

## **A STUDY ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF MUGHAL EMPIRE.**

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### **Abstract:**

The new Indian Architecture of the Mughal period is called Mughal Architecture. The Mughal architecture was an amalgamation of Persian, Turkic, Timurid Iranian, Central Asian, and Indian Hindu style of architecture. Mughal architecture first developed and flourished during the reign of Akbar. In this period there was extensive use of red sandstone as a building material. Mughal architecture reached its peak during the rule of Shah Jahan. The decline of Mughal architecture began during the rule of Aurangzeb and post his death. The Mughals were known for building beautiful quadrilateral gardens.

Mughal architecture is the type of Indo-Islamic architecture developed by the Mughals in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries throughout the ever-changing extent of their empire in the Indian subcontinent. It developed from the architectural styles of earlier Muslim dynasties in India and from Iranian and Central Asian architectural traditions, particularly Timurid architecture. It also further incorporated and syncretized influences from wider Indian architecture, especially during the reign of Akbar. Mughal buildings have a uniform pattern of structure and character, including large bulbous domes, slender minarets at the corners, massive halls, large vaulted gateways, and delicate ornamentation; examples of the style can be found in modern-day Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

The Mughal dynasty was established after the victory of Babur at Panipat in 1526. During his five-year reign, Babur took considerable interest in erecting buildings, though few have survived. His grandson Akbar built widely, and the style developed vigorously during his reign. Among his accomplishments were Agra Fort, the fort-city of Fatehpur Sikri, and the Buland Darwaza. Akbar's son Jahangir commissioned the Shalimar Gardens in Kashmir.

The Mughals constructed excellent Forts, Mosques, Mausoleums, Gardens and Cities. Mughal architecture begins with Akbar who displayed great passion for buildings with meticulous planning and constructing splendid edifices. He made the best use of the Hindu and Persian style of architecture. The salient features of Akbar's buildings are the use of red sandstone inlaid with white marble and painted designs on walls and ceiling.

**Keywords:** Mughal Empire, Indo-Islamic, Culture, Architecture.

### **Introduction:**

The Indo-Islamic-Persian style was the distinguished and chief characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture which was flourished on the Indian subcontinent during the reign of Mughal Empire (1526–1857). This new style was a result of combination of elements of Islamic art and architecture, which were introduced to India by the Delhi Sultanate (1192–1398) and had produced great monuments such as the Qutub Minar which consist the features of Persian art and architecture. Mughal monuments are found chiefly in north India and many remains can be found in Pakistan too. Rolling vines and flowers, jewels, and crowns in greens, blues, and gold embellish Mughal buildings.

Before concentrating purely on the architectural issues, providing some details about the Mughal Empire like a brief history, great rulers and major constructions and monuments will help the reader to comprehend the general conditions of the period. The Mughal Empire is considered to be the most prominent Muslim rule for its good governance, and contribution to the development of the fields like architectural, cultural, administrative and many others. The rise and reign of Mughal dynasty is considered by many scholars as one of the most interesting episodes in the history of India. At the extremes of their power, Mughals ruled almost every corner of India. The empire emerged out of descendants of the Mongol Empire who were living in Turkestan in the 15th century. They had become Muslims and assimilated the culture of the Middle East, along with keeping elements of their Far Eastern roots. Besides being the founders of cities (Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan), architects (Shah Jahan), naturalists and horticulturalists (Jahangir), Mughals were also the authors of autobiographies (Babur, Jahangir), letters (Aurangazib) and poems (Babur).

### **The objective of the study :**

1. To highlight the Mughal architecture.
2. To describe the beauty of the Mughal Architecture
3. Assess the value of enriched Mughal architecture in India.

Mughals brought in Persian style into Indian Architecture. The character and structure of Mughal buildings displayed a uniform character and structure. Some of the main features of Mughal architecture are mentioned as Large halls, Very large vaulted gateways, Delicate ornamentation, Bulbous domes Slender Minarets with cupolas at the 4 corners.

