
Indian Architecture - Turning Back Time From Past to Present

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ABSTRACT

India's architecture is influenced by its history, culture, and religion. The opposing Hindu temple architecture and Indo-Islamic architecture are the most well-known historical styles among a variety of architectural styles and traditions. Both of them, especially the former, contain a variety of regional styles. In ancient times of Indus Valley, people lived in cities. Houses were made up of brick, grid-layout streets, drainage systems, water supply systems, granaries and citadels were all a part of the cities.

Keywords:-*Indian architecture, civilization, town planning*

INTRODUCTION

Indian architecture is as old as civilization itself, from ancient South Indian temples to the finest Mughal ruins. The earliest signs of recognized building activity in India may be seen in the Indus Valley settlements. India is home to a plethora of temples, Baroque structures, and modernistic architecture that portray the tales of their respective eras. There are 830 World Heritage Sites on the UNESCO list, 26 of which are in India.

HISTORICAL ERAS OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Neolithic Period

The Neolithic period in South India began around 6500 BC and continued until around 1400 BC, when the Megalithic transition began. Ash mounds first appeared in the South Indian Neolithic around 2500 BC in the Karnataka region, eventually spreading to Tamil Nadu.

Neolithic settlements have been discovered in India's northwestern (Kashmir), southern (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh), northern

(Meghalaya), and eastern (Bihar and Odisha) regions.

Indus Valley Civilization

In late Bronze Age India, the Indus Valley Civilization spanned a broad area surrounding the Indus River valley and beyond. It created multiple cities characterised by extraordinary consistency within and across sites throughout its mature phase, which lasted from around 2600 to 1900 BCE, including Harappa, Lothal, and the UNESCO World Heritage Site Mohenjo-Daro.

Although the civic, town planning, and engineering components of these are impressive, the buildings' design is "of a stunning utilitarian character." Granaries, drainage, combat, water-courses, and tanks have all been discovered, but no palaces or temples have been discovered, despite the fact that towns have a centre raised and defended "citadel."

Wells at Mohenjo-Daro may have been the forerunners of the stepwell. As many as 700 wells have been uncovered in only one sector of the city, leading experts to

think that the Indus Valley Civilization devised 'cylindrical brick lined wells.'

Years 600BCE - 250BCE

There are little remnants of Indian architecture after the Indus Valley Civilization, which most likely used wood or recycled brick until approximately the period of the Maurya Empire, which lasted from 322 to 185 BCE. Much of the best remnants are of Indian rock-cut buildings, predominantly Buddhist, from this period onwards, and there are also a number of Buddhist images that provide highly useful information.

Gupta Architecture

The Gupta period saw a gap in Indian rock-cut architecture, with the first wave of work ending before the empire was built and the second wave commencing in the late 5th century after it ended, for reasons that are unclear. This is the case, for example, at the Ajanta Caves, where an early group was constructed by 220 CE at the earliest, while a later group was constructed about 460 CE.

Instead, the period has left practically all of India's first free-standing monuments, including the first Hindu temple architecture. "Under the Guptas, India was eager to join the rest of the mediaeval world in a passion for housing priceless artefacts in stylized architectural frames," writes Milo Beach, with the "precious objects" being predominantly deity images.

The Architecture of the Temple

The primary features of a Hindu temple are consistent across time and cultures. The garbha griha or womb-chamber, where the principal Murti or cult image of a deity is placed in a basic barren cell, is the most important aspect. There are usually numerous constructions and buildings around this chamber, which can

cover many acres in the most extreme circumstances. The garbhagriha is capped on the outside with a tower-like shikhara, also known as the vimana in the south. An ambulatory for parikrama (circumambulation), one or more mandapas or meeting halls, and often an antarala antechamber and porch between garbhagriha and mandapa are also part of the temple structure.

Early Architecture in the Nagara Style

There are few surviving Hindu temples from before the Gupta era in the 4th century CE, however, there were undoubtedly earlier timber-based constructions. Among the most important early sites are the rock-cut Udayagiri Caves. Simple cell-like stone temples, some rock-cut and others structural, such as those at Sanchi, are among the earliest Hindu temples still standing. These grew into high shikhara stone superstructures by the 6th or 7th century.

