

# Kakori: A Sufi Town - Need for the Holistic Revival

Shubha Kant<sup>1</sup>, Kumar Kartikey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Faculty of Architecture, Abdul Kalam Technical University, Tagore Marg, Hasanganj- Lucknow 226007, India

**Abstract:** *The Kakori, situated 14 Km towards north-west of Lucknow is a land of sacred sufi saints. The center of once flourishing Urdu poetry, literature and the Qadariya Qalandariya sufi order. The Shrine of Khanqahe Qazamiya Qalandariya- Takia Sharif, draws attention from the people all over the world and is a living example of “Ganga- Jamuni Tehzeeb” of Awadh region, which had patrons both from Hindu and Muslim religions. The town has grown all around these centers and we may say these sufi shrines act as a central pivot to the town. The festival of “Urs” is celebrated here where various intellectuals from different fields such as spirituality, research, astronomy, literature, poetry, dance, music, craft, cuisines and other cultural activities gather together to celebrate enthusiasm. Kakori once used to be the residential hub for most intellects of Awadh region like barristers, bureaucrats, advocates and many other major administrative designations before independence were in hold of the residents of Kakori as a result of which the town has magnificent Havelies and Kothis. Many transformations have been taken place in due course of time but still Kakori has been able to maintain its essence and living with high spirit & integrity. The paper presents the inherent of the town with a wider perspective of multi- modal activities connecting nearby areas and the enhancement or holistic revival of shrine complex. The overall vision for Kakori is as a region for tourism, cultural activities and craft village.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Dargah, Indo- Sasnic, Lime, Sacred, Shrines, Sufism

## 1. Introduction

Kakori town has several heritage structures including sufi shrines, Havelies, Baradaris, religious buildings and natural water bodies with a rich historical account saved well within its architecture, but it is dying day by day due to the negligence from the people and the government. Late 12<sup>th</sup> century shows the advent of Sufism in the northern India. The first orders to establish themselves in India were the Chishtiyas and Suhrawardiya which trace their origin from the Central and West Asia. Qadriya and Naqshbandiya both being the international orders of Sufism came late to India in 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> century. The Qadriya was majorly spread to the Deccan, in and around Delhi and Bengal. Awadh was also a center for these orders as there were many Chishti centers in and around Awadh. Khanqahe Qazamiya Qalandariya – Takia Sharif is a sufi shrine established by Shah Mohammad Qazim Qalandar between (1745-1806) to spread a message of humanity and to find out the solutions for the problems of the human beings around. It has captured the hearts so much so that even today the place is famous as a solace where people gather. Takia Sharif celebrates the spirits of Basant (spring). It is a belief that Basant is a prelude to attainment of union with one’s beloved (Lord Krishna or Hazrat Ali in this case) and this cause for a celebration in the form of Qawwali concerts and carnivals within the shrine complex and around the town.



**Figure 1:** Khanqahe Qalandariya Qazamiya - Takia Sharif  
Source (Kant, 2019)

The town has an ASI protected Beheta bridge and temples at the outskirts, whereas around 18 Havelies/ Kothis from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries within the town. The settlement of the town is scattered along a huge water body (pond). Some of the Kothis and Havelies are not well maintained as the owners have been migrated to Pakistan or other places after independence. Kakori has several monuments and historical structures which has the rich historical account saved well within its architecture, but it is dying day by day due to negligence from the people and the government.



**Figure 2:** Beheta Bridge and Temples Source:(Kant, 2019)

Beheta bridge and temples were Built in 17<sup>th</sup> century by Maharaja Tikait Rai during the reign of Nawab Asif – ud-Daula. This bridge has two huge towers at an end. There is a Shiva Temple attached adjacent to it. The temple has beautiful carvings at the dome and at the entrance gate.



**Figure 3:** Faiz Kothi, Kakori  
Source: (Kant, 2019)

Faiz Kothi was built in 17<sup>th</sup> century for the residential purposes by a local resident. This Kothi was utilized as the headquarters to freedom fighters during the independence movement against the British India Company.

