



The monumental architecture of the early period was mainly religious architecture in the form of temples. Later secular architecture in the form of forts and palaces was built. The Rajput rulers of the early medieval period were great patrons of architecture so were the southern kingdoms. In the period from eighth to twelfth centuries there emerged two styles – North Indian style and the South Indian or Dravidian style of temples. The South Indian style was popularised by Cholas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagara kingdoms.

In the beginning of the medieval period not only temples but also palaces, forts and water works were built. The Delhi Sultans built only religious architecture in the beginning. The regional kingdoms and later the Delhi Sultans showed inclination towards both religious and secular architecture. Muhammad Tughluq built a fortress called Tughluqabad in Delhi and Lodis too did the same.

The first **Islamic architecture** was *Quwwat-al Islam* mosque in Delhi followed by the Qutb Minar. The construction of Qutb Minar was started by Qutbuddin Aybak, the first Delhi Sultan. Its construction was completed by Iltutmish. It has five storeys. The first floor was constructed by Qutbuddin Aybak around 1199 and the rest by Iltutmish around 1229. A pattern is created under the balcony of the Qutb Minar by the small arches and geometrical designs. Therefore, the surface of the minar here is curved and angular. There are two bands of inscriptions in Arabic under the balcony. Only the most skilled craftsman could carve inscription on such a surface.



Two Bands of Inscriptions under the First Balcony of the Qutb Minar

Sher Shah Suri built his own mausoleum in Bihar. **Mughal architecture** began in the sixteenth century. The monumental architecture of Mughals started from Fatehpur Sikri near Agra which was founded in 1569. The complex at Fatehpur Sikri had several monuments like *Buland Darwaza*, *Panch Mahal* as well as Akbar's own mausoleum. Diwan-i-khas is famous for its architectural skill of inventing new styles. Akbar conducted his court at this place. He used to sit in conference on a circular platform supported by pillars. It was built entirely of red

sandstone but modelled like a wooden structure. Akbar also built a fort at Agra.

### Labour for the Agra Fort

Construction of Agra Fort required 2000 stone-cutters, 2000 cement and lime-makers and 8000 labourers.

In the medieval period (8th to 18th century) the rulers built two kinds of structures. The first were forts, palaces, garden residences and tombs— safe and luxurious places of rest in this world and the next. The second were structures for public use and comfort including temples, mosques, tanks, wells, carvan - *serais* and *bazaars*. Rulers hoped to win public praise by these structures. Rich merchants also made havelis for themselves and tanks, wells, *serais*, etc. for public.



*Buland Darwaza*



*Panch Mahal*



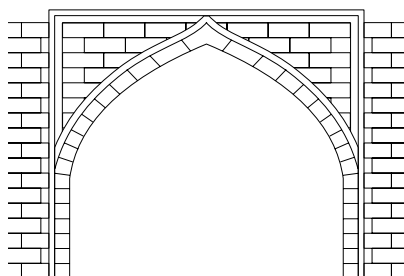
*Diwan-i khas*

## Technologies Used for Construction

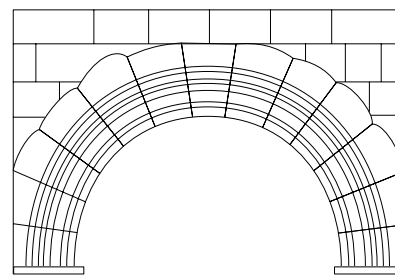
A roof can be made by placing wooden beams or a slab of stone across four walls. But to make a large room with an elaborate superstructure needs well-planned and well-designed techniques and skills. Superstructure is the part of a building above the ground floor. Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns. This style of architecture was called '**trabeate**' or 'corbelled'.

From the twelfth century, the weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was called '**arcuate**'.

From the twelfth century limestone cement was increasingly used in construction. This cement when mixed with stone chips hardened into concrete. This made construction of large structures easier and faster.



*Trabeate or corbelled style*



*Arcuate style*

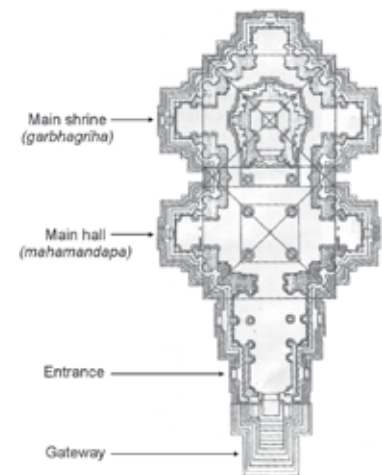
## Temple Construction in the Early Eleventh Century

In Northern India the Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho was constructed in 999 by the king Dhangadeva of the Chandela dynasty. The temple is decorated with elaborately carved sculptures.