By the 10th century, later North Indian temples had a higher elevation of the wall and a more complex spire. On the shikhara, the most ancient type, known as Latina, emerged variant shapes with many tiny "spirelets" going up the sides (urushringa). Sekhari, in which the sub-spires stretch vertically, and bhumiya, in which individual sub-spires are arranged in rows and columns, are two types of these.

Dravidian Style

The South Indian temple style is a Hindu temple architectural idiom that originated in the southern Indian subcontinent, or South India, and Sri Lanka, and reached its pinnacle in the sixteenth century. It can be observed in Hindu temples, with the most notable distinction from north Indian forms being the use of a vimana, a shorter and more pyramidal tower over the garbhagriha or sanctuary, as opposed to

shikharas, which are taller towers that bend inwards as they climb. The lofty gopura or gatehouse at the perimeter of the compound is the dominant feature for modern visitors to larger temples; huge temples have several, dwarfing the vimana; which were much more recent development. Other notable elements include the dwarapalakas – twin guardians at the temple's main entrance and inner sanctuary – and goshtams – deities carved in niches on the garbhagriha's outer sidewalls.

The Architecture of Jain Temples

It is mainly similar to Hindu temple architecture, as well as Buddhist religious architecture from the past. All religions typically used the same builders and carvers, and regional and period styles are generally comparable. A Hindu and most Jain temple's fundamental layout has always consisted of a small garbhagriha or sanctuary for the primary murti or cult figures, over which the lofty superstructure rises, and then one or more mandapa halls.

Architecture in Indo-Islamic Style

Around the 7th century AD, Indo-Islamic architecture emerged in the Indian subcontinent under the influence of Islam. Patrons of art and architecture built monuments and buildings throughout the Medieval Period that reflected native/regional Indic, Persian, Central Asian, Arabic, and Ottoman Turkish architecture styles. Regional Indian architecture has impacted several of these styles. It also substitutes the Arcuate style for the Indian Trabeate style. The architecture was shaped and inspired by Turks and Persians, who inherited a plethora of different designs from the Sassanian and Byzantine empires.

Mughal Empire

Mughal architecture is the most well-known Indo-Islamic style. During the

Mughal dynasty (1526–1857), Mughal art and architecture, a distinctive Indo-Islamic-Persian style, thrived on the Indian subcontinent. This new style blended aspects of Islamic art and architecture, which had been imported to India during the Delhi Sultanate (1192–1398) and produced major buildings like the Qutb Minar, with Persian art and architecture. The series of imperial mausolea, which began with the important Tomb of Humayun but is best known for the Taj Mahal, are the most renowned examples.

European Colonial Architecture

Under European colonial control, architecture became an emblem of power, aiming to endorse the occupying power, much like it did under the Mughals. Several European countries conquered India, bringing with them architectural styles that reflected their ancestral and adoptive homelands. The European colonisers built an architecture that represented their conquest mission and was committed to the state or religion.

The main European powers that founded colonies in India were the British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Post Independence

In recent years, there has been a migration of people from rural areas to industrial centres, resulting in an increase in property prices in various Indian cities. In India, urban housing is designed to accommodate space constraints while also serving the working class. In modern India, a growing knowledge of ecology has inspired architecture.

The climate-responsive design has long been a part of Indian architecture, but its importance has waned in recent years. Indian architecture represents the country's diverse socio-cultural sensibilities, which differ by location. Certain sectors have

traditionally been considered to be the domain of women. Courtyards, loggias, terraces, and balconies are common characteristics in Indian villages.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps India's greatest aesthetic achievement is architecture. Architecture in India has a vast and illustrious history that dates back thousands of years. It incorporates the Indian subcontinent's construction traditions, which include what is now India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The first Indian structures were composed of wood, followed by brick. Few instances of such ancient constructions have survived the harsh Indian climate, particularly those made of wood. Stone construction began to emerge on the subcontinent about the 6th century BC. Indian architects quickly developed a high level of expertise in stone carving and construction. Stone has become popular for large buildings of considerable magnitude by the 7th-century ad. In India, there are numerous mediaeval stone temples still standing.

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