
Chapter – 5 History

Rulers and Buildings

- Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries, kings and their officers built two kinds of structures; the first were structures of grandiose while second were structures for public activity.
 - **Engineering Skills and Construction:**
 - (i) Monuments provide an insight into the technologies used for construction.
 - (ii) Between the seventh and tenth centuries architects started adding more rooms, doors and windows to buildings.
 - (iii) Roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called 'trabeate' or 'corbelled'.
 - (iv) Two technological and stylistic developments from twelfth century are 'arcuate architectural' form and use of limestone mixed with stonechips that led to faster construction.
 - **Buildings, Temples, Mosques and Tanks:**
 - (i) Temples and mosques were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship and meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron.
 - (ii) The largest temples, were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temples were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler.
 - (iii) Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of God but Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the 'Shadow of God'.
 - (iv) As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral right to be rulers.
 - (v) It was widely believed that the rule of a just king would be an age of plenty when the heavens would not withhold rain.
 - **Why were Temples Destroyed:**
 - (i) Since kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to God and their power and wealth, they attacked and targeted these buildings when they attacked one another's kingdoms.
 - (ii) In the early 11th century, when the Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers.
 - **Gardens, Tombs and Forts:**
 - (i) Under the Mughals, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan were personally interested in literature, art and architecture.
 - (ii) Babur got gardens called Chahar bagh (four gardens) built in Kabul. They were further constructed in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi by Akbar, Jahanir and Shah Jahan.
 - (iii) Akbar's architecture is visible in his father, Humayun's tomb.
 - (iv) Under Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture were fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis.
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- (v) The ceremonial halls of public and private audience (diwan-i-khas; diwan-i-am) were carefully planned.
 - (vi) Shah Jahan adapted the Chahar Bagh technique in the layout of the Taj Mahal, the grandest architectural accomplishment of his reign.
 - **Region and Empire:**
 - (i) As construction activity increased between the eight and eighteenth centuries there was also a considerable sharing of ideas across regions.
 - (ii) In Vijayanagar, for example, the elephant stables of the rulers were strongly influenced by the style of architecture found in the adjoining Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda.
 - (iii) In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri.
 - (iv) The creation of large empires that brought different regions under their rule; this helped in this cross-fertilisation of artistic forms and architectural styles.
 - (v) The Mughals adopted the 'Bangla dome' in their architecture.
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