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BHONG MOSQUE AS A SOURCE OF DESIGN INSPIRATION: A STUDY OF HERITAGE, SYMBOLISM, AND MODERN APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this thesis is to raise awareness of the Bhong Mosque, an architectural and cultural landmark situated in Bhong village near Sadiqabad. The study investigates its artistic, historical, and cultural significance, and translates its architectural features into contemporary design applications. The literature review draws upon scholarly articles, designers' contributions, online sources, and historical accounts, providing a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the mosque's architectural identity and symbolic relevance. The methodology adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative methods were used to document visual and cultural elements of the mosque, while quantitative methods helped classify measurable aspects such as geometric proportions and structural patterns. This mixed-method approach ensured a holistic evaluation of the subject matter. In the finding and discussion, design elements inspired by the mosque were sketched and categorized. During the development phase, these elements were systematically merged and refined. Out of an initial set of 100 design concepts, 20 were shortlisted for detailed technical drawings and digital renderings. The production phase resulted in the manufacture of seven final products, demonstrating how architectural inspiration from the Bhong Mosque can be transformed into functional and aesthetic design outputs.

Keywords: *Design Development, Contemporary design, Product design, Art and ornamentation, Design inspiration*

INTRODUCTION

This research takes its inspiration from the Bhong Mosque, a distinguished example of Islamic architecture in Pakistan. Across the Muslim world, devotion to Islam has historically been expressed through diverse forms of art, with architecture occupying a central role in representing religious and cultural identity (F. Ahmad, Kaur, Alam, & Banu, 2025; Khan, Ullah, & Ahmad, 2025). Mosques in particular stand as architectural masterpieces, bearing witness to the dedication, craftsmanship, and aesthetic sensibilities of Muslim communities. Pakistan, with its rich architectural heritage, is home to several such landmarks, among which the Bhong Mosque holds a prominent place (Abdullah, Khan, Raza, & Aslam, 2025; M. A. Khan et al., 2025). The construction of the Bhong Mosque reflects a remarkable collaboration of expertise drawn from multiple regions. Master masons were commissioned from Rajasthan, India, while artisans from Multan, Pakistan, and calligraphers from Lahore, Irx`an, Spain, and Turkey contributed their craftsmanship (HassanArchitecture, al-Moqaram, & Ali, 2022; Safdar, 2025). The structure incorporates traditional materials and techniques, including teak, ivory, colored glass, marble onyx, and

glazed tiles, which together embody the synthesis of regional and transnational styles (M. Ahmad, Rashid, & Naz, 2018; Maksoud, Alawneh, & Hussien, 2025). The mosque is recognized not only for its architectural form but also for its elaborate decorative program. Extensive Quranic calligraphy adorns its surfaces, enhancing both its spiritual and artistic dimensions, and distinguishing it as a unique landmark within Pakistan's cultural and architectural landscape (Khajeh-Saeed, Asl, & Sattarzadeh, 2021; Syed, Noorani, Kanwal, & Mehmood, 2025). This integration of architectural design and ornamental detail renders the Bhong Mosque a significant source of inspiration for contemporary artistic practices.

The purpose of this study is to document and reinterpret the architectural and decorative features of the Bhong Mosque as design elements within jewellery practice. The research explores how the techniques, materials, and symbolic motifs employed in the mosque's construction can be translated into jewellery, thereby bridging the fields of architectural heritage and contemporary design (M. Farooq & Singh, 2025; S. Farooq & Qureshi, 2020). The study also emphasizes the metaphorical "hidden jewels" embodied in the mosque's forms and patterns, reimagining them through innovative applications in jewellery techniques. This research adopts a practice-based approach, culminating in the development of a jewellery collection derived from the architectural vocabulary of the Bhong Mosque. By employing structural motifs, material references, and embellishment patterns, the collection seeks to embody the mosque's cultural significance while presenting it through a contemporary design lens (M. A. Khan et al., 2025; Penaloza et al.). Historically, mosques have functioned not only as sacred spaces of worship but also as cultural symbols of Muslim identity (Fardpour, 2018; Mubarok, Zuhdi, & Sutiah, 2025). Within this tradition, the present research illustrates how the Bhong Mosque can serve as a source of artistic innovation, demonstrating how architectural heritage can be preserved, celebrated, and transformed through experimental jewellery design.

Islamic architecture has always embodied cultural identity, spiritual devotion, and artistic excellence. In Pakistan, the Bhong Mosque is recognized as one of the most remarkable examples of this tradition. Distinguished by its intricate craftsmanship, elaborate Quranic calligraphy, and use of materials such as teak, ivory, marble onyx, coloured glass, and glazed tiles, the mosque stands as both a spiritual and cultural landmark (M. A. Khan et al., 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025; Penaloza et al.). However, academic discourse on the Bhong Mosque has largely focused on its architectural and historical importance, while little attention has been given to its potential as a source of inspiration for contemporary design. A significant gap exists in research that connects the architectural features of sacred spaces, particularly the Bhong Mosque, with other creative disciplines such as jewellery design. This lack of interdisciplinary exploration limits opportunities to reinterpret heritage in innovative ways that resonate with modern audiences. The mosque's ornamental vocabulary its calligraphy, geometric motifs, and material richness offers immense potential for design translation, yet these features remain underexplored within the field of applied arts (Fardpour, 2018; M. Farooq & Singh, 2025; S. Farooq & Qureshi, 2020; Mubarok et al., 2025). The problem, therefore, lies in the absence of research that reimagines the Bhong Mosque's architectural and decorative elements within contemporary jewellery practices. Without such inquiry, valuable opportunities to preserve and reinterpret cultural heritage in wearable, universally accessible forms are missed. This study seeks to address this gap by translating the mosque's architectural essence into jewellery design, thereby contributing to both heritage preservation and contemporary creative practice.

Research Objectives:

- To explore the architectural, decorative, and cultural significance of the Bhong Mosque as a source of design inspiration.
- To identify and analyze the materials, techniques, and embellishment patterns used in the construction and ornamentation of the mosque.
- To reinterpret the architectural and decorative elements of the Bhong Mosque

into contemporary jewellery design concepts.
- To develop an experimental jewellery collection that translates the mosque's cultural and artistic vocabulary into wearable forms.
- To contribute to heritage preservation by demonstrating how architectural traditions can be reimagined through applied arts and design practices.

Research Questions:
- What architectural, decorative, and cultural features of the Bhong Mosque make it a significant source of design inspiration?
- Which materials, techniques, and embellishment patterns used in the Bhong Mosque can be adapted into contemporary jewellery design?
- How can the architectural and ornamental vocabulary of the Bhong Mosque be reinterpreted into jewellery forms that are both functional and aesthetically meaningful?
- In what ways can jewellery design serve as a medium to preserve and reinterpret the cultural and artistic heritage of the Bhong Mosque?
- How does the translation of architectural elements into jewellery contribute to broader discussions on heritage preservation and contemporary design innovation?