In Arabic and Persian Mughal means Mangol or Mangolian. The Chagatai Turkic prince, Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was the founder of the Mughal Empire. He was born in Central Asia in 1483 into the ruling family of small kingdom Fargana. He was descendant of the Turkic conqueror Timurlane from his father's side and Genghis Khan, the Mongol ruler on his mother's side. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, sultan of Delhi, in 1526, in the first battle of Palnipat after which he imposed his rule on most of Northern India. The Empire he founded was of sophisticated civilization which was based on religious toleration. It was an amalgamation of Persian, Mongol and Indian cultures. During this time, trade with the rest of the Islamic world, including Persia and through Persia to Europe, was encouraged. Babur had great thoughts regarding civilization, architecture and administration and he was the person who brought a broad- minded and confident Islam from central Asia to India. He also wrote an autobiography, The Babur Namah, a candid, honest and at times even poetic. By the time of his death in 1530, he had conquered all of Hindustan and established an empire that extended from the Deccan to Turkestan. As Babur was aggressive and keener about expanding his territory, he did not

concentrate on constructing buildings and monuments of architectural value but it is true that he paved the way for an empire that became famous for its architecture.

After Babur had died in 1530, his son Humayun at the age of 23 took the throne. He soon found himself busy in fighting his enemies on two widely separated fronts. In the west, Bahadur Shah, the ruler of Gujarat, which had gained independence from Delhi, provided shelter for his enemies and in the east, his authority had to face challenges from the Afghan chieftains, under Sher Khan Sur (known as Sher Shah). In 1539 Humayun, after occupying Gaur, was caught in an unknown territory and when he tried to withdraw his forces towards Agra, Sher Khan blocked his communications and defeated him at Chausa on the Ganges. In 1540, the two armies met once again at Kanauj, but this time the Mughal army was so demoralized that with the approach of Sher Khan, they fled in panic. Humayun exiled in Persia. The death of Sher Khan in 1554 became an opportunity for Humayun to regain his empire from the clutches of Afghans. He finally got succeeded in achieving the lost empire by 1555. Thus, Humayun's tenure is marked by aggressive fighting throughout his life.

A heterogeneous picture of Mughal architecture prevailed during the reign of Humayun which lasted upto the middle of sixteenth century. The Timurid style can be seen in almost pure imports such as the mosque at Kachpura, Agra. After the death of his father, Humayun, Akbar acquired the throne in 1556 when he was at the age of 13. During his reign, Akbar managed to restrain almost all parts of India, with some areas becoming tributary states. In the mean time, Bengal became an integral and core part of the empire in 1576. Besides his military conquests, he introduced a series of reforms to accumulate his power. Akbar practiced tolerance and he aimed at the unification of Hindu-Muslim through the introduction of a new religion called Din-i-Ilahi. Akbar became ill and died of slow poisoning on October 27, 1605.

Mughal architecture started gaining importance during the rule of Akbar. He built extremely and the style was exceptional. Most of Akbar's buildings are built with red sandstone, spiced at times through marble inlay. Fatehpur Sikri located 26 miles west of Agra, was constructed in the late 1500s and becomes evidence to the era of his royal heritage. In Gujarat and many other places the presence of a style, which is a mixture of Muslim and Hindu characteristic features of architecture can be found. The great mosque is one such embodiment of architectural brilliance which can be unmatched in elegance and grandeur. The Tomb of Akbar's father Humayun, Akbar's tomb at Sikandra are some other examples of such finest works of architectural magnificence which highlights the Mughal architecture. The tomb placed in a garden at Delhi has a complex ground plan with octagonal chambers at center, which is joined by an elegantly facade archway, surmounted by cupolas, kiosks.

Prince Salim, who was the only surviving son of Akbar, succeeded to the throne on November 3, 1605, under the title of Jahangir and he ruled India till his death on Oct 28, 1627. The extension of the Mughal territory came practically to a pause in his reign, and the empire suffered a severe blow with the loss of kandahar. In spite of having vast imperial resources, no serious attempt was made to bring some of the great and unconquered areas of the Deccan under the empire.

