



SALTORA NETAJI CENTENARY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

SEMESTER –IV

COURSE CODE: AHHST 402 C-9

COURSE TITLE: HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA (C.1526 AD –
C.1757AD)

TOPIC: MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

PRESENTED BY
SANJAY PRASAD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Introduction

With the exception of Aurangzeb, all the early Mughal Emperors had fine artistic tastes and it may be roughly stated that the century covered by the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan was the golden age of Mughal empire. The period witnessed glorious outburst of activity in architecture, painting and music. In all these, the Mughals set up standards which still extort the admiration of all. The cultural richness of the age was possible because the Mughals by their strong and wise government, ensured a long period of peace and prosperity. They also patronised learning and so under their auspices, there grew up a rich crop of literature. In a word, the Mughals left behind a rich legacy of culture in all its distinctive manifestations.

Architecture under Babar

It was in the domain of architecture that the Mughals made their most impressive contribution to Indian culture. They were prolific builders and their buildings were masterpieces. In their beauty and grandeur, they dazzled “even eyes accustomed to the pomp of Versailles”. Babar has a poor opinion of the art of building prevalent in India and is said to have imported artists from Constantinople. But in memories he stated that he utilised the services of Indian stone cutters in constructing his buildings. Most of these buildings have perished except two. He built a large mosque at Kabuli Bagh at Panipat and Jami Masjid at Sambal.



Architecture under Humayun and Sher Shah

Humayun's troubled reign left him little opportunity to indulge his artistic taste. Only one mosque of his time still stands at Fatehabad in the Punjab. Sher Shah was a great builder and introduced a more refined and dignified style than what prevailed before. The two remarkable buildings of his time are: the mosque in the Purana Kila near Delhi and his own tomb at Sasaram in Bihar. The mosque reflects Persian influence and shows a refined taste. His noble mausoleum at Sasaram is one of the "best designed and most beautiful buildings in India". It stands in the middle of an artificial lake grey and brooding and suggests eternal repose.

Architecture under Akbar

The new style of architecture begun by Sher Shah was greatly developed by Akbar whose tolerant spirit and artistic sense gave full play to Persian and Hindu influences. Most of the edifices of Akbar's time were built with red sandstone, a very hard material, but Akbar worked wonders with it. Akbar adorned his capital Agra with many magnificent buildings such as the Diwan-i-Am, the Diwan-i-Khas and the palace known as the Jahangir Mahal. But his most important buildings are to be found at Fatehpur Sikri, which is known as Buland Darwaza. His mausoleum at Sikandra is a unique sepulchre modelled on the Buddhist viharas of India. It was planned by Akbar but constructed by Jahangir.

Architecture under Jahangir and Shah Jahan

Jahangir had fine artistic sense but his tastes were for painting rather than for architecture. The two most important buildings of his time are the tomb of Akbar at Sikandara and the tomb of Iti-mad-ud-daula. Shah Jahan was the most prolific and magnificent builder among the Mughal emperors and in his time the art of building in India reached its zenith of perfection. He built Jama Masjid, Diwan-i-Am and the Diwan-i-Khas at Delhi. The lovely Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) at Agra is remarkable for its purity and unadorned beauty. But the finest flower of the Mughal art is the famous Taj Mahal, a noble mausoleum erected by Shah Jahan over the grave of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

References:

1. Stanley Lane Poole: Medieval India under Mohammedan Rule
2. R. P. Tripathi – Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire
3. J. N. Sarkar – Studies in Mughal India
4. Iswari Prasad – History of Medieval India
5. R.C.Majumdar (ed.) – The Mughal Empire
6. R. C. Majumdar (ed.) – Comprehensive History of India
7. K. S. Lal- Studies in Medieval Indian History
8. ইরফান হাবিব – মধ্যকালীন ভারত

THANK YOU