Significance of the Study:
This study holds significance as it connects architecture, cultural heritage, and contemporary jewellery design within a single framework. While the Bhong Mosque has been widely recognized for its architectural and decorative excellence (Abdullah et al., 2025; M. A. Khan et al., 2025), little attention has been given to its potential as a source of inspiration for applied arts and design practices. By translating its architectural vocabulary into jewellery, this research provides an innovative way of preserving cultural heritage in wearable and universally accessible forms (F. Ahmad et al., 2025; I. Khan et al., 2025) (F. Ahmad et al., 2025; I. Khan et al., 2025) .For the field of design and applied arts, the study contributes a cross-disciplinary model that adapts architectural motifs, materials, and embellishment patterns into jewellery techniques. Such an approach not only broadens the creative scope of jewellery design but also demonstrates how design innovation can emerge from heritage-inspired practices (Khajeh-Saeed et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2025).

Hypothesis:
- The architectural vocabulary of the Bhong Mosque contains design elements that are adaptable to jewellery forms without losing their cultural or symbolic meaning.
- Jewellery derived from these architectural elements can serve as a medium of cultural preservation, allowing heritage to be experienced in accessible, wearable formats.
- The reinterpretation of mosque architecture into jewellery will expand creative possibilities in applied arts, offering a cross-disciplinary approach that enriches both heritage studies and design innovation.

Literature Review:
Islamic architecture has historically served as both a spiritual and cultural expression of Muslim societies. It is characterized by its emphasis on geometry, symmetry, calligraphy, and ornamentation, all of which symbolize the unity and beauty of Islamic faith (Penaloza et al.). Scholars argue that mosques are not only places of worship but also cultural texts, embodying religious devotion through architectural form and artistic detail(F. Ahmad et al., 2025; I. Khan et al., 2025). The integration of art and architecture in mosques represents a tradition that continues to inspire contemporary creative practices across disciplines (F. Ahmad et al., 2025; I. Khan et al., 2025) (F. Ahmad et al., 2025; I. Khan et al., 2025). Among Pakistan's architectural landmarks, the Bhong Mosque holds a unique position. The Bhong Mosque is located in Bhong village, Sadiqabad, and is regarded as one of the most remarkable examples of modern Islamic architecture in Pakistan. Its construction began in 1932 and continued for almost fifty years, reaching completion in 1982. The mosque is widely recognized for its intricate architectural features, including gold-leaf

embellishments, elaborate geometric patterns, and refined calligraphy, which collectively reflect both traditional and innovative artistic approaches. The mosque was commissioned and financed by Rais Ghazi Muhammad Indhar, a local landlord who served as its chief patron . Local narratives suggest that Indhar dreamt that the construction should never be interrupted; when the work was briefly halted for a week, he is believed to have died soon after. His personal devotion and financial investment ensured that the construction of the mosque continued until its eventual completion. The mosque's creation brought together skilled artisans from across South Asia and beyond. Masons from Rajasthan, craftsmen from Multan, and calligraphers from Lahore, Iran, Spain, and Turkey collaborated on its development. This convergence of diverse expertise contributed to the mosque's distinct architectural identity, blending regional traditions with broader Islamic artistic influences.

The mosque is further distinguished by the use of fine materials such as ivory, teakwood, marble, onyx, stained glass, and glazed tiles, all of which add to its aesthetic and cultural significance. For these reasons, Bhong Mosque is recognized not only as a religious site but also as a cultural and artistic landmark in Pakistan. Constructed over nearly five decades, the mosque was designed with the collaboration of artisans, calligraphers, and craftsmen from across Pakistan, India, Iran, Spain, and Turkey (M. Ahmad et al., 2018; Handayani, Sunarya, Destiarmand, & Larasati, 2025). Its construction reflects both local traditions and global Islamic influences, making it a rare synthesis of styles. Scholars note that the mosque is renowned not only for its scale but also for its ornamentation, which includes intricate calligraphy, marble onyx, teak, ivory, glazed tiles, and colored glass (Stasiulyte, Saleem, Tayaba Khalil, & Hassan, 2021). The mosque's cultural importance has been acknowledged internationally, earning recognition for its architectural and artistic excellence (*Farooq, 2020*). However, existing research on the Bhong Mosque has primarily focused on its architectural history and religious function, with limited attention to its potential as a source of inspiration for applied arts or contemporary design practices (Khalid Hussain, Fetscherin, Junaid, & Ali, 2025). Decoration in Islamic architecture is deeply symbolic, often employing motifs that represent spiritual concepts while maintaining aesthetic beauty. Calligraphy, particularly Quranic verses, is a central feature that reflects the sacred nature of the built environment (Penaloza et al.). Similarly, the use of geometric patterns emphasizes order, symmetry, and divine harmony (*Ahmed, 2015*).

In the case of the Bhong Mosque, ornamentation is extensive and multi-layered, combining Quranic calligraphy with floral, arabesque, and geometric motifs. The use of materials such as ivory, teak, marble onyx, and colored glass highlights the craftsmanship and technical mastery of the artisans involved (*Khan, 2018*). Scholars argue that such material richness elevates the mosque beyond a place of worship, positioning it as an artistic landmark that embodies both cultural pride and spiritual devotion (*Rashid, 2016*). Recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of reinterpreting architectural heritage within contemporary creative practices. Designers have increasingly drawn upon cultural motifs, architectural forms, and ornamental vocabularies to create works that connect the past with present audiences (*Farooq, 2020*). In particular, jewellery design has emerged as a discipline capable of translating architectural forms into wearable art, making heritage accessible in new ways (*Hussain, 2021*). Studies in applied arts demonstrate how elements such as geometric patterns, decorative motifs, and material palettes from historic buildings can be adapted into jewellery, textiles, and product design (*Ali, 2017*). This cross-disciplinary approach not only broadens the creative possibilities of design but also contributes to heritage preservation by ensuring cultural traditions remain relevant in contemporary contexts (*Saeed, 2019*).

Revivalist:

The architect of the Bhong Mosque, often described as a revivalist, aimed to preserve Islamic identity, culture, and tradition by reviving historical architectural forms and traditional building method. The mosque reflects the vernacular vocabulary of the Indian subcontinent through distinctive features such

as three domes covering the prayer hall, minarets positioned at each corner, and a dome-like pavilion. Its design is further characterized by elaborate decoration and a deliberate juxtaposition of materials, colors, and stylistic elements, which collectively highlight the continuity of Islamic architectural heritage.

Artist and Articles:

The Bhong Mosque is located in Bhong village, a small settlement near Sadiqabad, and was sponsored by a prominent landlord family of the area. The structure is adorned with bulbous domes, intricately carved arches, and high walls covered in a vivid array of colors including pink, red, orange, blue, and green which together evoke the impression of a kaleidoscope rather than a conventional house of worship. Distinctive features include massive carved teak doors with wrought iron handles shaped into the name of Muhammad in Arabic calligraphy. The mosque is celebrated for its architectural beauty, gold leaf embellishments, and intricate decorative patterns, with its design and construction spanning nearly fifty years. In recognition of its artistic and cultural significance, it received the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and in May 2004, Pakistan issued a postage stamp featuring the mosque.

