Revival of Indian Architecture
The debate and the plight of the *Mistri*

RATAN PARIMOO

Almost throughout the twentieth century whenever commentators have been talking about revivalism in the context of Indian art, it is the role of EB Havell and Abanindranath Tagore, that has been over-emphasized which is restricted to the area of modern painting, besides linking it with the growth of nationalism. The role of Havell and Abanindranath was neither new nor a sudden development (Parimoo 1973). We must take note of the impact of the ongoing serious ventures concerning revival of crafts, at that time generally referred to as art (or industrial art), besides also the use of Indian elements in the colonial period architectural activities from around 1860s onwards. Decorative designs were extensively studied and adapted for making of objects as well as for architectural decoration. A number of British architects had consciously integrated and adjusted Indian architectural elements for new buildings.

The fact is that 'Revival' initially was associated with 'Revival' of handicrafts'. At this point it was considered in terms of achievement of a 'nation', representing pre-industrial manifestation of hand products, which was the reason because of which they possessed inherent beauty. Secondly, these belonged to an Oriental culture, a small credit that the colonial power could concede to its colonized subject country which was also a thing to be boastful about among other rival European colonial powers (Birdwood 1880). The nineteenth century notion of Revival of medeival period crafts of Europe, had served as prototype and ideological ground. Medieval, that is pre-Renaissance period, had been relatively free from the influence of Greek and Roman art. The term 'Revival' itself derived from Revival of the styles of historical periods, irrespective of having anything to do with a particular nationality or tradition, that is to say it was taken in terms of heritage of Europe as

a whole. Graeco-Roman revival was one of the features of the Renaissance period but it inherently included a prejudice against Gothic (its predecessor). Therefore Gothic revival in European architecture has been a great struggle. It was part of the larger phenomenon of the medieval revival, which was also understood as revival of 'national' -Ityles, because most European countries claimed that they had their own distinct 'national' Gothic (Pevsner 1963).

Definition of Revival

Oxford English Dictionary (OED) explains Revival as the act of reviving after decline or discontinuation; restoration to general use, acceptance, etc; as instance or result of this. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (EB) explains Revival as generally renewed religious favour within a Christian group, church or community, but primarily a movement in some Protestant churches to revitalize the spiritual order of their members and with new adherents. According to another explanation by EB, Revivalism is the tendency or desire to revive what has gone out of use or belongs to past. OED also brings within the notion of revival the act of restoring an old play to the stage, or of republishing an old literary work. But OED includes in the phenomenon of Revivalism, the state or form of religious characteristic of Revivals, that is, hysteria in connection with Revivalism. Here the connotation is adverse or negative. For OED, the re-introduction of Gothic architecture towards the middle of the nineteenth century also comes under the rubric, Revival. EB adds that the year in which the foundation stones of the Parliament House (London) was laid, may be taken as turning point in the history of Revival (1840). The haphazard picturesque quality of the early Revival was replaced by a more conscious adaptation of the medieval English style. This phenomenon also influenced professional architecture in United States of America since 1840s.

In my view, the European Gothic Revival is a strong precedent for the British Indian administration as well as officially appointed British architects for acceptance of and tolerance towards 'Indian' architecture. The scholarly work of James Fergusson during the 1860s, besides raising its prestige, also facilitated the analyses of its architectural elements and grasping them for the purpose of use building practice (Fergusson 1876). For Indian readers it will be useful to in - entioii soi-ne details given in succinct form

in EB According to it there are mainly three reasons for the change of direction from Neoclassicism to the Gothic Revival.

1. The first sparked by the general Romantic revolution was the literary interest in medieval times that produced Gothic tales and romances. Authors like Walpole and Walter Scott helped to create a sense of nostalgia and a taste for that period. The ruins of medieval castles and abbeys depicted in landscape paintings, were another manifestation of this spirit.
2. The second was the writing of architectural theorists who were interested as part of church reform, in transferring the liturgical significance of Gothic architecture to their own times.
3. The third, which strengthened this religious and moral impetus were the writings of John Ruskin, whose Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) and Stones of Venice (1853) were widely read and respected. Ruskin stated that the quality of medieval craftsmanship reflected the morally superior way of life of medieval period. The writings of the French architect Eurgene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Due provided the inspiration to sustain the Gothic Revival movement.

The Gothic Revival was to remain one of the most potent and long-lived of the buildings—such as churches and institutions of higher learning were constructed in Gothic style in England and in the United States well into the 20th century. (EB)

In India, Gothic Revival style was extensively adopted in the mercantile city of Bombay, during 1860s and 1870s. This has led to the comment that no city, even in Great Britain 'can boast such a remarkable concentration of Victorian Gothic Revival public buildings', as Bombay (Metcalf 1989). The first major building was the Secretariat (completed in 1874) which had been designed by H. St. Clair Wilkins. Next were the Post and Telegraph Offices (completed in 1874) inspired from Italian Gothic style, and the vast Law Courts (completed in 1878) following the early English style of the courts in London. The Bombay University Hall (completed 1874) was designed by Scott, introducing a rose window of the fifteenth century French churches. He adopted Giotto's fourteenth century Campanile (bell tower) at Florence for the design of Bombay University's Rajabhai Clock Tower (1878). Most spectacular, however, was Steven's Victoria Terminus (1878-87) the largest building constructed by the British in India up to that time. The architect of this station sought inspiration in Scott's St. Pancras

station, London, 'yet its masonry dome and exuberant Italian Gothic detailing, in polychromatic stone, decorated tile, marble and stained glass, gave it a distinctive character of its own'. It has been observed that Wilkins had adopted a Venetian style of Gothic in his Secretariat buildings. With its polychromatic texture and open arcading, the Venetian buildings appealed to observers as the most 'Oriental' of Gothic styles, hence best suited for the climate of Bombay (Metcalf 1989). Actually this also led to observing similarities between Gothic and Indo-Saracenic architectural elements. Havell had referred to the latter as eastern variety of Gothic (Havell 1913). The pointed cusped arch of the Mughal architecture does seem to have a similarity with the pointed trefoil Gothic arch.

