

IMPACT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE ON INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract

The medieval period saw great developments in the field of architecture in India. After the arrival of Muslims in India many new features and techniques came to be introduced in the construction of buildings. The development of Muslim style of architecture during this period can be called Indo-Islamic architecture. Indian architecture is influenced by Islamic art. The Indo-Islamic style was neither strictly Islamic nor strictly Hindu. It was in fact a combination of Islamic and Hindu architecture elements, those of the Indian architecture. The architecture of medieval period was divided into two main categories – Architecture of Delhi Sultanate or the imperial style and Mughal architecture. The imperial style developed under the patronage of the sultans of Delhi. The Mughal architecture was blend of Islamic architecture of central Asia and the Hindu architecture of India.

Objectives:

- 1) To Examine Indian architecture during ancient period.
- 2) To analyze the impact of Islamic culture on Indian architecture.

Methodology: To study this paper secondary data is taken. Books, magazines, journals, newspapers and internet sources were referred.

Key words: architecture, medieval period, Indo-Islamic culture, imperial style.

Brief Introduction of Indian Architecture: One of the most enduring achievements of Indian civilization is undoubtedly its architecture. Indian architecture which has evolved through centuries is the result of socio-economic and geographical conditions. Different types of architectural styles include a mass of expression over space and time transport by the forces of history considered unique to India. As a result of vast diversities, a vast range of architectural specimens have evolved retaining a certain amount of continuity across history.

Indian architecture belonging to different periods of history bears the stamp of respective periods through the cities of Indus valley provided substantial evidence of extensive town planning. The beginning of Indian architecture can be traced back to the advent of Buddhism in India. It was in this period that large number of magnificent buildings came up. Some of the highlights of Buddhist art and architecture are the great stupa at Sanchi and the rock cut-caves at Ajanta.

With the establishment of Hindu kingdom in South India, the South Indian School of architecture began to flourish. The most notable achievement of the Pallava rulers were the rock cut temples of Mahabalipuram and temples of Kanchipuram. The Chola, Hoyasala, and Vijayanagara rulers also did a remarkable job in the field of architecture. In north India they developed a new and different style of architecture. This was called as the Nagara style architecture in central India. The Chandela rulers built a magnificent temple complex at Kajaraho. With the coming of Muslim rulers they developed a new architectural style in India called as the Indo-Islamic architecture.

IMPACT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE ON INDIAN ARCHITECTURE: Islam as an independent religion, made its emergence in the first half of the seventh century AD. Prophet Muhammad was the founder of this religion. He gave a cultural and spiritual unity to the people of Arab who accepted this new religion, the followers of Islam are called Muslims.

The Arab invasion of India in 712 AD was a notable event in the annals of Indian history, because for the first time the Muslims attacked India under the leadership of Muhammad –bin- Kasim. Consequently, the Muslims acquired political supremacy over the land and continued to rule over India for about 5 centuries. The Muslim rulers maintained their courts, officials, bureaucracy, legal system, language practices, customs and beliefs in their own styles. The sultanate period ranging from the 13th century till the advent of the Mughals, in 1526 AD was very eventful. During this period, due to the influence of Islam two religious movements namely Sufi and Bhakti, brought about tremendous change in the socio cultural scenario of India.

ARCHITECTURE: With the establishment of Muslim rule India there was a marked growth in cultural excellence in the realm of art and architecture. The Muslim rulers of India were great patrons of art. They brought with them significant impression of Islamic style of art. New designs, new modes of construction like, spherical domes, arches, tall minarets, open courtyards, pillared caves, huge walls etc. were introduced in architectural creations following the Islamic style. But these changes in design were carried out by Hindu craftsmen. As a result a fusion of Hindu and Muslim styles of art took place from this interaction a new style of art called Indo-Islamic Art tradition gradually evolved. To quote Sir John Marshall "Islamic art was neither merely a local variety of Islamic art nor a modified form of Hindu Architecture.

It derives its character from both sources though not always in an equal degree". Thus with a new majestic spirit Indo-Islamic art manifested itself through different channels that included two types of structure namely a) Religious structure b) secular structure.