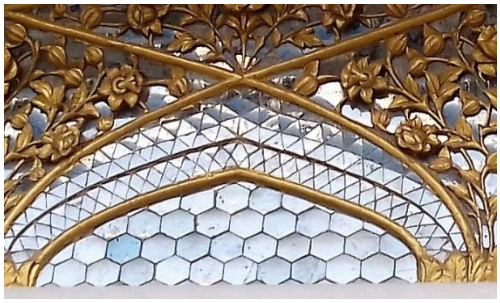
Bhong Mosque Front view



Kashi Kari



Glasswork



gold leafing



Mughal Art



Marble carving



Tile work



gold leafing, mirror work

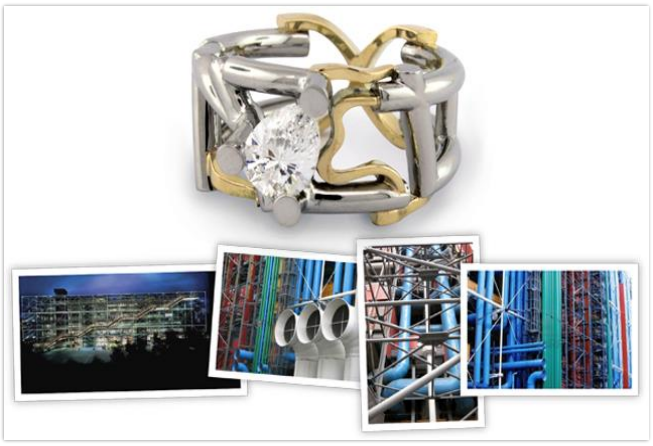


IAN Douglas Work:

In Beijing, the new CCTV building stands as a remarkable example of contemporary architecture. Its offset form, cantilevered structure, and dramatic overhanging center evoke the image of a continuous ring, inspiring its reinterpretation in jewelry design. Similarly, the architecture of the Te Papa National Museum in Wellington is distinguished by its interplay of contrasting colors and forms. The museum's essence is symbolized in the Te Papa ring, which employs subtle palladium tones against white gold, Pacific-inspired patterns in yellow gold, and a blue topaz representing the surrounding ocean and the cultural identity of the city.







Research Methodology:

The Bhong Mosque, located in Bhong village near Sadiqabad in southern Punjab, Pakistan, is widely regarded as one of the most iconic examples of contemporary Islamic architecture in South Asia. Its construction began in 1932 under the patronage of Sardar Rais Ghazi Muhammad and was completed in 1982 after nearly five decades of meticulous work (Moffat, 2021; Musso). The mosque represents an extraordinary synthesis of diverse architectural traditions and techniques, merging elements

from classical Islamic, Mughal, and regional vernacular styles with modern sensibilities. This eclecticism makes the Bhong Mosque not only a religious space but also a cultural and artistic landmark (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). What distinguishes the mosque is the extensive use of high-quality decorative techniques and materials. These include gold leaf ornamentation, intricate ***kashi kari*** **(tile work)**, mother-of-pearl inlay, stucco tracery, carved woodwork, and calligraphic inscriptions that adorn the prayer halls, domes, and minarets (Bahadur, 2022; Musso; Naeem, 2017). Each element demonstrates both traditional craftsmanship and innovative adaptation, reflecting the fusion of heritage with modern construction practices. For example, the mosque's gold leaf details mirror classical Persian and Mughal traditions, while the innovative use of modern construction materials allowed for structural experimentation, making the building a catalog of architectural creativity (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999).

The purpose of the present research is to analyze and document these architectural and artistic techniques in order to situate the Bhong Mosque within the discourse of contemporary world architecture. By doing so, the study not only preserves knowledge of this unique masterpiece but also promotes recognition of Pakistan's contribution to global architectural heritage. Moreover, highlighting the mosque's significance underscores the need for conservation and scholarly attention to regional Islamic architecture, which often remains underrepresented in global academic discussions (Musso; Naeem, 2017; Shah, Qureshi, & Akhtar, 2021).

Research Design:

The foundation of this report lies in the systematic collection of information for research purposes. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Research design is essential for developing awareness and producing structured insights into a given topic (Brandstätter, 2025; Creswell, 2009). In this case, the chosen theme is inspired by the architectural brilliance of the Bhong Mosque, which is celebrated for its eclectic use of materials, decorative techniques, and symbolic design (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). The researcher's primary objective is to translate these architectural elements, techniques, and materials into a new form of artistic expression. Specifically, the study aims to design handcrafted jewelry that symbolizes the mosque's unique aesthetics. Techniques such as gold leaf ornamentation, ***kashi kari*** **(tile work)**, and intricate calligraphy, which characterize the mosque's visual identity (Musso; Naeem, 2017; Shah et al., 2021), are reimagined on a smaller scale through jewelry design. This approach not only pays homage to the craftsmanship embodied in the Bhong Mosque but also seeks to reinterpret its architectural heritage as wearable art, thereby bridging the gap between monumental architecture and contemporary design practice.

Data Collection Measures:

Data for this study was collected through both primary and secondary research methods. Primary research involved direct observation and analysis of architectural features of the Bhong Mosque, along with design experimentation to translate these features into jewelry concepts. Secondary research included the review of academic literature, books, and published studies on Islamic architecture and decorative traditions, particularly those focusing on the Bhong Mosque and its artistic techniques (Musso; Naeem, 2017; Shah et al., 2021) (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). This dual approach ensured that the findings were grounded in both firsthand exploration and established scholarly knowledge, thereby strengthening the reliability and depth of the research (Brandstätter, 2025; Creswell, 2009).

Primary Research:

Primary data was gathered through direct observation by personally visiting the Bhong Mosque. During the visit, the researcher carefully studied its structural layout, construction materials, and the techniques used in ornamentation, including gold leaf work, *kashi kari*, and calligraphy. This hands-on engagement with the site provided an authentic understanding of the mosque's architectural and artistic features, which could not be fully captured through secondary sources alone

(Brandstätter, 2025; Creswell, 2009). Such primary observation allowed the researcher to connect theoretical knowledge with practical insights, strengthening the foundation for translating these elements into jewelry design.

Secondary Research:

Secondary data was collected through an extensive review of literature related to Islamic art and architecture, with a particular focus on the Bhong Mosque. Key sources included books, journal articles, and research studies that discuss the mosque's historical background, design philosophy, and artistic techniques (Musso; Naeem, 2017; Shah et al., 2021) (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). This review provided valuable theoretical insights into the cultural significance of architectural ornamentation, such as tile work, calligraphy, and inlay methods, which are central to the mosque's identity. By engaging with existing scholarship, the researcher was able to contextualize the Bhong Mosque within broader debates on Islamic architecture and contemporary design, thereby complementing the observations gathered through primary research (Musso; Naeem, 2017).

Interviews:

As part of primary data collection, three interviews were conducted to obtain firsthand insights related to the history, community impact, and technical aspects connected to the Bhong Mosque and jewelry design.