In the designing of the Mayo College building, several circumstances have converged which resulted in evolving a good example of an alternative Indian architectural style to the otherwise standard adaptation of European Italian Renaissance or Gothic styles. The process of arriving at a suitable Indian-derived design gave rise to the observations and discussions of Hindu and Islamic elements which were intermingled both in the Mughal as well as Rajput buildings in the context of architectural practice distinct from archaeological angle and the perspective of architectural history (Metcalf 1989). Through such process also emerged several British architects, who both by personal inclinations as well as temperament, involved themselves in the grasp and usage of Indian architectural features, such as Major C Mant and RF Chisholm. A new term or nomenclature was coined, that is Hindu-Saracenic, which is very significant from my point of view. It enables to properly classify the colonial period revival of Indian architectural elements from the Indo-Islamic architectural structures during Sultanate and Mughal rule, which was mistakenly designated as 'Indo-Saracenic' by James Fergusson.

Despite the debate being essentially among the colonial administrators and the British 'official' architects, the entire phenomenon represents revival of Indian architecture for an Indian commentator deliberating on it in the postcolonial period. The focus of Thomas Metcalf's researches is in terms of the 'imperial vision'; therefore for him the decision to build in Indo-Saracenic design did not carry with it repercussions which were definitely significant in comparison with the insistence to build in the European styles. Tillotson's approach to the Indo-Saracenic movement' on the other hand also explores how it affected especially the Indian indigenous building practice and *mistris* (Tillotson 1989).

The appropriate design for Mayo College, Ajmer, was under consideration since the implementation of the scheme was conceived by Lord Mayo as Viceroy of India (1969–72). The aim was to provide an environment like an English boarding school for the education of sons and relatives of ruling princes of Rajputana (now Rajasthan) who were to carry out the special function of providing leadership in the service of the Empire. Before the construction began in 1878, Mayo had been thinking of the second alternative design for the building besides his first preference for European classical (or Grecian). This second alternative has been termed as the mixed 'Hindu-Saracenic' and the executive engineer of the college, J. Gordon, was assigned to study the 'Hindoo' models (Metcalf 1989). The palace complex at Dig (near Agra) became the focus of attention to understand how the Hindu and Muslim architectural elements were intermingled and the manner in which the Hindu features were given prominence because of its occupants (users). The then chief of the Empire's Archaeological Survey, Alexander Cunningham, had also been consulted. For Cunningham the prominent Hindu feature was profuse ornamentation, also wrongly propounded by the contemporary architectural historian James Fergusson. Since then the question of identifying and distinguishing between the two architectural styles has remained problematic but even the next viceroy Lord Northbrook (1872–76) was keen on the mixed Hindoo-Saracenic design.

Charles Mant (1839-1881) arrived in India in 1859 as a member of Royal Engineers and began designing buildings—one in Surat, one in Kolhapur. It was through the encouragement of Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay Presidency that Mant concentrated on incorporating indigenous elements in his designs. It was again through his mentor's influence that he was assigned the commission of Mayo College by the Government of India. Mant drew the bulk of its stylistic features from Rajput buildings but also included Mughal type plain and cusped arches, the Bengali or drooping *chattries*, small domed entrance porches, two turrets terminating at roof level by the Hindu *shikhara* domes and so forth. High above the entire structural mass, soared a clock tower ninety-four feet high. Dominating clock towers were the conspicuous features in the two major palaces subsequently designed by Mant at Kolhapur and Baroda. In the opinion of Richard Temple, the distinguishing merit of Major Mant's architectural designs was that he tried to hit on some style which should unite the usefulness of the scientific

European designs together with the beauty, taste, grandeur and sublimity of the native style; and this style he called the Hindu-Saracenic. Thomas Metcalf has asserted that at no time was Indo-Saracenic design conceived of as an exercise in antiquarianism, but central to its conception was the combination of 'traditional' forms and 'modern' functions.

With the designing of palaces at Kolhapur and Baroda, began the adaptation of the Indo-Saracenic forms in the princely states. For the Maratha ruler at Kolhapur, Mant incorporated elements from the architecture of the region, besides Jat forts of Bharatpur and the Jain temples of Ahmedabad, whose multiple clustered domes are visible along the Kolhapur skyline. The Lakshmi Vilas palace for the Gaekwad ruler Sayajirao III was immense in size, perhaps determined by the colonial authorities who had installed him as the Maharaja. Tillotson describes Lakshmi Vilas palace as gargantuan, profused, yet refined in its ornament. Across its capacious but crowded facade are employed every type of arch, dome and moulding known to the vocabulary of North Indian architecture (Tillotson 1989). Although, it retains the traditional tripartite division of an Indian palace, in the proportion of its rooms and in all other aspects of its planning, it adheres more closely to European models. Inspite of considering it as a masterpiece of the Indo-Saracenic revival movement, Tillotson sees something neurotic about this loquacious building and links it with Mant's insane phobias that his building will not 'stand'. The untimely death of Mant brought the convergence of him and Chisholm, the two pioneers of Indian architectural revival, on the soil of Baroda. Chisholm's intervention in the design can be seen in the changes he made in the tower as well as the shapes of domical roof-tops (Metcalf 1989).