Jahangir inherited the attitude of Akbar as he abundantly patronized the arts, painting, architecture, philosophy and literature, and ignored the military conquest. The period of Jahangir as Emperor is considered to be the richest period of Mughal culture. Scholars of India and West have praised this period as the age of Mughal splendor. Jahangir encouraged paintings of events and incidents which occurred in his own life rather than illustrated fiction. He also encouraged portraiture and scientific studies of birds, flowers and animals, which were made into albums. Mansur and Manohar include his

famous painters. Jahangir, who resided at Lahore, built less compared to his predecessors but brought the significant change from sandstone to marble in his monuments of architecture.

It is during the reign of Jahangir from 1605- 1627, that there was a decline in the Hindu influence on Mughal architecture. Jahangir's style was more Persian, like his great mosque at Lahore. Akbar's mausoleum was built during his rule. Jahangir played an exceptional role in the development of the Mughal garden. "Verinag" and "Chashma-Shahi" are beautiful gardens built by Jahangir. The Gardens of Shalimar and other pavilions on the shore of Kashmir's Dal lake were also built by him. The extreme use of white marble as a material was one of the striking features of Jahangir's time.

The reign of Shah Jahan, which lasted from his accession of the throne on Feb 6, 1628 to 1658 is considered as the period of the greatest splendor of the Greatest Mughals. The empire witnessed a great measure of internal peace and the emperor found ample time to satisfy his taste for cultural pursuits and the Mughal armies were able to attend the expansion of the empire. It was Shah Jahan who gave perfection to the Mughal architecture. Shah Jahan began a series of unbelievable, splendid, and monumental architectural projects in Delhi. The city itself was surrounded by a wall of sixty feet. In the middle of the city he built for himself a magnificent palace along with the buildings that were associated with imperial administration within the Red Fort. Besides the buildings, he built for himself an extraordinary throne, the Peacock Throne, made of gold and covered in rare jewels which would cost over five million dollars.

Mughal architecture acquired perfection in the construction of Jama Masjid of Delhi during the rule of Shah Jahan. The Moti Masjid, which was built during his rule, is another beautiful creation and reminiscent of the style that was eminent in Mughal era. Shah Jahan's most famous building project was the Taj Mahal in Agra. When his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, died at the age of 39 while giving birth to her seventh child in 1631, the grief-stricken emperor wanted to build for her the most lavish and splendid tomb he could manage. With the amalgamation of both Persian and Indian architectural styles, the tomb and the grounds brought the Muslim idea of Paradise into reality. The Taj Mahal is a magnificent monument which took over twenty years of time to build and demanded the hard work of over twenty thousand men.

When Emperor Shah Jahan fell severely ill at the end of September 1657, it became a signal for a struggle of succession to break out among his four sons—Dara Shiko, Suja, Aurangazib and Murad. Aurangazib was the third son of Shah Jahan and he was born on Oct 24, 1618. He ascended the throne on 21st July, 1658. Aurangazib ruled over most of the Indian subcontinent. His reign lasted for 49 years from 1658 until his death in 1707. Aurangazib was a notable expansionist like his forefathers and during his reign, the Mughal Empire, though temporarily, reached its greatest extent. During the reign of the orthodox Aurangazib, there was a decline of the arts. In this period the Mughal academy was dispersed. Many artists then started joining Rajput courts, where their influence on Hindu painting is clearly evident. Famous Badshahi Mosque was built by Aurangazib which had the huge praying area in the world till the construction of Faisal Mosque in Islamabad in late twentieth century. After the death of Aurangazib, a war of succession broke out among his four sons that had ultimately resulted the decline of the empire.