Interview with the Mosque Supervisor

The first interview was conducted with the supervisor of the Bhong Mosque to gather historical and contextual information. This discussion provided details about the mosque's origins, its patronage, and the reasons for it being awarded the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In addition, the supervisor explained the types of materials used in both the interior and exterior construction of the mosque, such as gold leaf, *kashi kari*, and calligraphic ornamentation (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). This one-to-one interview was crucial in deepening the researcher's understanding of the mosque's cultural and architectural significance.

Interview with Bhong Village Residents

A second interview was conducted with local residents of Bhong village to examine the mosque's influence on community life. The conversation focused on how the construction of the mosque changed their social and educational environment. The respondents shared insights into the availability of Islamic education prior to the mosque's establishment and the transformations brought about in their daily lives after its completion (Naeem, 2012). These community perspectives provided a social dimension to the research that complemented the architectural and historical analysis.

Interview with Jewelry Expert

The third interview was carried out with Sir Humayun, a senior handicraft teacher in the Gems and Jewellery Department at the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD). This discussion focused on technical knowledge essential for adapting architectural ornamentation into jewelry. Questions explored the process of gemstone carving, the suitability of various materials for producing three-dimensional pieces with intricate designs, and whether gold leaf techniques differ when applied to surfaces such as wood and metal. The expert's insights were instrumental in connecting the architectural inspiration of the Bhong Mosque to practical jewelry-making processes (Musso; Naeem, 2017).

Focus group (General Public):

In addition to individual interviews, a focus group was conducted to gather diverse perspectives on the Bhong Mosque. The session included participants from different age groups, ensuring a variety of viewpoints were represented. The discussion centered on participants' perceptions of the mosque's architectural, cultural, and social significance. Questions were posed to the group collectively, and each participant was invited to respond in turn, which encouraged active participation and allowed for the comparison of intergenerational perspectives. This group-based method was particularly useful for identifying shared understandings as well as contrasting opinions regarding the mosque's role in community life (Ilyas & Arifin, 2025; Krueger, 2014).

Population:
The jewelry inspired by the Bhong Mosque is being produced in Lahore, which serves as the central location for participant selection. A targeted sampling method was applied, as it allows the researcher to deliberately choose participants who are most relevant to the study's objectives. This approach ensures that individuals with expertise or interest in handcrafted jewelry, cultural heritage, and design innovation are included in the process. Such purposive sampling is considered appropriate for qualitative research because it generates rich and relevant data for analysis (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Juanta et al., 2025). By focusing on participants who can provide informed perspectives, the research outcomes are strengthened and better aligned with the project's aims (Etikan et al., 2016; Juanta et al., 2025).

Data Analysis:
For the quantitative component of the research, data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This software was chosen because it provides robust tools for managing, coding, and statistically analyzing survey data (Pallant, 2020; Prayogo, 2025). SPSS allowed the researcher to conduct descriptive and inferential analysis, identify patterns, and interpret responses in a systematic manner. The use of this software ensured accuracy in handling numerical data and enhanced the reliability of the research findings.

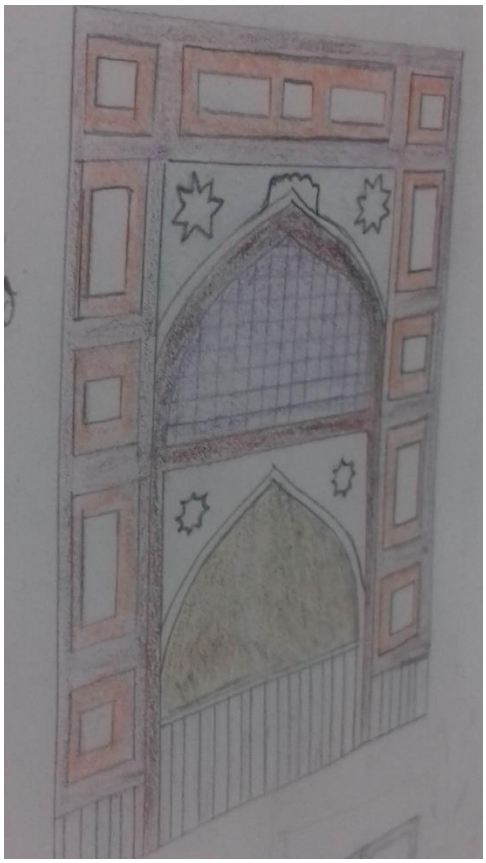
Design Development
The design process was carried out systematically to translate the architectural and decorative features of the Bhong Mosque into jewelry forms. This stage involved gathering inspiration, creating design sketches, and refining them into final renderings and technical drawings.

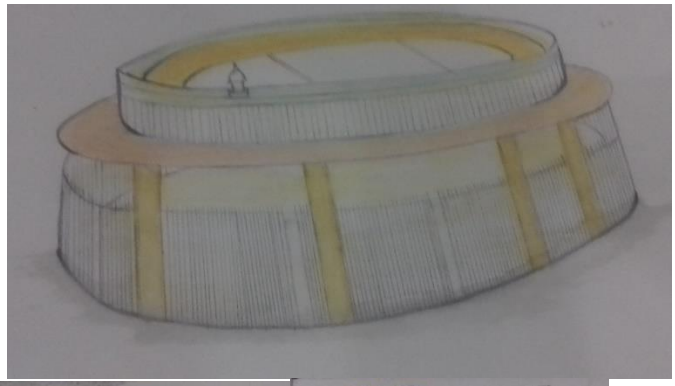
Inspiration Sources
The initial stage of the design process involved collecting visual references through live photography of the Bhong Mosque. Specific architectural and decorative elements were identified as primary sources of inspiration, including:

- **Architectural structure**: domes, arches, and ornamental facades.
- **Decorative techniques**: *kashi kari* (tile work), inlay craftsmanship, and gold leafing.
- **Hidden artistic details**: the white marble Qur'an and framed images of holy sites embellished with gold leaf.
- **Islamic motifs**: geometric and floral patterns commonly associated with Islamic design traditions.
- **Mughal influences**: stylistic features reflecting Mughal-era art and ornamentation (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999).

These elements provided a diverse visual vocabulary that could be reinterpreted within the medium of handcrafted jewelry.

Sketching and Ideation
The collected observations were translated into design sketches. This stage focused on combining, overlapping, and merging different motifs to generate unique jewelry concepts. Multiple iterations were explored to ensure that the designs captured both the richness of the mosque's ornamentation and the functionality required for wearable art.