In the architectural career of Chisholm, the governor of Madras Lord Napier (1866-1872), had played a considerable role, because he himself was an amateur architect and one of the first administrators to be influenced by Fergusson's biased judgments about Indian architecture. While Napier recommended Indian mythology to be painted in the language of European naturalistic ideals (see the section on Raja Ravi Varma's paintings), he also considered the 'Brahmanical' architecture 'manifestly defective'. Its picturesque' quality was the main reason of its attraction, which comprised of multitude of cloisters, galleries, and pools, profusion of ponderous material and delicate sculpture as well as the dimness of the inner shrine. According to Napier, all of these combined 'to effect the

imagination with those impressions which belong to vastness, mystery, and the lapse of incalculable time, to the patient, devoted application of human labour, and the ceaseless tribute of human worship' (Metcalf 1989). Agreeing with Fergusson, Napier pronounced the 'inherent poverty' of design and construction in South Indian temples. He elaborated 'a multitude of supports crowded together, horizontal super position, a vast expenditure of solid material and radical defects of form designed by minute ornamentation'.

Lord Napier justified: 'from Granada to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Samarcand, and Samarcand to Bejapore, the earth is adorned with the masterpieces of Mussulman piety and taste, and often strewed with their remains. In India as else where the central features of this style, derived from ancient Rome and transformed by early Christian builders, were, as they saw it, the arch and the dome. The Mussulman's adopted and diversified, and having added the minaret, they created... a group of architectural forms, in which dignity, elegance, and the picturesque are unite with perfect constructive science' (Metcalf 1989).

The journal, *Builder*, reviewing Fergusson's *History of Architecture*, forthrightly upheld the same viewpoint (Builder 1870). The 'refinement of detail' and 'constructive and aesthetic truthfulness' of the 'Saracenic' style, they argued, placed it far above the 'more barbaric' profusion and confusion of the 'pure' (that is Hindu) Indian architecture. British had identified architectural styles in India with the two major religious communities, and sought to explain them as incompatible opposites. 'Idolatrous' Hindu religion also became the reason for denigrating the 'Hindu' architectural style.

One of the first commissions in Madras given to Chisholm was to adopt the already Saracenic building complex of Chepauk Palace property (the British-backed nawab of Arcot) for contemporaneous use. One example was integrating the Humayun Mahal into the new Revenue Board building completed in 1871. But in his next major project, the Madras University Senate House (1874-1879), Chisholm incorporated wide variety of sources including elements of Byzantine style. On the four corners of a huge raised hall, he set towers crowned by an onion dome and the walls decorated with polychrome brick and coloured tiles. Chisholm made first hand study of the seventeenth century palace of Tirumal Naik, the Telugu warrior of Madurai. Distinguishing between 'Hindoo' and 'Saracenic' building styles, he concluded that Indian builders had never endeavoured rigorously to keep them separate from each other (Chisholm 1875–

76). He also made two significant observations, one, that in the Madurai palace there are 'Hindoo interpretations of European forms', two, 'in much that is really Hindu it passes as much for Mohammedan'. Chisholm was also attracted by the 'native' architecture of Travancore which he explained as an attempt to protect the walls from sunshine and continuous rains, thus evolving the roof upon roof or a series of Sun shades, one above the other, type of structure. He used these elements along with 'Bijapoor' and 'Ahmedabad' style in the Madras Post and Telegraph office (1875–84) and the Napier Museum building at Trivendrum. In turn the museum at Trivendrum was adopted as I-model subsequently for designing the Baroda Museum building.

Apart from the changes Chisholm made in the design of Lakshmi Vilas palace, his major building in Baroda was the Baroda College and its imposing domed Convocation Hall which put this city in the map of Indo-Saracenic revival. Apart from revealing the architect's bravado in adapting the great dome of Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur, Chisholm experimented with making native art and indigenous forms subservient to the conditions and requirements of the day (Chisholm 1882-83). The design of the corner units is note worthy. At the plinth level are *kudus* derived from Buddhist cave architecture filled with turbaned heads. As it rises high up, *caitya* arch is formed making room for large windows embellished by *jalis*. The entire unit is surmounted by small hemispherical domes. This corner assemblage is the major component of the total organization of the Baroda College building complex, repeated on the four cardinal points as well as the wings attached to both sides of the Central Hall. This composite quality combining Buddhist elements, with the Indo-Saracenic forms was observed by Gauri (Parimoo 1990).

Most critics and art historians of visual-plastic arts have missed the relevance of this phase of preoccupation with Indian architecture, its decorative and structural elements, the materials and their technology and the expert designers, builders, masons and carvers on the part of the British administrators as well as those architects who conscientiously grasped the vocabulary of the Indo-Saracenic styles. It was not only the thinking and attitude towards the rich wealth of Hindu and Islamic architecture that mattered but also the encounter with its large number of existing skilled experts. In the discussions from around mid-19th century onwards, the term *mistri* was particularly used to refer to the present day practitioners and trained skilled workers relating to building crafts. EB Havell has

given much thought to the crisis created for the indigenous building knowledge and skills by restricting the opportunities and involvement of the *mistri*, which I shall discuss subsequently. Here I would like to mention Tillotson's observations regarding Mant's and Chisholm's approach to Indo-Saracenic design of buildings, who did not envisage role for the *mistri* but merely execution of the already finalized design fixed oil paper. In comparison with these two architects, the contribution of other pioneers (SS Jacob and FS Growse) of the revival of Indian architecture, had been in the direction of promoting the Indian guild system enabling it to function in the traditional manner.

Samual Swinton Jacob had taken up the post of Executive Engineer to the Maharaja of Jaipur in 1867, staying beyond his retirement till 1902. He worked closely with Maharaja's two British doctors keenly devoted to the revival of Indian handicrafts—FWA de Fabeck who was put in charge of the School of Art for teaching of local crafts and Thomas H Hendley who organized the first exhibition of handicrafts, known as Jaipur Exhibition of 1883. Hendley eventually planned to establish a museum with the objective of presenting the Jaipur craftsman 'with the most exemplary specimen of the work of their predecessors'. It was for the designing of a suitable building for such museum that SS Jacob saw the opportunity of revival of Rajput architecture as well as employing local mistris. Named Albert Hall, work had begun in 1883 and the museum was formally opened in 1887. Tillotson has observed that the exterior massing of the building, with its stepped form and receding piles of pavillions recalls certain historical stereotypes: the pyramid of pavillions was an ancient Indian form, revived in some early Mughal buildings such as the Panch Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri and Akbar's Tomb at Sikandra (Tillotson 1989). The exhibition spaces required for display purpose necessitated a more European planning of rooms. The high quality of its detailing especially the decorative stone carving, was the handiwork of the local craftsmen. As explained by Jacob, 'The endeavour has been also to make the walls themselves a Museum, by taking advantage of many of the beautiful designs in old buildings near Delhi, and Agra and elsewhere'.

