

HISTORY CHAPTER-5

CLASS-7

RULERS AND BUILDINGS

Engineering Skills and Construction

- Monuments provide an insight into the technologies used for construction. Take something like a roof for example. We can make this by placing wooden beams or a slab of stone across four walls. But the task becomes difficult if we want to make a large room with an elaborate superstructure.
- Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries the trabeate style was used in the construction of temples, mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells (baolis).

Engineering Skills and Construction

- Between the seventh and tenth centuries architects started adding more rooms, doors and windows to buildings. Roofs, doors and windows were still made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called “trabeate” or “corbelled.”
- Two technological and stylistic developments are noticeable from the twelfth century. (1) The weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was called “arcuate”
- Limestone cement was increasingly used in construction. This was very high quality cement.

Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

- Temples and mosques were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship. They were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron.
- The largest temples were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temple were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler. The temple was a miniature model of the world ruled by the king and his allies. As they worshipped their deities together in the royal temples, it seemed as if they brought the just rule of the gods on earth.

Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

- Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of god but Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the “Shadow of God”. An inscription in the Delhi mosque explained that God chose Alauddin as a king because he had the qualities of Moses and Solomon.
- As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral right to be rulers. Constructing places of worship provided rulers with the chance to proclaim their close relationship with God, especially important in an age of rapid political change. Rulers also offered patronage to the learned and pious, and tried to transform their capitals and cities into great cultural centres that brought fame to their rule and their realm.

Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

- Sultan Iltutmish won universal respect for constructing a large reservoir just outside Dehli-i kuhna. It was called the hauz-i Sultani or the “King’s Reservoir”

Why were Temples Destroyed?

- Because kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to God and their power and wealth, it is not surprising that when they attacked one another's kingdoms, they often targeted these buildings. In the early ninth century when the Pandyan king Shrimara Shrivallabha invaded Sri Lanka and defeated the king, Sena I (831-851).
- Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was a contemporary of Rajendra I. During his campaigns in the subcontinent he also attacked the temples of defeated kings and looted their wealth and idols. Sultan Mahmud was not a very important ruler at that time. But by destroying temples – especially the one at Somnath – he tried to win credit as a great hero of Islam.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- Under the Mughals, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan were personally interested in literature, art and architecture.
- These gardens were called chahar bagh, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters. Beginning with Akbar, some of the most beautiful chahar baghs were constructed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- There were several important architectural innovations during Akbar's reign. For inspiration, Akbar's architects turned to the tombs of his Central Asian ancestor, Timur. The central towering dome and the tall gateway (pishtaq) became important aspects of Mughal architecture, first visible in Humayun's tomb.
- It was during Shah Jahan's reign that the different elements of Mughal architecture were fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis. His reign witnessed a huge amount of construction activity especially in Agra and Delhi. The ceremonial halls of public and private audience (diwan-i khas or am) were carefully planned.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- Shah Jahan's audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque. The pedestal on which his throne was placed was frequently described as the qibla, the direction faced by Muslims at prayer, since everybody faced that direction when court was in session. The idea of the king as a representative of God on earth was suggested by these architectural features.
- The construction of Shah Jahan's audience hall aimed to communicate that the king's justice would treat the high and the low as equals where all could live together in harmony.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- Shah Jahan adapted the river-front garden in the layout of the Taj Mahal, the grandest architectural accomplishment of his reign.
- Here the white marble mausoleum was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was to its south.

Taj Mahal



Humayun Tomb



Agra Fort



Region and Empire

- As construction activity increased between the eighth and eighteenth centuries there was also a considerable sharing of ideas across regions: the traditions of one region were adopted by another.
- In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri.
- The creation of large empires that brought different regions under their rule helped in this cross- fertilisation of artistic forms and architectural styles.

Region and Empire

- Mughal rulers were particularly skilled in adapting regional architectural styles in the construction of their own buildings. In Bengal, for example, the local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut.
- Even though the authority of the Mughal rulers waned in the eighteenth century, the architectural styles developed under their patronage were constantly used and adapted by other rulers whenever they tried to establish their own kingdoms.

SUMMARY

- ENGINEERING SKILL AND CONSTRUCTION
- GARDEN TOMBS AND MOSQUES
- WHY TEMPLES WERE DESTROYED
- REGION AND EMPIRE

Thank you