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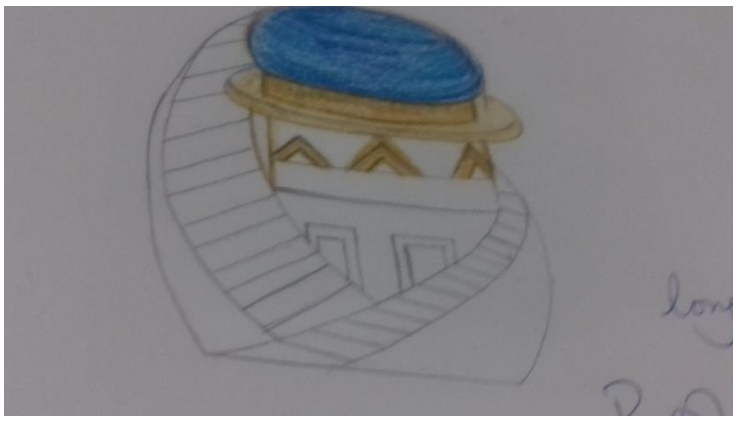

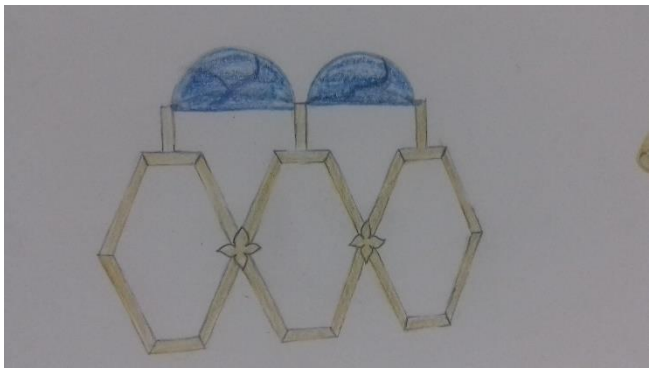



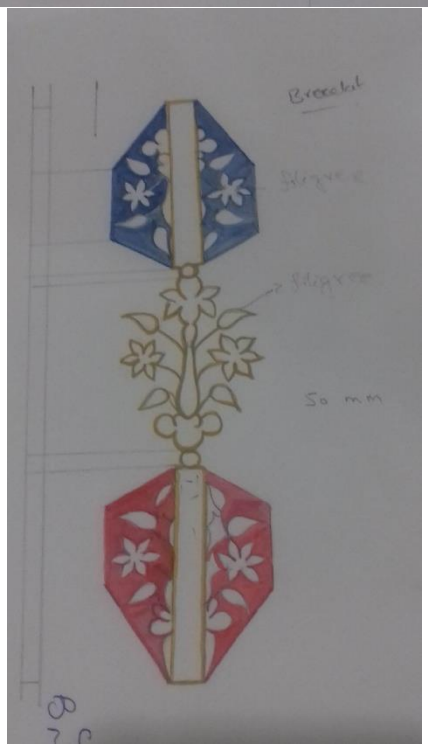

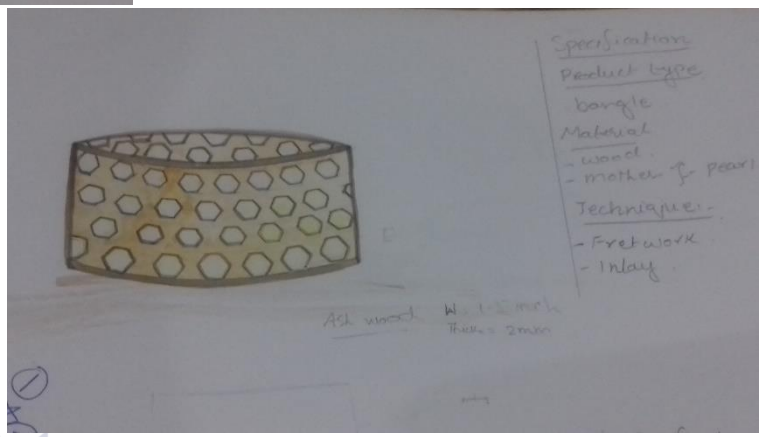

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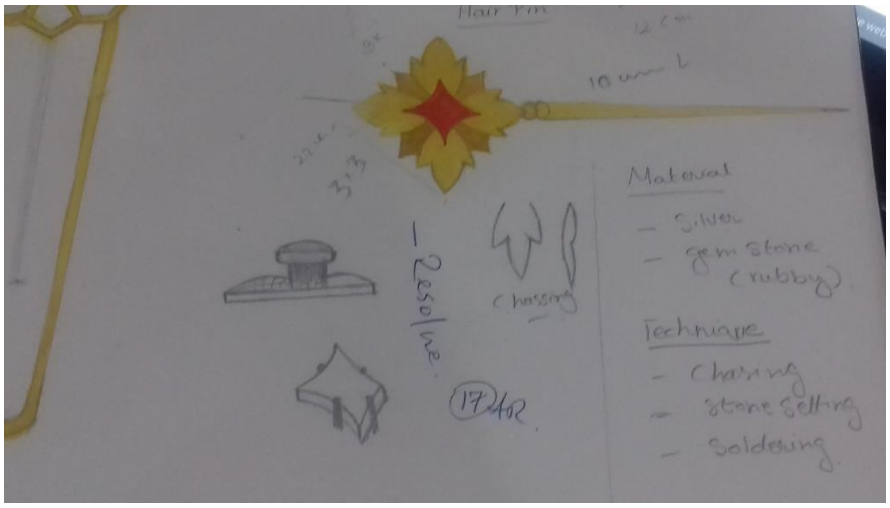

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Rendering and Technical Drawings

From an initial pool of 20 developed sketches, 8 renderings and 8 technical drawings were selected for refinement. The renderings highlighted the aesthetic aspects of the designs, including form, color, and surface decoration, while the technical drawings emphasized the structural details necessary for fabrication. Different mediums were used at this stage to experiment with visual outcomes and to test the feasibility of incorporating materials such as gemstones, metals, and gold leaf into the final products. Through this iterative process, the architectural identity of the Bhong Mosque was successfully reimagined into a series of jewelry designs that reflect both cultural heritage and contemporary craftsmanship.

Finding of primary observation & secondary observation:

Findings from Primary Observation



Direct observation of the Bhong Mosque during site visits provided valuable insights into its architectural and artistic identity. The mosque's structural features, such as domes, arches, and minarets, were observed to be richly adorned with decorative details. Notable techniques included **gold leaf ornamentation**, **kashi kari tile work**, **calligraphy**, and **inlay craftsmanship**, all of which contribute to the mosque's visual richness. Hidden artistic treasures, such as the **white marble Qur'an** and framed images of holy sites embellished with gold leaf, were also noted as significant features. These observations highlighted the mosque's combination of traditional craftsmanship with modern construction, making it a living example of architectural hybridity. For the purpose of design inspiration, these elements provided a strong visual and conceptual foundation for developing jewelry pieces that reflect the same cultural and artistic values.

Findings from Secondary Observation

The review of literature and scholarly sources on the Bhong Mosque confirmed and expanded the insights gained from primary observation. Academic studies emphasize the mosque's significance as a blend of **traditional Islamic motifs** and **modern design practices** (Khadim Hussain, 2025; Mumtaz, 1999). Scholars note its recognition through the **Aga Khan Award for Architecture**, highlighting its role as both a religious and cultural landmark (Musso; Naeem, 2017). Literature also details the mosque's eclectic use of techniques such as gold leafing, tile work, mother-of-pearl inlay, and calligraphy, which collectively situate it within the discourse of **contemporary Islamic architecture**. These secondary findings validated the researcher's observations, while also placing them in a wider historical and cultural framework.