The names of Indian collaborators of SS Jacob for the Albert Hall are listed in the inscription at the entrance to the building (Tillotson 1989). It mentions next to Jacob the name of Mir Tujumool Hoosein as supervisor, the draftsman Laia Rambux (Ram Baksh), Shankar Lai and Chote Lai and the *mistris* Chander and Tara. Documents

mention Lai Ram Baksh as pupil of the Jaipur school of Art, who in 1877 was appointed as the principal instructor of drawing there, to be subsequently succeeded by Shankar Lai. Ghasi Ram and Rupchand were among prominent craftsmen of Jaipur working as assistants in Jacob's offices. Names of many more craftsmen are recorded on the pages of the Jeypore Portfolio of architectural details. The first six volumes of the Jeypore Portfolio were published under the patronage of the Maharaja in 1890, followed by another six in 1913. These volumes comprise the most lasting contribution of SS Jacob to the revival of indigenous Indian architecture. The first six volumes contained measured drawings of plinths, columns, doors, brackets, arches and balustrades, of building, mostly at Jaipur, Amber and the Mughal capitals, ranging in date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The later six volumes covered string and band patterns, wall decoration, dados, parapets, *chatris* and *jharokhas* from the same sources. Jacob described these volumes as a stimulus to the imagination and as a collection of working drawings for the architect and artisan.

FG Growse of the Indian Civil Service was neither an engineer nor an architect by training but undertook certain architectural project employing indigenous *mistris* due to his deep interest in Indian culture. This resulted in his direct conflict with the colonial authorities as well as the Central Public Works department. As all Oxford graduate he was posted to Mathura in 1870, where with his antiquarian and scholarly interests, he founded the new world famous Mathura museum, compiled and published the district memoir of Mathura while working on the translation of Ramayana from a Hindi version. 'The construction of a new Catholic Church in Mathura (begun in 1874) gave Growse the opportunity for his first major exercise in employing local craftsmen and involving them in architectural design'. This was against the approved methods of PWD and therefore in 1878, Growse was abruptly transferred to Bulandshahr, as the collector of a small district, south of Delhi. In his later writings he had criticised the follies of PWD engineers contrasting his own 'efforts to develop native talent' with 'the efforts of the Engineers to extinguish it' (Jacob 1890).

When he arrived at Bulandshahr, he attempted to give it some beauty and dignity. He undertook the rebuilding of the *chowk*, the main square, by providing a shallow podium to separate the central area from the surrounding streets. Around 1880-81, the improved *chowk* was then bounded by a series of buildings including a Hindu

temple and a three-story house for a leading Muslim merchant, Ali Galaothi. The local buff sandstone was used for wall surfaces decorated with richly ornamented, carved and pierced screen-work. Subsequently, Growse provided the town with numerous gates, a town hall, a tank with bathing *ghats*. In the neighbouring trading town of Khurja, he persuaded the merchants to rebuild their market and provided it with a handsome gate. Because of its stateliness this huge structure became known as 'Badshahi market'. Growse did not take any personal credit for the designing of any of his ventures but had engaged Indian draftsmen and mistris. He has recorded that the stone screens of the Galaothi house were designed by two brothers, 'Yusuf and Mircha, of Mathura, whom I have employed as headmen in all my operations'. Once again Growse had been transferred to a yet smaller town named Fatehpur, in 1885. In the quietness of this town he prepared a two volume edition of his endeavours including the polemics against the PWD, entitled 'Indian Architecture of Today as exemplified in New Buildings in Bulanshahr District' (Growse 1886). He resigned from the service in 1889 and left India.

A slightly different adaptation of Indo-Saracenic elements in the designing of an educational institution was W. Emerson's building for Muir College, now a part of the Allahabad University. It has been better described by its own architect. He availed of an Egyptian phase of Muslim architecture and worked it up with the Indian Saracenic style of Bijapur, confining the whole in a Western Gothic design. The beautiful lines of the Taj Mahal had influenced him in the dome, while in the details he shows how Gothic tracery is blended with the geometrical perforated stone work in the windows, and so forth.

In the major metropolis of the country, namely Bombay, Indo-Saracenic movement reflected itself at its last phase when George Wittet had been appointed the consulting architect to the Presidency during the first quarter of the twentieth century. As museums were commonly regarded to be exceptionally suited for an Indo-Saracenic architectural style, Bombay's Prince of Wales Museum was also constructed along similar lines. Once again Bijapur was the source which was applauded by the British 'the most remarkable to be found in India for virility, boldness of conception and adaptability to modern use'. Wittet brought together monumental tiled concrete dome elements from Bijapur as well as from the fifteenth century architecture of Ahmedabad (we should also add Champaner near

Baroda). Wittet endeavored to join together the Gujarat and Maharashtra regions of the Presidency architecturally (Metcalf 1989). In his next design for the Gateway of India, the elements from Ahmedabad-Champaner were again incorporated.

In Lahore also a number of buildings were constructed in the Indo-Saracenic style, some of which are located on the Mall, the city's chief thoroughfare. These include Mayo College of Art, the High Court (1889), the Ajaib-Gohar Museum (1894), the General Post Office and King Edward Medical College. The railway offices reveal a modified Saracenic style. Some of these buildings were designed by Bhai Ram Singh, Lockwood Kipling's protege and colleague (Lang *et al* 1997).

