

AR6202

HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE –II

LECTURE 1 UNIT – II

**ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE DELHI
SULTANATE**

Hindu & Islamic Architecture

Let's have a recap of the history of Indian architecture timeline so what we saw in our previous semesters was about ancient India and early India, the Indus valley, the Aryan culture, the Buddhist period, the Dravidian culture, then we came to the mediaeval India period where we started saying about Chola architecture, Nayak architecture, right now we are in this part of the timeline that is the Islamic period, we are in the medieval Indian time period.

Let's see how Islamic architecture had its impact in Indian subcontinent, let's have a recap of how Islam as a religion was spread from Arabia to various parts of the world so as you can see Islam was obviously spread in India. If you see the time period from 7th century there were influences of Islamic rulers in India. The first Muslim ruler who came to India came from Iraq and Persia they first landed in Northwest India in a region called Sindh right now this place is part of Pakistan but that is where the first Islamic impact happened in India. This is the place called Sindh this was part of India before independence, in this southern part of Sindh there is a place called Debal was actually a Hindu region, there were Muslims merchants who came for trading and apparently during that period those Muslims merchants were captured and held as captives so once they released they complain to their rulers and they started attacking the Hindu region of Debal however they did not succeed in the first two attempts.

In the third attempt what happened was Muhammad bin Qasim was a ruler and this Islamic ruler defeated Debal and that was when the first mosque was built in the city. This present Debal is actually reminds of the first mosque that was built in India, till then what was happening in India was Indians were only aware of Hindu architecture and temple architecture. Hence in terms of architecture this was completely a new thing for them so how did India managed to deal with it so what happened in the scenario.

Let's first take a look at two images and see what is the contrasting differences between these images, on your screen you see a temple image a typical South Indian temple you can see the striking features of temples you have the Gopuram and various decorative figures on it you have the temple tanks orated pillars etc, This is typical image of a Mosque if you can see there is no paramedical kind of Towers, inside you have a dome then you don't have much of ornamentation in terms of sculptures very plain exterior look also in terms of planning. If you see this is a typical plan of a Mosque and this is a typical plan of a temple if you start comparing these two you will find many contracting differences. Firstly this is more square plan and very open in nature this whole open courtyard in the centre, where as in the temple if you see it is very rectangular (oblong) in nature and also the main part of the temple is very close that is Garbagriha it is not an open planning very introverted kind of planning.

If we start comparing the Hindu architecture and Islamic architecture we can list down certain key aspects. Hindu architecture began religiously, there were only religious buildings, whereas in Islamic architecture civic building for public use palaces fortresses, royal complexes, pavilions gardens were also built has we saw in a previous lecture the palaces and public buildings were also built.

If we take the orientation, Hindu temples always face the east and Mosque orientation was towards Mecca which was west for India. In terms of style there is always a mystery related to a Hindu temple architecture there was not much of a clarity when you enter the temple you were not sure what of what to expect they were very dark and narrow passage whereas in the mosque you go there and it is very simple and clear, so temples very dark and introverted whereas Islamic architecture open to light and air. In Hindu architecture we saw various sculptures of human figures animals etc whereas sculptures were totally prohibited only decorative lettering and inlaywork was done. In Hindu architecture we saw pyramidal spires of the Gopuram whereas it was replaced by the domes and Minarets and then the main shrine Garbhagriha was small and narrow and the Mihrab was surrounded by a large enclosure where people used to gather for prayers. Hindus believe in cremation whereas Islam was based on burial so concept of domes started evolving.

As you can see there were many differences basically in terms of the religious principles also in terms of social and cultural aspects so this automatically reflected in their architectural styles also, but though there was this wide disparity between these two styles it still managed to combine together and form a very unique style in India so that style of architecture called the Indo Islamic architecture. In spite of this wide gap over the years a certain symbiosis did come into being between the Muslim designers and master Builders and the Hindu craftsman who carried out the building, both benefited from the other's knowledge and what slowly evolved was a distinct new style of architecture – 'Persian in inspiration but very Indian in execution'. What happened was the principles and the ideas that Islamic architecture was based on was Persian in origin because it came from Central Asia but the people who executed here in India were basically at least to begin with were Hindu craftsmen, therefore

they have their own ideologies and principles so these two ideas combined together formed a whole new style of architecture called the Indo Islamic architecture.

If you take the Indo Islamic architecture in India it can be broadly classified into three time period that was the Delhi or the imperial style, the Provincial style and the Mughal style.