Alvi Kothi was built in 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Alvi clan and is still in residential use by the family. This Kothi is in well maintained condition and made of lakhauri bricks and lime mortar.



**Figure 4:** Alvi Kothi, Kakori  
Source: (Kant, 2019)

Built in 17<sup>th</sup> century and belongs to Khusro family. The family has shifted to Lucknow and now is with a care taker to look after. The Kothi has two huge halls with balconies.



**Figure 5:** Khusro Kothi, Kakori  
Source: (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 6:** Soheb Manzil, Kakori  
Source: (Kant, 2019)

Soheb Manzil was built in 18<sup>th</sup> century and belongs to Soheb family. It is being used by the family for residential purposes. This Kothi developed on the central courtyard planning and is surrounded by magnificent lawns from all sides. It is a G+1 structure with a huge entrance gate and a staircase on both the sides.



**Figure 7:** Umaraao Kothi, Kakori Source:(Kant, 2019)

It is the most well maintained Kothi in the town among the all Kothis which is often used for filming movies and documentaries depicting Awadh region. The Kothi has Doric columns and a corridor at front façade with arched openings. Built in 18<sup>th</sup> century and still the pride of town. The Kothi premises also has other structures like guest house and servant's quarter.



**Figure 8:** Rauza Baba Dargah Source:(Kant, 2019)

Rauza Baba Dargah was built in 17<sup>th</sup> century by Nawab



Asif- ud – Daula. The structure is in dilapidated state at present. The roof has fallen down in due to natural distress. The structure is made of lakhauri brick and lime mortar. It has similar façade on all the sides. The structure has been bonded by four minarets on all the corners.

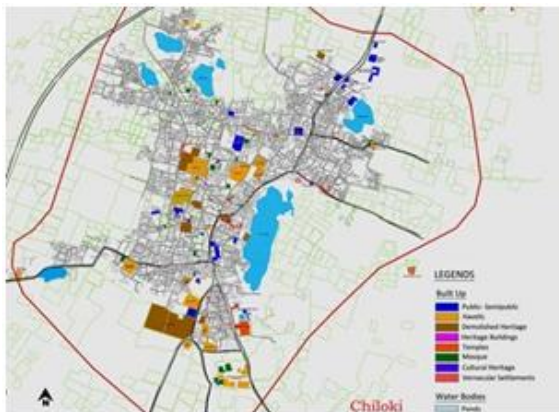


Figure 9: Settlement of Kakori with Heritage Demarcation Source (Kant, 2019)

## 2. Takia Sharif- the Sufi Complex

Takia Sharif shrine complex is situated at the southern axis of the town and consists of total 12 built structures in its premises. In the north of the complex, the three Dargahs namely Dargah of Shah Turab Ali Qalandar, Dargah of Shah Ali Anwar Qalandar & Dargah of Shah Mohammad Qasim Qalandar are the main source of footfall. These Dargahs are beautifully decorated with carvings on the marbles cladded on walls and cornices. The foliated arches and the huge dome with lotus petal base shows an amalgamation of Islamic and Indian architectural elements. The interior of these Dargahs are beautifully done by calligraphy and Persian art form painted on the dome and walls. Huge colorful chandeliers are hanging from the dome in large numbers of different sizes. These chandeliers are antiques from Persia. The complex has one magnificent Baradari built in colonial style with exposed lakhauri brick and vaulted arches resting on a high platform, it has been a place for sufi saints to practice Sufism in the form of dance and qawwali. The platform works as a basement to this Baradari with small space divisions. In the west of the complex lies a mosque which is a later construction by the committee and the administrator.