The death of Queen Victoria during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1898-1905) created opportunities which brought out how he held double standards towards official architecture, at a time when the Indo-Saracenic Revival style had reached a high level of development with its conspicuous features. Lord Curzon organized the most spectacular Delhi Durbar of 1902 to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII as King-emperor amidst the presence of loyal feudatories. Soon after Queen Victoria's death in 1901, he had announced the decision to build a grand and spacious imperial monument to the first Queen-Empress. For the Delhi Durbar, he himself selected Indo-Saracenic styles to re-affirm the conception of Britain as the legitimate ruler of a 'traditional' India as well as rightful successor to the throne of Mughals. Curzon had employed the Jaipur based Swinton Jacob 'the best professional architect in India', to prepare the design. The Viceroy himself had intervened to remove any European features, so that the specially built amphitheatre for carrying out the Durbar proceedings was 'built to and decorated exclusively in the Mogul or Saracenic styles' (Metcalf 1989). It had not only 'Oriental' outlines but also gave the illusion of a palatial Mughal structure. The temporary building art and handicrafts exhibition was also erected in an Indo-Saracenic style. (It was in this exhibition that Abanindranath Tagore was given an award for his painting, 'The Last Hours of Shahjahan'.)

Curzon expected the princely states to adhere to the Indo-Saracenic style in their building projects as appropriate to their position as well as carrying out their proper role as patrons of Indian art. Curzon told to Maharaja of Jaipur that the princes must be 'trained to all the advantages of western culture, but yet not divorced in instinct or in mode of life from their own people' (Metcalf 1989). Indo-Saracenic

architecture had for Curzon, an important yet limited role to play in empire. According to him, the affirmation of empire, of law, order and efficiency in government required a different architectural expression.

Curzon wrote later that in Calcutta, 'a city of European origin and construction, where all the main buildings have been erected in a quasi-classical or Palladian style, and which possessed no indigenous architectural style of its own, it was impossible to erect a building in native style' (Metcalf 1989). He did not pay much attention to various advises, such as the building's audience and how educated Indian opinion was meant to respond to it. Lord Ampthill of Madras urged the construction of some masterpieces of Indian art and architecture, such as pavillion of carved marble. Finally William Emerson was entrusted with preparing the design, who had extensively worked in Indo-Saracenic style culminating with Muir college of Allahabad. But Emerson accommodated Curzon's wishes and together they shaped a white marble structure in the Palladian or Italian Renaissance style. In spite of this, it has been observed that Curzon all the time kept in mind the comparison with Taj Mahal.

EB Havell had argued that the most suitable style would be something similar to the Mogul architecture of Bijapur, which is so simple and dignified in character that it can easily be made to harmonize with the style of Govêrnment House or with European statuary. At the end of 1905, Havell had left for London having been declared sick and unfit for service in India. In his version of the story he wrote: I was the Senior Official art advisor to Government when the scheme for the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta originated. He had sent a proposal which Lord Curzon did not see fit to adopt. 'As a preliminary to the making of a design for that building, a survey should be made by a competent architect, of living Indian architecture, i.e. of buildings constructed in Indian style by Indian master-builders who are all still alive; that the design for the memorial should be made in consultation with the best men that were found, and carried out in cooperation with them' (Havell 1912).

Havell does not seem to have been impressed by the Indo-Saracenic Revival style buildings designed by the British architects. Imagining a 'competent critic', Havell observed: 'The competent critic will recognize at a glance the essential difference between these native buildings and the 'Indo-Saracenic' of the British engineer-architect. The latter clothes his engineering with external paper-designed adornments borrowed from ancient buildings which were made for

purposes totally foreign to those which he has in hand. The engineering is more or less real (according to the skill of the designer); the 'style' is purely artificial. The artistry which may be shown in the building is entirely dependent upon the vitality which the Indian craftsman can put into it: if he is compelled to follow mechanically the 'Indo-Saracenic' paper patterns, ill tile designing of which he has no share, according to the usual (Public Works) departmental system, that cannot be of much account. In other words the engineer supplies the mechanics, the Indian craftsman, so far as he is permitted, the art' (Havell 1912). Havell conceded that 'from an artistic point of view the only advantage which this 'Indo-Saracenic' has over Renaissance or any other European 'Style', is that it gives Indian craftsmanship a somewhat better chance of life.'

Havell laments that 'the engineer-architect does not come, as the Moguls did, to learn the art of building from the Indian master builder, but on the false assumption that art in India vanished with the last of Moguls—to teach the application of Indian archaeology to the constructive methods of the West, using the Indian craftsman only as an instrument for creating a make-believe Anglo-Indian 'style' (Havell 1913).

Havell wrote this analyses in the chapter XIV of his great book *Indian Architecture, its Psychology, Structure, and History, from the first Muhammadan invasion to the present day*. Published in 1913, this book is a highly perceptive contribution to architectural theory. I am very much amazed that no architectural scholar of the twentieth century (Indian or British) has ever included Havell in any discussion on architectural theory as well as in the context of living tradition of Indian building arts and skills of Indian *mistris*.

In his preface he said that he had realized that Indian architecture covers a field as wide as the whole architecture of Europe, and he set out his aim to turn the study of it (Indian architecture) off the side-track in which Fergusson left it, and that he had limited himself to those chapters of it which have most practical interest for the modern architect. He had planned this work 'so as to make evident to expert and laymen alike the relation between Indian architectural history and a great problem which is exercising the public mind at the present moment—the building of Nevi Delhi—and a question of much more vital importance - the preservation of Indian handicraft' (Havell 1913).

Havell referred to his two previous books viz. *The Ideals of Indian Art* (1908) and *Indian Painting and Sculpture* (1911); thus the present

book *Indian Architecture* (1913) may be considered a third volume in this trilogy. He also used the term 'sound critical basis'. Thus he evolved a different methodology than Fergusson, stating that the history of architecture is not the classification of buildings in archaeological watertight compartments according to arbitrary academic ideas of style, but a history of national life and thought. The historian of Indian architecture should realize for himself the distinctive qualities which constitute its Indianness, or its value in the synthesis of Indian life.