Religious structure mainly consisted of mosques and tombs, secular structures included those meant for public and civic purposes like palaces, forts, town gates, etc. The first phase of Muslim rule in India i.e., from 1206 AD to 1526 AD called as sultanate period is marked by three styles of architecture.

1. Imperial style of architecture
2. Provincial style of architecture
3. Hindu style of architecture.

Imperial style of architecture: Imperial Delhi style of architecture is to be found in Delhi and its neighboring areas.

1. Qutb Minar
2. Quwwat-al-Islam mosque
3. Alwai Darwaja
4. Kali Masjid
5. Begum puri mosque
6. Sikri fort and city
7. Tombs of Mubarak Sayyid and Sikandar Lodi
8. Bada Gumbad Mosque.

Provincial style of architectural: After the decline of the Sultanate of Delhi the rulers of provincial dynasties asserted independence and began to build tombs, mosques, and palaces on their own. Hence these structures had their respective regional trends and manifestations that were quite different from the Delhi style of architecture. They formed a separate category called provincial style of architecture. This style was enriched with local artistic traditions and technical differences.

1. Tomb of Sah Rukn- i-Alam in Punjab.
2. Adiana Masjid, Dakliil Darwaja, Chhota sona Masjid and Bada Sona Masjid of Bengal
3. Jama Masjid, Teen Darwaja, Tomb of Ahmad Shah in Gujarat.
4. Jahaj Mahal, Ashrafi Mahal, 4. Jahaj Mahal, Ashrafi Mahal, Hindola Mahal, Tomb of Hushang Shah in Malwa
5. Biwi –ki-Masjid in Khandesh
6. Chand Minar of Daulatabad Gol Gumbaz- Mithai Mahal, Zenana and Deval Mosque in the Deccan.

HINDU STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE: When the sultanate of Delhi lavishly patronized the architectural growth of the country. The Hindu rulers also did not lag behind. Different Hindu ruling dynasties extended their helping hands for the growth of structures of Art. These Hindu structures had their own peculiarities marked by narrow pillars, cornice or chhaja, corbel brackets, tapering arches, decorative designs and figures with liberal doses of religious sanctity. This style of Architecture flourished mainly in Rajasthan and at Vijayanagar in the south.

MUGHAL PERIOD: From 1526 AD to 1707 AD the Mughal rulers ruled over India. It was during this period that Indo-Islamic architecture reached the pinnacle of glory and magnificence. The artistic temperament of the rulers and economic prosperity along with liberal royal support brought in its wake an outburst of architectural activities.

PROMINENT STRUCTURES OF THE MUGHAL PERIOD:

1. Puana Qilla in Delhi
2. Tomb of Sher Shah at Sasaram
3. Tomb of Humayun at Delhi
4. Buland Darwaja, diwan-i-khas at Fatehpur Sikri
5. Tomb of Akbar at Sikandra
6. Jama Masjid
7. Red Fort at Delhi and Agra
8. Taj Mahal
9. Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula at Agra

The architectures of the Mughal period are marked by splendour and form graceful domes magnificent palace halls, decorated gateways of slender pillars. These pieces of architecture reveal a splendid synthesis of Persian and Indian style – Muslim structure with Hindu decoration. To quote Tara chand, “The crafts manship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu while the arches, plain domes, smooth faced walls and spacious interiors were muslims superimposition”. The other side of the picture is equally interesting from the second half of the 16th century Hindu buildings showed traces of Mughal architecture. The romantic city of Amber, the palaces of Bikaner, the fortresses of Jothpur and orchna, are the most notable instances of this style.

Some examples of structural features of Sultanate –Mughal period

1. Qutb Minar, Delhi
2. Agra Fort, Agra
3. Buland Darwaja – Fatehpur Sikri
4. Gol Gumbaz Bijapur
5. Red Fort. Delhi
6. Taj Mahal, Agra.

1.Qutb Minar: The construction of the Qutbminar was started by Qutub-ud-di-Aibak in 1199AD. And was completed by Iltutmish in 1230 AD. It is named after the famous Muslim saint. Qutb-ud-din of Ush. (Near Baghdad). It is built of red stone.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES: The minar is a circular tower 13.8 mts in diameter at base and tapers to the width of 3 mts. At the summit.