In Southern India the Rajarajeshvara temple at Thanjavur was built by king Rajarajadeva in the early eleventh century. It had the tallest *shikhara* amongst temples of its time. The *shikhara* of the Rajarajeshvara temple is twice as high as that of the Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The architects built an inclined path to the top of the temple to carry a 90 tonne boulder for the top of the *shikhara*. They placed the boulder on rollers and rolled it all the way (4 km) to the top. This way was dismantled after the temple was constructed.



Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho



(b) Plan of the Temple

## Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

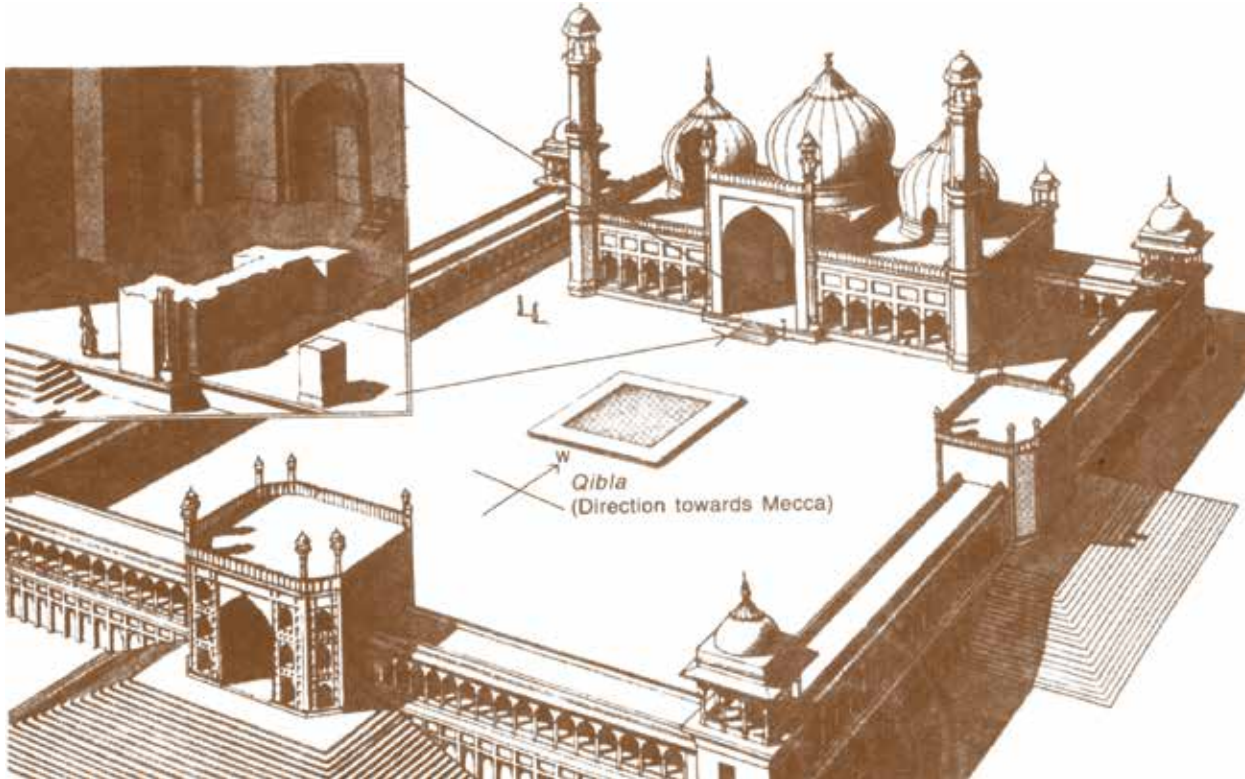
Temples and mosques were places of worship for the powerful and humble, rich and poor, so they were constructed with the best material and best architectural design and style. Sometimes they were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron. As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral right to be rulers. Constructing places of worship provided rulers



Rajarajeshvar Temple at Thanjavur

with the chance to proclaim their close relationship with God. At some places the king was thought as the representative of God, if not incarnation of God. Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the 'shadow of God'. The worship of the deities by the king sent the message to people that they brought the just rule of the gods on earth. Rulers also tried to transform their capital and cities into great cultural and commercial centres. It brought fame to their just rule and their realm. It also attracted traders for business and warriors for service and learned men for administration and advice.