At the outset Havell observes that the classifications and analysis of European writers is very confusing when one studies the bewildering maze of Indian art. He referred to the several misconceptions, such as the Graeco-Roman or Gandharan theory of inspiration of Buddhist sculpture, the sectarian classification of Buddhist-Hindu architecture as well as the presumed theory of Indian art in the medieval period, followed by the attribution of the masterpieces of painting and architecture in the Muhammadan period to the superior creative and constructive genius of Islam. The root of these misconceptions was the colonial view 'that true aesthetic feeling has always been wanting in the Hindu mind and that everything really great in Indian art has been suggested or introduced by foreigner (Havell 1913).

It was Fergusson's analysis of Indian architecture of the Muhammadan period which has confirmed the general belief that between Hindu and Saracenic ideals there is a great gulf. Likewise Fergusson held the view that the zenith of Mughal architecture in the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan was only reached by removing the Hindu influences which affected the so-called I mixed styles of Indo-Mohammadan art. Havell contends that this persistent habit of looking outside India for the origin of Indian art must necessarily lead to false conclusions. It is here that Havell set out his thesis: 'The vital creative impulse which inspired any period of Indian art, whether it be Buddhist, Jain, Hindu or Muhammadan, one will only find its source in the traditional Indian culture planted in Indian soil by Aryan philosophy, which reached its highest artistic expression before the Mogul dynasty was established, and influenced the greatest works of the Mohammadan period as much as any others' (Havell 1913).

Havell observed that: 'The Taj, the Moti Masjid at Agra, the Jami Masjid at Delhi, and the splendid Muhammadan buildings at Bijapur were only made possible by the not less splendid monuments of

Hindu architecture at Mudhera, Dabhoi, Khajuraho, Gwalior, and elsewhere, which were built before the Mogul Emperors and their Viceroys made use of Hindu genius to glorify the faith of Islam.' Havell contended that the magnificent architectural works of the preceding Hindu period, through their massive grandeur and sculpturesque imagination, surpass any of the Mogul buildings. In Havell's view the term 'Mogul' architecture is misleading, for as a matter of fact there were but few Mogul builders in India. He affirmed that the great majority of the builders employed by the Moguls, including not only the humbler artisans but the master-minds who directed them, were Indians or of Indian descent, most of them Hindus, though some were professed Muhammadans. Thus Mogul architecture did not bear witness to the finer aesthetic sense of Arab, Persian or Western builders, but to the extraordinary synthetic power of the Hindu artistic genius. He claimed that the truth of this statement could be demonstrated from the incontrovertible record of the buildings themselves.

Havell rightly observed that Western writers have been so eager to seize upon the divergences between Muhammadan and Hindu civilization, due to which 'the common basis which underlies them both generally fails to impress them'. The latter was Havell's personal view to which he added that the use of anthropomorphic symbols, considered to be the main point of difference dividing Muhammadans and Hindus, 'was not by any means essential to Hinduism'. He disagrees about the so-called fundamental antagonism between Hindu and Muslim religions' beliefs. In Muhammad's concept of the unity of the godhead, that 'there is one God', Havell observes a parallelism in the Hindu concept of the Godhead manifesting Itself in all things, animate and inanimate.

Havell theorized that the Arabian instinct of art creation reflected in drawing everything in pure outline silhouetted against the sky, as he actually saw things in the glare of the open desert by day or in the mysterious splendour of star-and moon-light such as the rocky coasts of Arabia. 'All Arab design, whether in architecture, in the form of domestic utensils, or in surface decoration, was distinguished by this feeling for pure outline and colour, rather trial) by a plastic treatment of surfaces or the massing of form for contrast of light and shade in which the Hindu architectural genius especially asserted itself.' In the subsequent chapters Havell, took much pains to analyze this phenomenon.

Havell takes up the feature of the pointed arch and distinguishes its structure and its symbolism. According to him this very feature

by which all Western writers have distinguished Saracenic architecture was originally Indian. They have missed this point because they have treated Indo-Muhammadan architecture as a subdivision of the Saracenic schools of Egypt, Spain, Arabia and Persia. 'Practically all Saracenic symbolism in architecture was borrowed directly or indirectly from India, Persia, Byzantium, or Alexandria, though devout Muhammadans put their own reading into the symbols they borrowed, just as the early Christians did with those they borrowed from paganism' (Havell 1913). The pointed arch in Arab architecture was a purely religious symbol before it became a distinctive structural feature in Saracenic building replacing the round arch and horizontal beam. To the devout Muslim it symbolized the two fundamental concepts of his faith: God is one, and Muhammad is his prophet. The pointed arch was the symbol of the hands joined in prayer, it pointed the way to Mecca and to paradise. It demonstrated mathematically the divine truth that all things converge towards and meet in the one. This according to Havell represented the inverse of the Hindu proposition. So far as the dome of Taj Mahal is concerned, Havell traces its sources from the domical *vitana* structure of *mandapa* of Hindu temples as well as the Buddhist Stupa forms.

Here is what I consider a 'great passage' from Havell's architectural theory. Havell had made a very perceptive and remarkable conceptualization for understanding the development of architecture in different countries, arguing that we should recognize the very cosmopolitan organization of the building craft in the Middle Ages as well as in previous periods. He categorically stated that, 'No class of society has stood so strongly for religious tolerance and the principle of the universal brotherhood of man as the master-builder, and none have done more for the spread of civilization, peace, and goodwill among all men' (Havell 1913). Building fraternity did not subscribe to the bitter religious and racial animosities. Pagan craftsmen, built for Christian, Christian for Muslim, Buddhist for Jain and Hindu, Hindu for every sect. The same rule applied to craftsmen of different races. Havell referred to the truism that in times of peace the master-builders wandered far and wide in search of lucrative appointment whereever it might be found, while in times of war their lives were often the only ones that were spared by the victors in battle who sacked the cities, for their services were highly valued by all combatants, even by barbarian marauders like the Huns and Mongols.