Figure 10: Baradari, Takia Sharif Source (Kant, 2019)

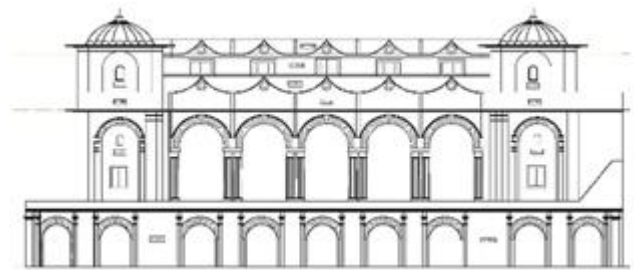


Figure 11: Baradari South Elevation Source (Kant, 2019)

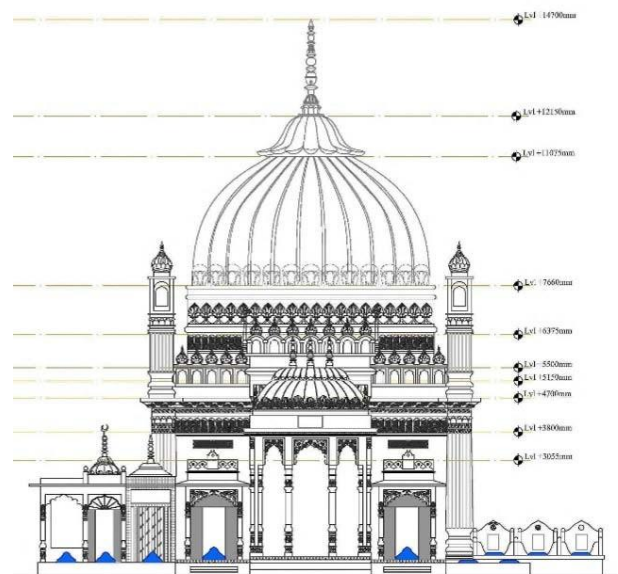


Figure 12: Front Elevation- Dargah of Shah Ali Anwar Qalandar Source (Kant, 2019)

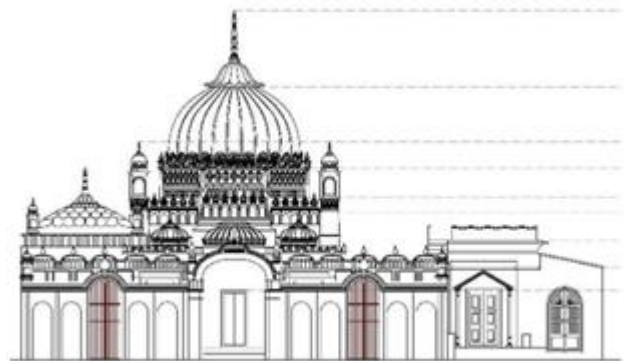


Figure 13: Front Elevation- Dargah of Shah Turab Ali Qalandar Source (Kant, 2019)

During the times of carnival Neem Wala Makaan is being used as paying guest for devotees. This residential unit is a central courtyard planning with running corridors in continuation of arches all around the courtyard. Living Quarters of Sajdah Nashin is another residential unit which is being used by the present administrator as a second home. These living quarters holds a public library and a Sajdah room placed around two consecutive courtyards.





**Figure 14:** Neem Wala Makaan, Takia Sharif  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 15:** Central Courtyard  
Source (Kant, 2019)

The other three residential units lies on the east of the premises built during the times of Nawabs. Miss Sona Bai Irani's House is a residential bungalow for her frequent visits to the shrine. Nawab Abd Al Karim Khan's House was used as dormitories during festivals and later rented out to a gulshan herbal factory. The fifth residential building in the complex is Maulvi Zia al din Haider Abbasi's House which belong to his descendants at present. These 12 buildings are placed around a central rectangular podium used for several performances and gatherings. This podium provides a central vista to the complex as altogether. The Qawwali and other cultural programs/ meetings is being performed on this podium. Earlier the podium was being used to tie the horses of visitors in the Sarai (Guest house).



**Figure 18:** Central Podium, Takia Sharif  
Source (Kant, 2019)

The Langarkhana and Bawarchikhana are situated towards south-east of the premises which serves the devotees and the crowd during the times of carnival and festivals. They too are planned with central courtyards with huge entrances.