The orthodox people at large believed that the rule of a just king will bring prosperity as the heavens will be pleased to rain as and when required. Constructing tanks, reservoirs and wells for water supply for use by all people was thought a pious job. So, the kings used to build them. Sultan Iltutmish constructed a large reservoir of water called *hauz - i Sultani* just outside the old city Delhi - i - Kuhna. He got high respect and praise from people of all religions, rich and poor. Sometimes these tanks were part of a temple, mosque or gurudwara.



*Plan of Jami Masjid built by Shah Jahan in his new capital Shahjahanabad*

### **Looting and Destroying Temples**

Sometimes when a king attacked another's kingdom he took away the images made of gold. He used to worship them in his personal temple or the temple of his capital.

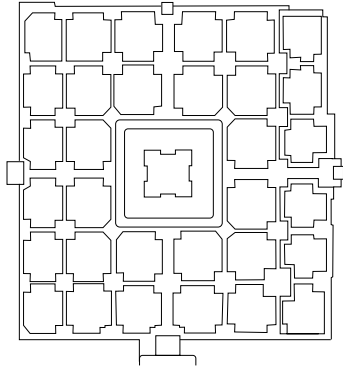
In the early eleventh century when Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple, he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers. Sometimes, it was a kind of insult to the defeated king or kingdom only when the invader was of a different religion.

When the Pandyan king Shrimara Srivallabha invaded Sri Lanka and defeated the king Sena I (831-851), he took away the statue of the Buddha made entirely of gold. The next Sinhalese ruler Sena II ordered his general to invade Madurai, the Pandyan capital and he made a special effort to find and restore the gold statue of the Buddha.

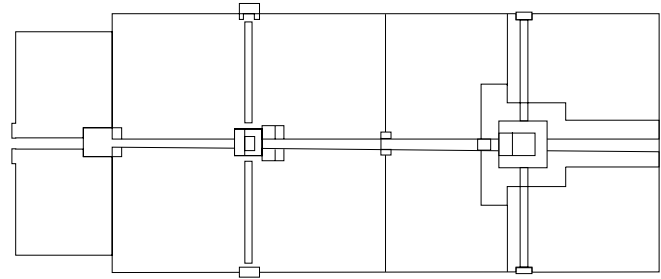
Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was a contemporary of Rajendra I. He attacked the temples and looted their wealth and idols. Unlike Rajendra I, he destroyed the temple and statues made of stone and took away the statues made of gold to melt and use for purposes other than worship.

## Gardens and Garden Palaces

The Mughal emperors were interested in *Chahar bagh* meaning four gardens made by dividing a rectangular land into four symmetrical quarters by cross channels in between. Some of the most beautiful *Chahar baghs* were constructed by Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Delhi, Kashmir and Agra.



*The Chahar Bagh in Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1562-1571)*

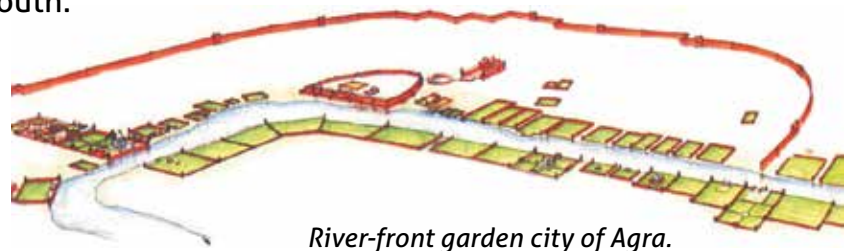


*Side view of Terraced, Chahar Bagh at Shalimar Gardens, Kashmir, 1620 and 1634*

In the early years of his reign, Shah Jahan's capital was at Agra, a city where the nobility had constructed their houses on the banks of the river Yamuna. These were set in the middle of formal gardens constructed in the *Chahar bagh* format. The *Chahar bagh* format also had a variation called river front garden. In this patterns, the houses were located at the edge of the *Chahar bagh* and not in the middle. Taj Mahal was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was to its south.



*The Taj Mahal at Agra (completed in 1643)*



*River-front garden city of Agra.*

Shah Jahan developed this architectural form as a means to control the access that nobles had to the river. Similarly, the imperial palace commanded the river-front in the new city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi. Only few nobles were given access to the river.