Interview with Bhong Mosque Supervisor:

A one-to-one interview was conducted with the supervisor of the Bhong Mosque to gain detailed insights into its historical background and architectural development. The supervisor explained that the mosque was constructed under the patronage of Sardar Rais Ghazi Muhammad, beginning in 1932 and completed in 1982 after nearly five decades of work. He highlighted the vision of the patron, who aimed to create a religious and cultural landmark that combined traditional Islamic artistry with modern construction practices (Khan, 2003). The interview also provided information about the materials and techniques used in both the interior and exterior of the mosque, including gold leafing, *kashi kari* tile work, calligraphy, marble inlay, and woodcarving. These details revealed the extent of craftsmanship involved in the project, which required artisans from different regions of Pakistan. Another significant point raised was the mosque's recognition through the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. According to the supervisor, the award was granted due to the mosque's unique blend of traditional Islamic motifs with innovative architectural solutions, making it an international symbol of contemporary Islamic design (Bahadur, 2022). This interview enriched the research by offering firsthand historical context and technical details that are not always accessible through secondary literature. The insights gained directly informed the jewelry design process, particularly in terms of selecting materials and decorative techniques that reflect the architectural spirit of the mosque.

Interview Findings

Interview with Lecturer Asif (Furniture Department, PIFD):
Lecturer Asif explained the traditional wood inlay process, where patterns are carved into wood and filled with gem or pearl powder. He highlighted that pearl can be used for inlay work by creating small chips and embedding them into carved spaces. According to him, teak wood is the most suitable material for this technique, and specialized wood carving tools are essential for achieving precision.

Interview with Sir Humayun (Handcraft Teacher, Jewellery Department, PIFD):
Sir Humayun recommended silver and gemstones as the most suitable materials for the jewellery project. He explained that carving machines available in the handcraft studio allow gemstones to be shaped into different forms. For intricate three-dimensional designs, he suggested using wax modeling. He also clarified that gold leafing techniques differ for wood and metal surfaces, as each requires a distinct form of gold. Finally, he recommended purchasing high-quality materials from Dhobi Mandi in Old Anarkali, Lahore.

Interview with Miss Hina (Lecturer, Jewellery Department, PIFD):
Miss Hina emphasized that the essence of Bhong Mosque in design development can be achieved by incorporating unique architectural portions of the mosque that distinguish it from other structures. She noted that architectural elements should be carefully adapted into jewellery designs without disturbing their original characteristics.

Focus Group Findings

A focus group session was conducted on 17 October 2017 with participants from different age groups and professional backgrounds. The purpose was to gather opinions on the cultural and architectural significance of Bhong Mosque. Participants were encouraged to share their views individually, followed by group discussion.

Participants:

Sr. No.	Name	Age	Occupation
1	Azra	22	Student (4th Year)
2	Sara	18	Student (1st Year)
3	Arshea	23	Student (3rd Year)
4	Hoor	21	Fashion Designer
5	Abdullah	25	Architect

Key Findings:

- The younger participants (students) highlighted Bhong Mosque's unique decorative elements, particularly the calligraphy and inlay work, as a strong inspiration for design.
- The fashion designer (Hoor) emphasized the mosque's symbolic value and suggested that its ornamental patterns could be transformed into modern wearable art.
- The architect (Abdullah) provided insights into the mosque's structural features, stressing that its architectural blend of traditional and contemporary elements makes it a landmark worthy of adaptation into jewellery design.

The focus group results provide valuable insights into how Bhong Mosque is perceived by individuals from different age groups and professional backgrounds. Across all responses, two recurring themes emerged: architectural appeal and spiritual symbolism. In terms of architecture, participants emphasized the mosque's structural elements such as domes, minarets, and overall symmetry, as well as its use of color and form. Several respondents also linked their appreciation of architecture to Mughal influences, situating Bhong Mosque within the broader historical tradition of Islamic design in South Asia. This reflects the mosque's hybrid identity as both a contemporary and historically rooted structure. On the symbolic level, participants consistently described mosques as spaces of purity, peace, and divine connection. Their responses show that Bhong Mosque is not only admired for its physical design but also valued as a spiritual landmark. The description of the mosque as "200 years of the timeline in one picture" captures the perception that it unites historical depth with modern relevance.

Finally, there was unanimous agreement that Bhong Mosque deserves recognition among the most famous mosques of Pakistan. Participants highlighted the intricacy of its ornamentation and the uniqueness of its design, affirming that its reputation extends beyond the local community. Overall, the focus group findings confirm that Bhong Mosque is viewed as both an aesthetic masterpiece and a spiritual symbol, making it a strong source of inspiration for creative fields such as jewellery design.

