
Research Paper

Main Title

Iranian Mosques, an icon in identity of Iranian cities

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Abstract

Mosques is the place of praying of Muslims. The common elements of mosques are entrance, Shabestan (a covered hall with numerous columns in mosques and the main space for praying), Ivan (a semi open space between yard and Shabestan), Minarets, yard, doom and so on.

There are various kinds of mosques, for example Jameh mosque (which is the most important mosques in the city), mosques of a residential district, mosques of cemetery and mosque- school.

Revolution of mosques in Iran can be divided to some periods. Mosques have been evolved during the history, first Iranian mosques had just a Shabestan and a courtyard but Ivan was added to mosques and mosques with one Ivan and after Mosques with four Ivan were appeared.

Mosques (specially Jameh mosques) have effective impacts in cityscape of Iranian cities, the doom and minaret of mosques play as effective landmarks in cityscape of the city.

The ornamented entrance of a mosque is an effective point in the elevation of streets as well. In the other hand the courtyard of mosque can be used as an urban space as well.

This paper will explain about the effects of mosques in the cityscape of Iranian city and how this effect can be reinforced in the best way to lead the city toward a mentionable and remarkable city.

Keywords

Mosque , skyline , Elements of mosques , cityscape

Introduction

Urban designing is an art which should be admired by million visitors and citizens. In past Iranian cities had high physical quality but in revolution of modernization its physical quality was declined a lot.

Improving the physical quality of Iranian cities should be considered in recent urban planning programs. Although fulfilling it will take a long time.

Each city needs a pleasant and qualified cityscape and beautiful skyline to be considered as an in shaped and remarkable city.

Mosques in Iranian cities have a great impact in the physical elements of Iranian cities such as cityscape, skyline, roofscape and roofline.

This paper will discuss about the impact of Iranian mosques on physical quality of Iranian cities and how it can improve the image of city.

1. Elements of the physical image of city

The physical aspects of each city are numerous and the most important elements of it are: skyline, roofline, roofscape. Below is a brief explain about each element.

1.1. Skyline

The skyline can be defined as “a line which exists in the intersection of sky and land”. The skyline is the crown of the city and this crown will be decorated by gems which they are actually the land marks. With putting more gems with a good order on the crown, we can have more beautiful cityscape and skyline in the city. Skyline can create an individual and unique character in the city.



Figure 1. Jameh mosque (great mosque) in Ardestan city



Figure 2. The skyline of historical city of Yazd

1.2. Roofscape

It is the scape of roofs which can be seen from higher buildings or other high places. Roofscape needs to be decorated to form a remarkable and noticeable city.



Figure 3. Roofscape of Jameh mosque of Isfahan

1.3. Roofline

The difference between skyline and roofline is that skyline can be seen from a long distance and roofline can be seen from the inside the urban space. So, we can see the roofline from the near distance.



Figure 4. Naghshe – Jahan square roofline

2. Iranian mosques and its features

Mosques in Islamic cities is the main landmark in an Islamic society. The shape of mosques, dome, high minaret and location of mosque become it to a landmark in the Iranian cities. In traditional Iranian cities bazars and districts were formed around the Jameh mosques. Jameh mosque (great mosque) is a main and the most important building in the city. In the second scale we have mosques for districts for local prayers, these mosques are smaller with lower ornaments.

Mosques have several elements and in follow we will review the most general elements in an Iranian mosque.

3. Elements of mosques

3.1. Entrance

The entrance of a mosque includes entry, the minaret above the entry, the door, stone bench, Hashti and corridor. The entrance of the mosque usually is decorated with tile work and plastering.



Figure 5. Imam Mosque in Bazar of Tehran



Figure 6. Imam mosque in Isfahan

3.2. Courtyard

it is the main open space of the mosque. The access to the Ivans, Shabestan, and stairs of roof and Minarate is possible by courtyard. Often a pool has been located in the middle of courtyard for cleaning purposes and getting Vuzo.

3.3. Ivan

this space is a semi opened between courtyard and Shabestan. The history of it goes back to Iranian architecture in Ashkanian and Sasanid era.



Figure 7. The courtyard of Agha Bozarg mosque in Kashan city

3.4. Minaret

This element usually located on top of entrance or roof of the mosque. Minaret was used for standing the singer of Azan (sing for inviting prayers to pray)



Figure 8. Sepahsalar Mosque in Tehran



Figure 9. Jameh mosque in Yazd city

3.5. Doom

it is an arched structure of the roof of mosques which can be identified as a landmark like minaret. Many Doods in mosques have been decorated by tiling.



Figure 10. Agha Bozorgh Mosque in Kashan

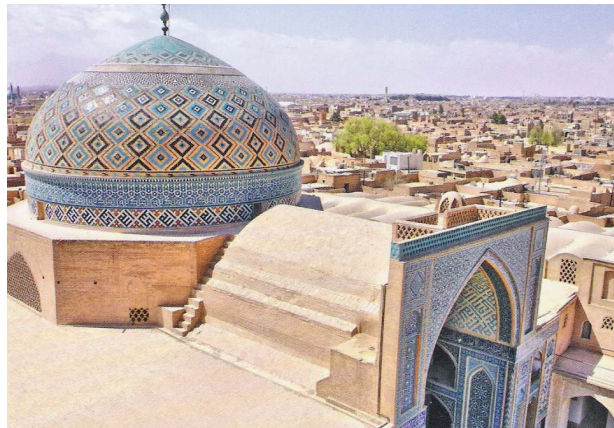


Figure 11. Jameh mosque in Yazd city

3.6. Shabestan

a covered hall with numerous columns in mosque and it is the main space for praying and meeting.



Figure 12. Shabestan of Nasir-ol-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz

4. conclusion

Iranian cities have lost their physical values during modernization but it can be improved by some strategies. One of the effective strategies is considering the impact of mosques in the roofscape and skyline of the city. Mosques can be considered as a landmark in the Iranian cities, the dome, Minaret , entrance and other similar elements of mosques can have positive impacts in the skyline , roofline and roofscape of the Iranian cities.

Specially Minaret and after that the dome of mosque can have a great influence in the skyline and roofscape of city.

We have good example of this kind in some Iranian cities and this should be improved in other Iranian cities. During the making shape of the city this landmark can enrich the physical impact of Iranian cities.



Figure 13. Mosalla (mosque for doing ceremonial prayers) of Tehran



Figure 14. Roofline of the square of Amir Chaghmagh in Yazd city

Istanbul in Turkey is a good and noticeable example of it. This city has the beautiful image because of its Mosques.



Figure 15. Roofline in Istanbul

Even smaller mosques have their effect in the image of city in smaller scale. Presenting a good image of district mosques can improve the image of that district of city.



Figure 16. A district mosque in Dubai

Authorities of urban planning in Iran can improve the image of city by issuing some good legislation in designing of mosques according their scale. For examples issuing some codes for the height of doom and minaret for future mosques, the skyline and its character of city can be improved.

An important fact in Iranian urban plans is that most of plans just have been prepared in two dimensions. The comprehensive plan for Iranian cities has been created as a two-dimensional plan, so the third

dimension hasn't been considered in this plan. Because of this character the future skyline of the city has no legislation.

This means that urban plans should be created in three dimensional the height of building should be considered in each landuse and any zone. So, the future skyline and cityscape of city can be created more better with a defined program.

Finally, it can be said that providing three-dimensional plan for Iranian cities with considering important landmarks specially mosques can create a more considerable and noticeable cities.



Figure 17. Goharshad mosque in Mashad city

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