By the seventeenth century, a predominantly floral decorative vocabulary had established itself as a mainstream ornament in the arts of the great empire of the Mughals. Flower and plant decoration occupied the place of the previously favored "typical Islamic" geometrical patterns. In the court arts of Shah Jahan, the new floral aesthetic showed its impact on all art forms and objects of court life, but

it was in the buildings of the emperor where they were expressed in a noticeable way that everyone can see. The naturalistic flower representations of the Taj Mahal bring the involvement of the Mughals with plants and botanical studies to its monumental pinnacle. The close observation of the visual world had created an interest to the Mughals from the beginning. The founder of the dynasty, Babur expressed his interest in nature in detailed descriptions of plants, trees and animals which he saw on his peregrinations in his native Central Asia and during his conquest of India. He included these in his autobiography, an outstanding text both for its time and to have been written by a young Timurid prince of 16th century Central Asia. His great grandson Jahangir, the fourth Mughal emperor, also showed himself as a first-rank naturalist. Some of the most famous buildings created during the Mughal era are given below:

1. Taj Mahal: It was built by Shah Jahan between 1632 and 1653, in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognized the Taj Mahal as a World Heritage Site in 1983. It is located in Agra.

2. Red Fort: UNESCO designated it as the World Heritage Site in 2007. It was built by Shah Jahan when he decided to move the capital from Agra to Delhi. It was the residence of Mughal rulers.

3. Shalimar Gardens: The gardens date from the period when the Mughal Empire was at its artistic and aesthetic zenith. Construction of the gardens began in 1641 by Shah Jahan. In 1981 inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as they embody Mughal garden design at the apogee of its development.

4. Jama Masjid: Built by Shah Jahan. The construction was completed in 1656.

5. Badshahi Mosque : At the time of completion in 1673, it was the largest mosque in the world. It was built during the reign of Aurangzeb.

6. Humayun's tomb: Humayun's tomb was commissioned by Humayun's first wife and chief consort, Empress Bega Begum (also known as Haji Begum), in 1569-70, and designed by Mirak Mirza Ghiyas and his son, Sayyid Muhammad, Persian architects chosen by her. It was the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent. It is often regarded as the first mature example of Mughal architecture.

7. Fatehpur Sikri: Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri, was built by Akbar the Great to commemorate his victory. Akbar's greatest architectural achievement was the construction of Fatehpur Sikri, his capital city near Agra at a trade and Jain pilgrimages. The construction of the walled city was started in 1569 and completed in 1574.

It contained some of the most beautiful buildings – both religious and secular which testify to the Emperor's aim of achieving social, political and religious integration. The main religious buildings were the huge Jama Masjid and small Tomb of Salim Chisti. Buland Darwaza, also known as the Gate of Magnificence, was built by Akbar in 1576 to commemorate his victory over Gujarat and the Deccan. It is 40 metres high and 50 metres from the ground. The total height of the structure is about 54 metres from ground level.

The Haramsara, the royal seraglio in Fatehpur Sikri was an area where the royal women lived. The opening to the Haramsara is from the Khwabgah side separated by a row of cloisters. According to Abul Fazl, in Ain-i-Akbari, the inside of Harem was guarded by senior and active women, outside the

enclosure the eunuchs were placed, and at a proper distance there were faithful Rajput guards. Jodha bai Palace is the largest palace in the Fatehpur Sikri seraglio, connected to the minor haramsara quarters. The main entrance is double storied, projecting out of the facade to create a kind of porch leading into a recessed entrance with a balcony. Inside there is a quadrangle surrounded by rooms. The columns of rooms are ornamented with a variety of Hindu sculptural motifs.

### **3. Conclusion**

Indian heritage has a special place for Mughal architecture in India. Most of the Mughals were great builders who appreciated art and creativity and Indian architecture flourished under the Mughal empire. They had built monuments of ostentatious designs, elaborate splendor and impressive stature. The most beautiful example of Mughal architecture is Taj Mahal, and the white marbled mausoleum and the Humayun's tomb are examples of the combination of Mughal architecture and Persian architecture enriched to the beauty in the field of architecture in India

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