*1850 map of Shahjahanabad (in Delhi)*

## Tombs

While constructing Humayun's tomb during Akbar's reign, the architects copied the central towering dome and the tall gateway (pishtaq) from the tomb of his central Asian ancestor, Timur. The tomb was placed in the centre of a huge formal *chahar bagh*. The building was constructed in the tradition known as *hasht bihisht* (eight paradises), that is, a central hall surrounded by eight rooms. Made in sandstone, it is edged with white marble.

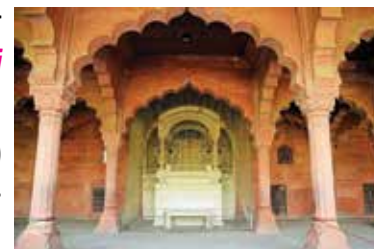


Humayun's Tomb (constructed between 1562 and 1571).  
(Notice the water channels.)

## Forts

The Mughal forts were generally very elaborate. They built forts covering a huge complex. These forts had palaces also and other splendid buildings inside the complex like *diwan-i khas* and *diwan-i am*. The Mughal forts were complete with township.

During Shah Jahan's reign, *Diwan-i-khas* (hall of private audience) and *diwan-i am* (*hall of public audience*) were carefully planned forty-pillared halls.



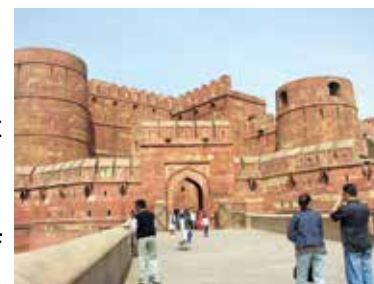
The throne balcony in the diwan-i am in Delhi (completed in 1648)

Behind Shah Jahan's throne in the newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi were a series of pietra dura inlays. **Pietra dura** means coloured hard stones placed in depressions carved out into sandstone or marble creating beautiful decorative patterns or pictures. These inlays depicted the legendary Greek god Orpheus playing lute. It suggested that Shah Jahan's justice would make people live together in harmony just as the music of Orpheus calmed the ferocious beasts and led them to live together in peace.



## Display of Power

The Qutb Minar and Quwwat-al Islam mosque both represented power of the Sultans. Indeed Quwwat-al Islam means 'Power of Islam.' The massive gateway at Fatehpur Sikri built by Akbar called Buland Darwaja (Gate of Victory) gives the impression of power and strength of the emperor. The white marble mausoleum Taj Mahal is the grandest architectural accomplishment of Shah Jahan's reign. The mausoleum apart from white marble is noted for its symmetry. The Taj Mahal is a symbol of immortal love. It also reflects the power and prosperity of Mughal Empire in India considering its design and expensive materials used. When Shah Jahan changed the architectural vocabulary from sandstone to marble, the screens in *diwan-i khas* in particular and his advanced architectural styles also reflected the scales of justice. The Red Fort in Delhi and Agra Fort are the display of Mughal power.



## Sharing of Architectural Styles

When various independent regions came under the rule of one large empire, it encouraged sharing of ideas across regions. Construction activity increased between the 8th and 18th century. One region adopted the architectural style of the another. In Vijayanagara, for example, elephant stables of the rulers were strongly influenced by



Pillars and struts holding the extension of the roof in Jodha Bai Palace in Fateh Pur Sikri.

the style of architecture found in the adjoining Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. In Vrindavan, near Mathura, the Iranian architectural style of the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri was followed in the construction of temples. Besides the Iranian style Mughal rulers also adopted regional architectural styles in the construction of their own buildings. In Bengal, the local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut. The Mughals used this style in their architecture. Decorated pillars and struts holding the extension of the roof in Jodha Bai Palace in Fatehpur Sikri followed the architectural traditions of the Gujarat region.

### In Other Parts of the World

#### Taller and Lighter Church Buildings



Church of Notre Dame in Paris.

From the twelfth century onward an architectural style came up in France. It was characterized by high pointed arches and flying buttresses (structure built to support a wall). Stained glass, often pointed with scenes drawn from the Bible, was also used. Tall spires and bell towers, visible from a distance were added. Thus the church buildings became taller and lighter than earlier buildings. For example, the Church of Notre Dame in Paris (France).