1. Each stage of the Tower is terminated by a projecting balcony. The projecting balconies are supported by stalactite bracketing.
2. The entrance is through the doorway on the northern side and within a stair-way and an illusions of its increased height.
3. It is the highest tower in India.

2. AGRA FORT: The foundation of Agra Fort was laid by Akbar in 1564AD. It is built with red sandstone and marble.

Structural Features: The plan of this fort takes the form of an irregular semi-circle. It is fortified by 2.4 kilometers long and about 21 meters high wall. The red sand stone linked by iron rings and is said that even a hair cannot find its way into their joints. It was for the first time that red sandstone was used on such a massive scale.

The entry to the fort is through two massive and highly ornamented gateways, one each on the southern and western side.

Shah Jahan added a few buildings in the fort and prominent among these are the Diwan-i-am, Diwan –i-khas and Moti Masjid. These buildings were executed in marble.

The fort at Art present a comparison between the production of Akbar with voluptuous productions of Shah-Jahan – two different styles of the Mughals.

3.BULAND DARWAJA: The Buland Darwaja at Fatehpur Sikri was erected by Akbar to commemorate his conquest of Gujarat. It has a rectangular border formation on its central face which carries a continuous inscription in beautiful lettering. The inscription is famous not only for its calligraphy but also because it establishes the religious broadmindedness of Akbar as it includes a message from Jesus Christ also.

Structural Features: The 39 meters wide gateway is approached by 42 steps and rises to the height of the structure is 52.8 meters from the ground level. It is believed to be the largest arched gateway in India.

It has an imposing frontal façade. The appearance of the structure is aspiring and overwhelming without being weighty and pretentious.

4.GOL GUMBAZ: The Gol Gumbaz or Round Dome the mausoleum of Mohammad Adil Shah was built in the middle the 17th century AD by the Bahmani rulers.

Structural features: 1. Externally the structure is in the form of a cube surmounted by a hemispherical dome with the tower or turret attached to its each corner.

2. The dome having the external diameter of 43.2 meters is supported by a combination of interesting arches. At the base, of the dome are the bold foliations which conceal the Juncture which joins the dome with the drum.

3. The interior of the Gol Gumbaz is one big hall measuring 40.5 meters across and 53.4 meters high and its dome is considered to be one of the largest in the world.

5.RED FORT: The Red Fort at Delhi was constructed by Emperor Shah Jahan. It is built of red sand stone and marble.

Structural features: The fort is in the form of a parallelogram measuring 930 meters and is enclosed in a strongly fortified wall. There are two gateways. The western gateway known as the Lahore gate was the Principal and ceremonial entrance.

The private and the royal apartments were enclosed within an enclosure measuring 480 meters by 345 meters an enclosure within an enclosure. It is in this enclosure that the magnificence of Shah Jahan as a builder comes to life. Some of the prominent buildings are the Diwan –i-am.

The Diwan –i-Khas and Rangh Mahal: Outside this inner enclosure are service quarters and barracks etc.

The fort is provided with full and continuous supply of water.

6.TAJ MAHAL: The Taj Mahal the grand mausoleum of Mumtaz Mahal, the beloved begum of Shah Jahan. Stands on the banks of the river Yamuna.

Structural features: The Mausoleum is constructed on a 66 Meters high plinth. The lower portion is square in plan rises to the height of 32.4 meters and is surmounted by the cupolas-in- each corner.

In the center of the cupolas rises a bulbous dome which rises to the height of 56.1 metres.

The arrangement of the compartments in the interior octagonal chambers connected with one another by diagonal passages is similar to that of the tomb of Humayun at Delhi.

The interior and exterior of the mausoleum is richly carved and decorated with inlay work screens and calligraphy.

The main structure is surrounded by ornamental gardens, fountains and pools.

The beauty of Taj Mahal lies in complete coherence and lucidity of its external architectural effect and its charm in the texture and quality of the white Makarana marble used in its construction.

Conclusion

This Islamic impact left a lasting influence on various aspects Indian culture. The indigenous cultural tradition underwent a great transformation after coming in contact with Islamic heritage over several centuries in the realms of art and architecture etc. The effects of this cultural synthesis are no longer alien and have become an integral part of Indian culture

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