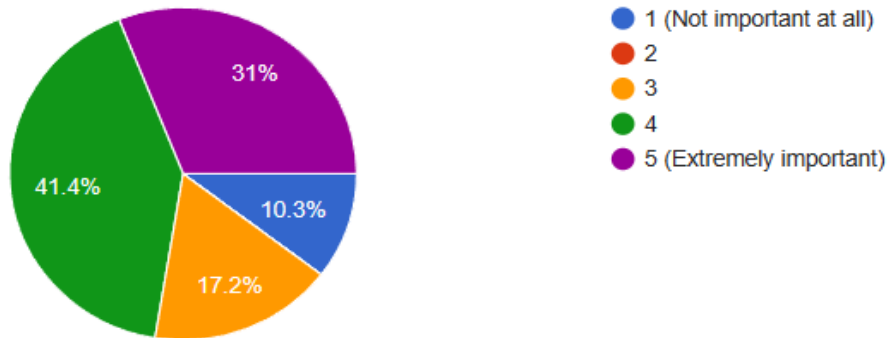


Figure. 1

On a scale of 1 to 5, individual responses to an interview on “how important do you think it is to preserve Nizami culture in urban Hyderabad?”



29 responses

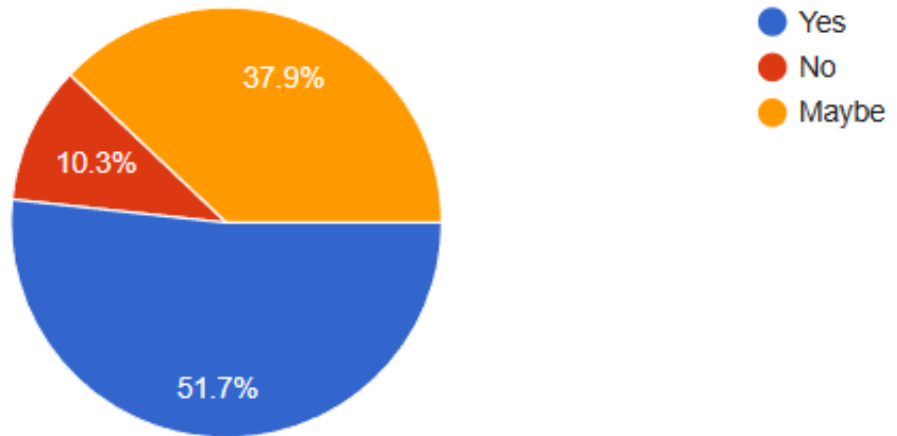


Figure. 2

Individual responses to an interview on "Do you believe urbanization has affected the preservation of Nizami culture in Hyderabad interiors?"