**Figure 16:** Quarters of Sajjdah Nashin  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 19:** Sona Bai Kothi, Takia Sharif  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 17:** Bawarchikhana, Takia Sharif  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 20:** Pottery Work  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 21:** Zardozi Work  
Source (Kant, 2019)



**Figure 22:** Site Plan - Takia Sharif, Kakori  
Source (Kant, 2019)

- 1) Dargah of Shah Turab Ali Qalandar
- 2) Dargah of Shah Ali Anwar Qalandar
- 3) Baradari
- 4) Mosque
- 5) Dargah of Shah Muhammad Qasim Qalandar
- 6) Living Quarters of Sajjad Nashin
- 7) Kitabkhane Anwariya, Library
- 8) Sajida Room
- 9) Neem Wala Makaan
- 10) Langarkhana
- 11) Bawarchikhana
- 12) Sona Bai Irani Kothi
- 13) Nawab Abd Al Karim Khan's House
- 14) Maulvi Zia al din Haider Abbasi's House
- 15) Central Podium
- 16) Family Graveyard

### 3. Analysis and Reviews

As a whole the complex fulfills all the requirements needed for a visitor but it draws some attention towards unification. The buildings are maintained to a certain level which are in need of conservation with an adaptive reuse. The architectural features of every individual building demands to be conserved in appropriate manner. The livelihood of Takia Sharif could be restored if taken into consideration by

the locals and the concerned authorities.

The town itself has the potential to be developed into a multi-modal junction adjacent to Lucknow the capital city. Due to several tangible - intangible factors, the town has its own identity. Majority of locals are involved into craftsmanship which involves zardozi work and pottery. Lack of proper workshops and retail areas pushes back the development in the town. Organized systems could help enhancing tourism as well which may bring the craftsmanship in limelight and give them larger scope of works.

The stakeholders of Havelies will get multiple benefits due to rejuvenation and conservation with adaptive re-use like economically stableness for their daily expenditure along with the maintenance of their properties. Due to monetary deficiencies these stakeholders are compelled to demolish the old structures and utilize the massive land pockets for commercial or mixed use development. Another benefit will be a global identity for the town and their roots.

Kakori is also known for its famous cuisines like Kakori Kebabs and lassi and the town is surrounded by the mango orchard belt which is a specialty of Awadh region for different varieties of mangoes. Dussehri is the most popular variety.

### 4. Conclusions

The gist of the analysis is that the town has richness in multi-disciplinary sectors to form a total heritage essence. These factors have been paid no heed since independence. The architectural richness, the amount of heritage Kakori holds is being neglected by us which will be disappeared if paid no attention.

### 5. Vision Plan

The vision for the whole project is to develop the Takia Sharif complex with an inclusive planning scheme keeping the beautification and workability into parallel concern. The Kothis in the complex can be utilized for visitors to stay and the complex could be transformed into a "hospice" for the sufi saints and poetry lovers. The perpetual bond for Sufism will be lasting here as a hub for all.

The other Havelies and Kothis may be transformed into heritage hotels, workshops and other recreational activities for visitors to experience the spectacular built forms and the environment of the town. Craft villages and art workshops will help to increase the footfall from all ages and organizations. This may even bring more employment and a stable lifestyle to the locals because majority of the population in town are workers and craftsmen at present. The waterbodies in Kakori can be transformed for recreational activities. The main pond among all can be considered for rejuvenation as it is huge in size and the settlement is alongside the pond.

Tourism is increasingly the enhancer element of the development of cities and their historic centers. The heritage resources of cities and their historic centers could

be utilized as marketing tool and promotion for tourism. Kakori can be a satellite town to Lucknow of its own kind and identity with a purpose to visit.

## References

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## Author Profile



**Shubha Kant**, currently pursuing Masters in Architecture from Faculty of Architecture, Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow- India.

Studied Bachelors from Amity University, Lucknow-India in 2013. A keen interest in art & heritage. Practicing in the field of architecture, interiors, landscapes and product designing since 2013



**Kumar Kartikey**, is a conservation architect. Studied Masters in Architecture from School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi in 2012. Since then practicing conservation and architecture as a

proprietor to the firm Earth to Sky, Lucknow -India. Working on Uttar Pradesh state projected monument Chattar Manzil and Lal Baradari, as a conservation consultant to Faculty of Architecture, Abdul Kalam Technical University. Visiting Faculty to FOA, AKTU.