### Key Words

- » Buland Darwaza : gateway of victory.
- » Kuwwat-al Islam : power of Islam.
- » Diwan-i khas : private audience hall of the emperor.
- » Diwan-i am : public audience hall of the emperor.
- » Havelies : big houses made by rich merchants.
- » Trabeate or corbelled style : making a roof by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns.
- » Arcuate style : making a roof such that its weight is carried by arches.
- » Shikhara : the uppermost part of a temple.
- » Chahar Bagh : a big garden divided by cross channels into four symmetrical gardens.
- » Pietra Dura Inlays : coloured hard stones placed in depressions carved out into sandstone or marble creating beautiful decorative patterns or pictures.

## SUMMARY

- ▶ The Rajput rulers of the early medieval period were great patrons of architecture so were the southern kingdoms.
- ▶ The first Islamic architecture in India was Quwwat-al Islam mosque in Delhi followed by Qutb Minar.
- ▶ The monumental architecture of Mughals started from Fatehpur Sikri near Agra which was founded in 1569.
- ▶ Construction of water tanks and wells was highly praised by everyone.
- ▶ Garden palaces were built by the rulers and nobles.
- ▶ Some kings tried to show them as representative of God.

## Exercise Time

### A. Tick (✓) the only correct choice amongst the following :

- The first Islamic architecture in Delhi was
  - Jami Masjid
  - Red Fort
  - Quwwat-al Islam mosque
  - Qutb Minar
- Sher Shah Suri built his own mausoleum in
  - Bihar
  - Agra
  - Delhi
  - Khajuraho
- Kandariya Mahadeva temple was constructed at Khajuraho by
  - Cholas
  - Pandyas
  - Chandelas
  - None of these
- Chahar bagh means
  - 4 gardens
  - 3 gardens
  - 2 gardens
  - beautiful garden
- Agra Fort was made by
  - Shah Jahan
  - Jahangir
  - Akbar
  - Aurangzeb

### B. Fill in the blanks :

- Mughal gardens were developed at Agra, Delhi and \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Qutb Minar and Quwwat-al Islam represented the power of \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Rajarajeshvara temple is located at \_\_\_\_\_.
- Temples were constructed to demonstrate the power, wealth and \_\_\_\_\_ of the patron.
- The kings tried to show them as \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

### C. Match the Following :

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Taj Mahal                | a. Delhi          |
| 2. Quwwat-al Islam mosque   | b. Thanjavur      |
| 3. Kandriya Mahadeva temple | c. Fatehpur Sikri |
| 4. Rajarajeshvara temple    | d. Agra           |
| 5. Buland Darwaza           | e. Khajuraho      |

### D. Write true (T) or False (F) against the following statements in given brackets :

- The Buland Darwaza was constructed within the Agra Fort.
- Construction of water tanks and wells was praised by every one.
- The Rajarajeshvara temple was constructed by the Chandela dynasty.
- Limestone cement was not useful for construction.
- Hauj-i Sultani was built by Iltutmish.





**E. Define the following terms :**

1. Trabeate style
2. Arcuate style
3. Chahar bagh
4. Pietra-dura inlays

**F. Identify the following :**

1. Big house made by rich merchants
2. The uppermost part of a temple
3. Making a roof such that its weight was carried by arches
4. Private audience hall of the emperor
5. A big garden divided by cross channels into four symmetrical gardens

**G. Answer in one word or one phrase :**

1. Which dynasty built the Qutb Minar ?
2. Name the city founded by Shah Jahan.
3. Where is Buland Darwaza situated ?
4. Who built Hauz-i Sultani near Dehli-i Kuhna ?
5. Who took away the gold statue of the Buddha from Sri Lanka ?

**H. Answer these questions briefly :**

1. What are the features of the Islamic architecture ?
2. How is the 'trabeate' style of architecture different from the 'arcuate' ?
3. Giving examples state how architecture represented a symbol of power ?
4. What are the elements of a Mughal chahar bagh garden ?
5. How did a temple or mosque communicate the importance of a king ?

**I. Answer these questions in detail :**

1. Give a brief account of the architecture of early medieval period (10th to 12th century).
2. Discuss the progress of architecture during the Mughal Period.
3. Why did the kings build temples ? Why did some kings loot and destroy temples ?
4. Describe the two kinds of structures constructed by the kings in the medieval period.
5. What were the features of the architecture built by Shah Jahan ?

## PROJECT WORK

- Visit and describe any park or garden in your neighbourhood. In what ways is it similar to or different from the gardens of the Mughals ?