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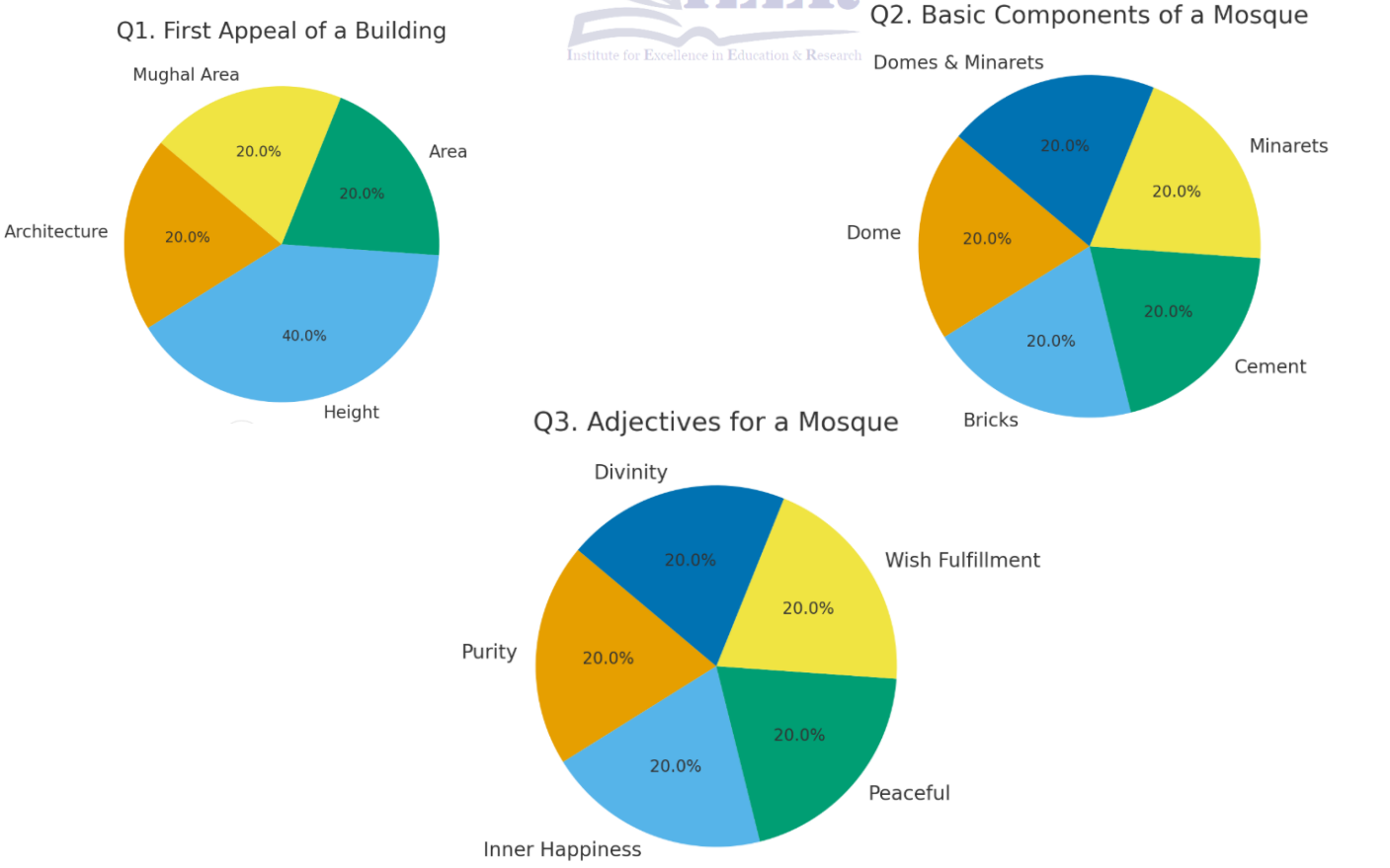
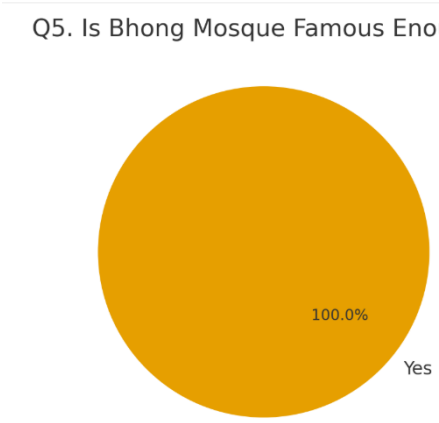
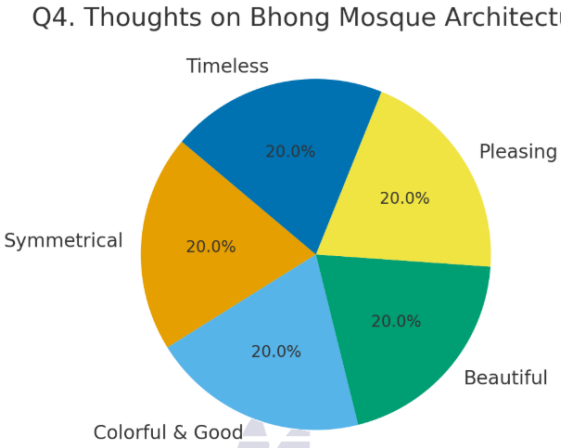
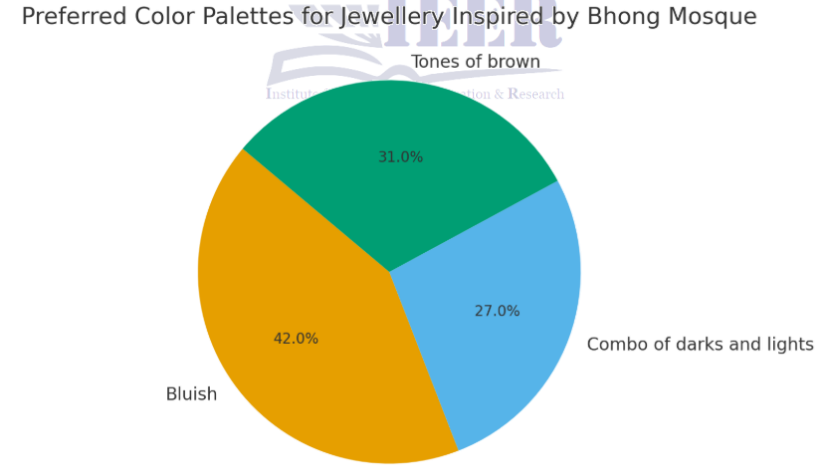
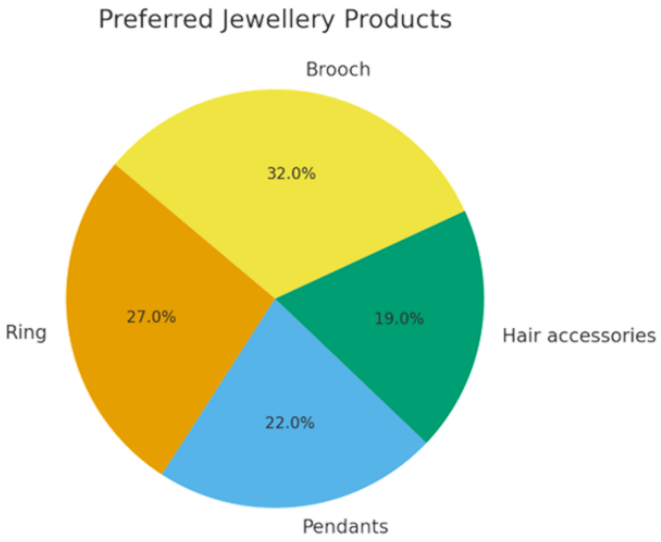



Q5. Is Bhong Mosque Famous Enough?
100.0%
Yes


Q4. Thoughts on Bhong Mosque Architecture
Timeless
20.0%
Pleasing
20.0%
Symmetrical
20.0%
20.0%
20.0%
Beautiful
Colorful & Good


Preferred Color Palettes for Jewellery Inspired by Bhong Mosque
Tones of brown
31.0%
27.0%
42.0%
Combo of darks and lights
Bluish



Here are the pie charts showing preferences:

- The first chart highlights color palettes where bluish tones are most popular (42%).
- The second chart shows jewellery product choices, with brooches being the top preference (32%).

Product process:

Brooch

The process began by melting silver to create a 17-gauge sheet. Elements of the brooch design were first drafted on paper, pasted on the silver sheet, and then cast. These casted elements were filed and sanded to achieve smoothness before soldering them together. A brooch pin was created separately and soldered into place. Finally, enameling in blue and red was applied to highlight key elements, followed by finishing touches to complete the piece.