Havell's first hand survey of Indian architecture re-affirmed that 'the domestic architecture of Rajputana remains on the whole a strong living craft.' Havell elaborated, 'Not only in Rajputana and central India, but over the greater part of India it is still true, what Fergusson wrote thirty years ago, that if Indians of the upper classes could be persuaded to take a pride in their own art, their master-builders could even now rival the works of their forefathers: for building is one of the master-crafts which are most closely bound up with the real life of the people, and consequently always retains its vitality longer than the sumptuary arts, which, being less essential to life, are more subject to the caprice of fashion.' Havell was concerned that the existence of a strong school of building craft in many parts of India is still as much unknown to the Western architectural scholar and practitioner as it is to Anglo-Indian departmentalism (that is Public Works Department). Havell pointed out, 'The Indian craftsman known to Anglo-India belongs almost exclusively to the type of labourer created in the last fifty or sixty years by this departmental system of making architecture a by-study in mechanical engineering. From their experience of him and his work, the characteristics of the Hindu craftsman—his patient, plodding labour, his slovenliness, lack of energy, imagination, and creative power—have been drawn by Anglo-Indian critics' (Havell 1913).

In spite of the handicaps imposed by the working of the PWD, Havell sharply observes, 'Meanwhile the Indian master-builder outside the Anglo-Indian gate, though scorned by many of his own countrymen as 'uneducated', keeps up, as far as he is permitted to do so, the splendid traditions of the practical school of craftsmanship, like that which existed in Europe a century and a half ago, in which his forefathers lived.' Out of numerous examples recorded by Havell, I quote two selected instances. He reproduced the photograph of a South Indian *sthapati* (hereditary temple architect) engaged in preparing drawings for the masons working under his direction. 'Many of the great Hindu temple foundations give permanent employment for master-builders learned in the *Silpasastras*, and the donations of pious Hindus towards the building of new temples or the repair of old ones, for constructing rest-houses for pilgrims, bathing *ghats*, wells, etc. as well as those of orthodox Muhammadans for the building of mosques, help to keep alive the condition of Indian architecture and of many of the crafts dependent upon it' (Havell 1913).

For the second instance, I again quote Havell's own words 'to

follow the history of Indian architecture in the nineteenth century one must visit the famous cities of pilgrimage, like Banaras, Brindaban, Hardwar, and other sacred places of the Hindus. Banaras is singularly rich in modern buildings; few of the fine palaces and monasteries which line the banks of the Ganges are earlier than the eighteenth century, or the time of Aurangzeb, who made havoc of the older Hindu temples and made a mosque out of their remains. Not many Anglo-Indians or European tourists who came to admire the wonderful scene which the *ghats* present on some great Hindu festival realize that two of the most stately of the palaces, those at Munshi Ghat and Ghusla Ghat,... belong to the latter half of the nineteenth century.' Havell wrote excitedly, 'to find anything to compare with them in Europe for largeness of design combined with perfection of craftsmanship one would have to go back to the early days of Renaissance in Rome or Florence, when the fine craftsmanship of the Middle Ages gave vitality to the classical conceptions of the painter-architects of Italy' (Havell 1913).

On the pattern of the chapter 'The Future of Indian Art', in his *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (1908) (expanded in his 1927 edition), Havell had enclosed in his magnum opus, *Indian Architecture*, a concluding chapter titled 'The Future of Architecture in India–The Building of the New Delhi'. He began with a severe criticism of Macaulay's policy indirectly distancing himself from it since Havell too was a member of the colonial administration. For Havell, Macaulay's policy was only a philistine war of extermination against all the intellectual traditions of Hinduism which he did not think worth consideration. Havell coined for Macaulay the epithet of a 'great iconoclast of Anglo-India'. Havell anticipated that Macaulay's policy would have the opposite effect of opening wider and wider the cleavage it has already made between the educators and the educated. 'For the more we sap and mine at the foundations of Hindu civilization, which has made the Indian masses of all people on earth the most amenable to law and order, the nearer we shall bring India in the vortex of anarchy'. Havell wished to make the point that it was Macaulay's logic which has resulted in the deterioration of Indian handicrafts and building skills (which also constituted one kind of 'oriental learning') on the hands of the colonial rule. He therefore closes this chapter with the questions: 'How will New Delhi be built? Will it be the starting point of real Anglo architecture, or only the opportunity of a life-time for the modern Western stylist? We must wait and see.'

Havell's last ditch effort was to submit a petition to Principal

Secretary of State for India on February 6th, 1913, signed by more than 160 signatories which included distinguished Knighted British personalities and lords, MPs, scholars, painters, designers, writers and so on *viz.*, George Bernard Shaw (playwright), Walter Crane (designer) Ananda Coomaraswamy (scholar). I quote one passage from the petition:

'They submit that it is for the general good, artistically and morally, not only of the United Kingdom and India, but of the world at large, that living craftsmanship should be saved from extinction by a right method of employment; that politically such a method will tie the natives of India more closely to the Mother country, and at the same time give an outlet for the energies of the college trained Indians to whom all the arts are at present closed; further that the use of native master-builders handling native material is financially economical' (Havell 1913).