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Process Picture:





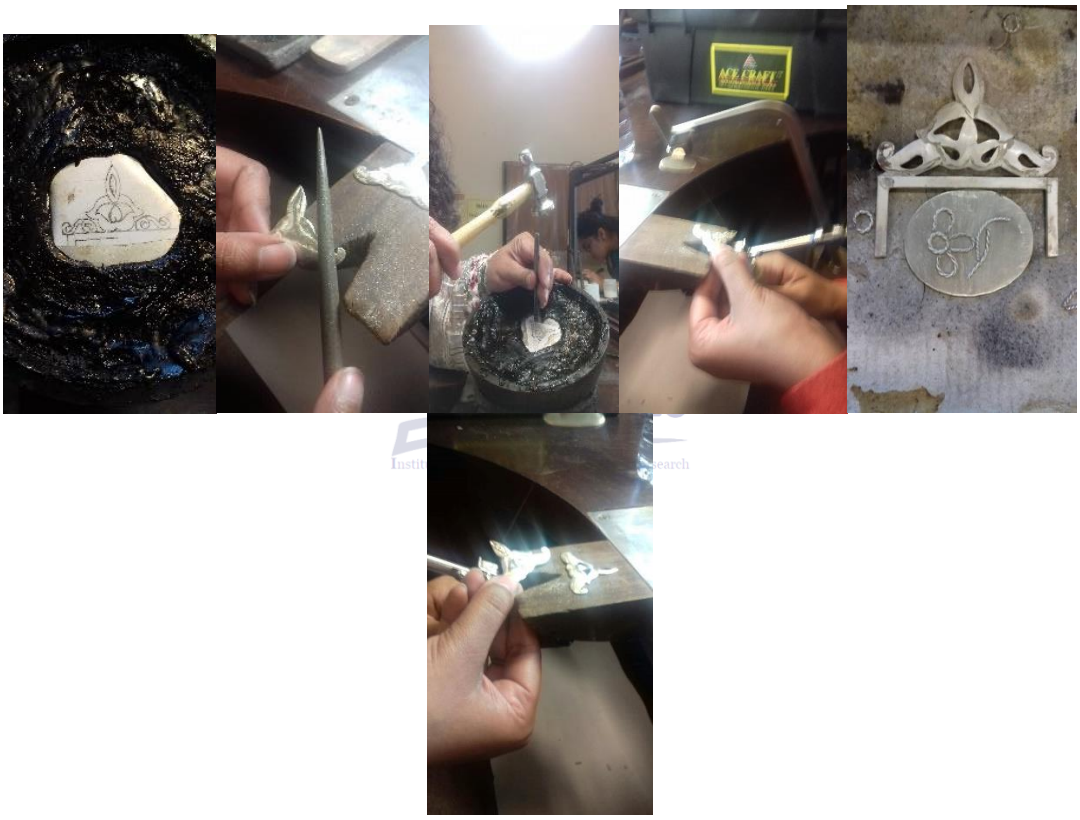
Final Product:



Earrings

Silver was melted to produce a 20-gauge sheet for the chasing technique. The floral motifs of the earrings were drafted on paper and transferred into a chasing bowl. Using tracing tools, chasing hammers, and planishers, the design was carefully outlined and refined. Negative spaces were marked, cut with a handsaw, and soldered before filing to perfection.

Process Picture:



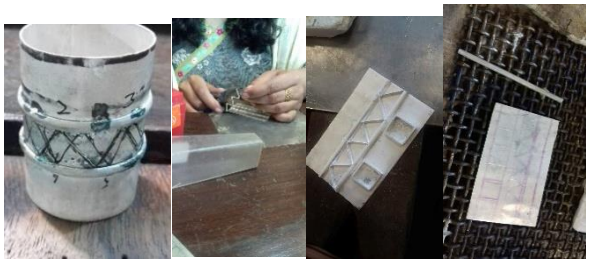
Final Product:



Pendant

The pendant was crafted by melting silver and creating an 18-gauge sheet. A pattern was drafted and complemented with 17-gauge and 18-gauge wires to form bezels. Zigzag wires were shaped and soldered onto the base sheet. The structure was bent using a ring bender to form a cylinder, which was soldered at the edges. Two bezels were added, completing the architectural-inspired design.

Process Picture:





Final Product:



Wooden Buttons

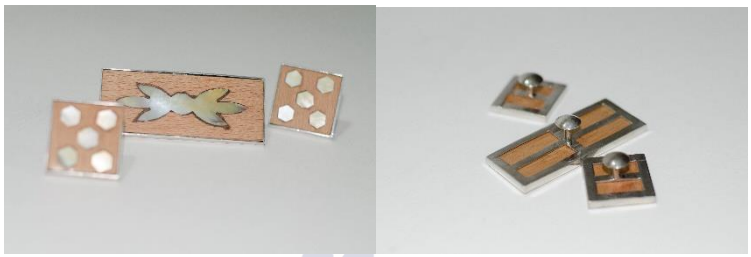
Wooden strips (3 sutar) were produced using a pressing machine. Designs were drafted using CorelDRAW and engraved with an engraving machine. Mother-of-pearl was cut to fit the engraved spaces, glued, and sanded. Silver bezels were then fabricated to complete the inlay buttons.



Process Picture:



Final Product:



Costing & Concluion:

Product name	Material cost	Wastage	Labor cost (Rs250/day)	Overheads	Electroplating	Enameling	Total cost
Bangle	Wood = 2000Mother of pearl = 2000	500	3500	1500	-	-	9,500
Motif Brooch	Silver = 4000	200	4000	2500	1500	3000	15,200
Earrings	Silver = 5500Gem = 2000	500	4500	2000	2000	4000	20,500
Buttons	Wood = 2000Mother of pearl = 2000	300	2000 (Bezels)4000 (Inlay)	1500	1500	-	13,300
Wooden Bun Pin	Silver = 3000Wood = 4000	2000	2500	1000	1500	-	14,000
Pendant	Silver = 7000Lapis Gem = 3000	2000	3750	1000	2000	4000	22,750
Bun Pin	Silver = 6000Ruby Gem = 2500	2000	1750	1000	3000	-	16,250

Conclusion:

This research highlights the potential of translating architectural heritage into contemporary jewelry design by drawing inspiration from the Bhong Mosque. Through a combination of primary and secondary research, including direct observations, interviews, focus groups, and photographic documentation, the study successfully identified key design elements such as inlay work, calligraphy, filigree, enamel, kashi kari, and the use of precious materials like silver, pearls, and gemstones. These elements were reinterpreted into miniature wearable forms, creating handcrafted jewelry pieces that embody the cultural and aesthetic essence of the mosque. The design development process, supported by sketches, technical drawings, and prototypes, led to the production of brooches, earrings, pendants, and wooden buttons. Each product reflects the mosque's intricate craftsmanship while being adapted to modern jewelry-making techniques such as enameling, gemstone carving, and filigree. The costing analysis ensured that the feasibility of each product was carefully evaluated, providing practical insights into material selection, labor requirements, and finishing processes.

Findings from focus groups and questionnaires revealed that brooches, earrings, and pendants with bluish tones and architectural motifs were most favored by participants, while preferences for gemstones varied by gender. These insights suggest a strong market for heritage-inspired jewelry that balances tradition with contemporary aesthetics. Overall, the project not only demonstrates how traditional Islamic architecture can inspire innovative design solutions but also establishes a framework for preserving cultural heritage through wearable art. The research contributes to both the fields of design and heritage preservation by showing how architecture can be celebrated in new creative forms while appealing to modern consumers.

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