The debate concerning the style and form of architecture to be adopted for the Imperial capital began when the decision was taken to shift it to Delhi from Calcutta in 1911 and Edwin Lutyens had been appointed the official architect. The debate was serious and heated, both concerning the architectural style to be adopted which would strongly symbolize the British colonial power and the place that ornamentation could be permitted in it. The arguments reflected the ideas taken from the strident polemics on decoration during the nineteenth century in Europe. Apart from affirming the choice for masculinity in architecture possible due to classical restraint, the bias was forthrightly expressed against the Indian styles of architecture as well as ornamentation, which the official architects associated with femininity. Herbert Baker was strongly of the view that architecture should reflect imperial power and thus the choice of the Viceroy Lord Hardinge to work with Lutyens. Indo-Saracenic revival had been rejected as it had been for the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, a decade earlier when Swinton Jacob was sidelined by Lord Curzon. Lutyens himself was irked by Jacob's advice concerning the architecture for Delhi, whose Indian style buildings he criticized as 'all made up of tidbits culled from various buildings' of various dates (Lutyens 1980). Havell's voice and the petition had no impact.

During the decade of 1920s when some spirited Indians initiated institution-building activities, the question arose about the appropriate architecture for the buildings required to house them. It was now their turn to think in terms of experiments with 'built form' as a

symbol of national identity. It is only in last few decades that writers on recent Indian architecture have put these efforts in a developmental perspective including the British sponsored Indo-Saracenic revival (Land *et al* 1997). At Santiniketan, under the influence of Rabindranath Tagore's ideas, the painter Surendranath Kar (1892-1970), Abanindranath's pupil of the first batch with Nandalal Bose, had designed five residential buildings called the Uttarayan complex. These are Konaraka, Udayana, Shyamali, Udichi and Dunascha built during 1920s and 1930s; the third of these establish what the architects call the aristocratic-folk paradigm. Konarak has a large verandah supported by Buddhist columns but the plan combines features of British bungalow and Japanese house. Udayana has Indo-Saracenic features as well as Buddhist elements. Shyamali, envisaged as a guest house for Gandhi during his visits to Santiniketan, is influenced by mud houses of Assam and includes a 'chaitya graha' at its entrance. Suren Kar also designed institutional buildings such as Nandan and Rabindra Bhawan. Kar was invited to design Montessori School at Raj Ghat and the Sarabhai residence, 'The Retreat' at Ahmedabad. (Robinson in *Marg* XLVI, i)

Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram at Sabarmati on the outskirts of Ahmedabad gave impetus to his nephew Maganlal Gandhi to design the campus on the principles of asceticism and functionalism. Built during 1920s, the living quarters were spartan and the buildings minimal but comfortable. Gandhiji's philosophy is reflected in the buildings designed for the Sevagram Ashram near Wardha which became the centre of his political activities relating to independence movement between 1936-1947. Adaptation of Indian vernacular buildings is a prominent characteristic at Sevagram, now being seriously considered by contemporary architects (Lang *et al* 1997). The leaders of the Home Rule League, who were directly inspired by the concept of Swadeshi, have been involved with architectural design in particular when the site plan of Banaras Hindu University was to be conceptualized. Banaras Hindu University was conceived as a nationalist endeavour by Madan Mohan Malviya and presented to the Indian National Congress in 1905 when Annie Besant, a staunch supporter of Indian nationalism, endorsed it. She herself had been supporting Indian architects such as AVT Iyer advocating evolution of a proper national style. The physical plan of the university consists of a concentric semi-circular infrastructure of roads based on cosmological principles. Some of the buildings like Sayaji Rao Gaekwad Library (1927-41) were designed by Siris

Chandra Chatterji (1873-1966), who himself admired Indo-Saracenic revival architecture of John Begg (who executed Bombay's General Post Office) as well as the work of Swinton Jacob. In 1920s, Chatterjee worked for the PWD of Bengal and subsequently did some theoretical writings under the influence of Havell's viewpoint, as well as the study of *Silpasastras*. Chatterjee had designed the Shiva temple in Banaras for the Pathuriaghat Tagore family, followed by Lakshmi Narayan Temple (1938, Delhi) and the Arya Dharma Sangha Dharmasala (1935, Sarnath), both sponsored by the Birla family. Chatterjee is recognized by architectural critics as the initiator of 'Modern Indian architecture' (Lang *et al* 1997). For him architectural design should represent 'Soul of India' synthesizing internal arrangements needed for modern life with a conception of Indian architecture.

REFERENCES

Birdwood, Sir George (1880), *Industrial Arts of India*, Handbook of the Indian Section of the South Kensington Museum, London, *Builder*, 27 August 1870.

Chisholm, R.F. (1875-76), "Tiroomal Naik's Palace, Madura", *TRIBA*, (Ist. Set), Vol. 26.

Chisholm, R.F. (1882-83), "A New College for the Gaekwar of Baroda-1", *TRIBA*, Ist Set, Vol. 33.

Fergusson, James (1876), *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London.

Growse, F.G. (1886), *Indian Architecture of Today: As Exemplified in New Buildings in the Bulandshahr District*, Benares.

Havell, E.B. (1913), *Indian Architecture, Its Psychology, Structure, and History from the First Muhammadan Invasion to the Present Day*, London.

Havell, E. B. (1912), *The Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival in India*, Adyar, Madras: Theosophist Office.

Jacob, S. Swinton (1890), *Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details*, London.

Lang, Madhavi Desai and Miki Desai (1997), *The Search for Identity-India 1880 to 1980, Architecture and Independence*, Delhi.

Lutyens, Mary (1980), *Edwin Lutyens*, London.

Metcalf, Thomas R. (1989), *An Imperial Vision, Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*, London.

Parimoo, Gauri (1990), "Glimpses of Gaekwad's Grandeur, Architectural Landmarks of Baroda", *Souvenir*, Baroda: The Indian Institute of Architects, Baroda Centre.

Parimoo, Ratan (1973), *The Paintings of the Three Tagores, Abanindranath, Ganagendranath and Rabindranath*, Baroda.

Pevsner, Nikolous (1963), *An Outline of European Architecture*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 7th Edition.

Robinson, Andrew "A Poet's Vision, The Houses of Rabindranath Tagore", *Marg*, Vol. XLVI, No. 1.

Tillotson, G.H.R. (1989), *The Tradition of Indian Architecture, Continuity, Controversy and Change since 1850*, Delhi.