Delhi Sultanate

In this lecture will be seeing about the Delhi or the imperial style, if you take the Delhi sultanate you can see the map of the Delhi sultanate in various time period there were five dynasty that ruled over Delhi sultanate. The first four dynasties were origin from turkey and the fifth one from Afghan; they were the Slave dynasty, the Khilji dynasty, the Tughlaq dynasty, the Sayyid and Lodhi Dynasty.

The slave dynasty were the ones that started establishing the Delhi sultanate so they covered around this region the slave and the Khilji dynasty is covered mostly the northern part surrounds Delhi, it was during the Tughlaq dynasty that the extent became more and it almost reached South India so it was during the rule of the Tughlaq's that the Delhi sultanate had higher power over India and again it started declining towards the sayyid and Lodhi Dynasty time period it was again concentrated in and around Delhi, I so during these five dynasty is Indo Islamic architecture also evolved in various stages based on the rulers who ruled them. Let's start with the first the slave and the Khilji dynasty one of the very first architectural monuments that they built was the Qutb complex in Delhi. If you see, this is the plan of the complex the portion marked in red was the one that was started initially it is the Mosque called the quwwat-ul Islam Mosque this was built by qutb-ud-din aibak he built the

mosque and also a victory tower called Qutubminar. Later the king Iltutmish and Alauddin Khilji expanded the complex into a very big Complex and added other structures like domes and other towers. The parts named this is the Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque there is an Iron Pillar here and these are the other domes that were built. Alai Darwaza is a Gateway that was built for the Mosque this is an overall view of the Qutub complex, this is the Mosque-Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque, QutubMinar, various domes in the background, you can see some quarters. Alai Darwaza that served as a gateway to the mosque this is an unfinished tower called the Alai Minar.

First let's see about the Mosque as I told earlier this was the first part that was built by Qutb-ud-din Aibak and then these portions were later expansion. This was the one of the oldest mosque in Delhi, the mosque was actually built by destroying Hindu temple so Indo Islamic architecture when it started evolving in India they needed some base to begin with so what they did was they destroyed existing Hindu temples and use those materials to recreate their own building. This is what exactly happened in the oldest mosque in Delhi you can see in those image the pillars they are all typical pillars that are located in a Hindu temple so what they did they reused the pillars they stacked one pillar above the other two achieve the height that they wanted. However what happened was they did not have the perfection what usually you see in an Islamic architecture because these were Hindu craftsmen and workers they had no idea how to build a dome that was a very new thing to them and this reflected in the building you can see the dome was actually built by corbeling and you can see the Imperfection in the kind of finish that you see here and also this series of arches was built to highlight the Kibla the axis of Mecca. What they did was they build 5 arches the central one being the tallest even in the way they built the arches you can find that the Hindu craft men were

struggling to find perfection in these new style of architecture so instead of having wedge shaped stones to achieve the arch they actually did corbelling and achieve these Ogee shaped arches. The images of the interior of the hypostyle Hall of the mosque, this is another view of the mosque with the arch screens. This is an Iron Pillar that is located in the complex in the courtyard of the Masjid this is almost 23 feet and 8 inches in height this metal is still not corrode and its more than 1,600 years because of their pure composition of Iron, this Pillar still stands pure without rusting. There is a tomb within the complex build for the Iltutmish the ruler so this was a period when the concept of tombs came into existence again this was a new concept for Indian subcontinent there were no tombs build till then, this building is important because this was the first time when they tried to tackle the problem of constructing the dome as we saw in the previous image they tried to build a dome by corbelling but it didn't give the satisfactory result so in this tomb of Iltutmish building they tried the new system of building a dome that is the squinch system though they adopted this method but in execution they failed because the span of the dome was very huge that it caved in them but at least they started adopting the particular method. It is a square building with the opening on the three sides and the Western side having the mihrab so what is the squinches system is basically they have a square base from which it is tapered to form an octagon again the octagon is tapered to form of circular base from which the dome was constructed, This squinch system for the first time adopted in the tomb of Iltutmish building.

Then Qutubminar is the victory Tower was actually started by Qutb-ud-din Aibak who built only the base and the first storey and then later parts were completed by Iltutmish. If you see the plan of QutubMinar there were Flutes all along the surfaces if you see the lowermost surface semicircular and angular

flutes alternated like this and above that you had only semicircle flutes and the storey above it had only angular flute and the 4th one was very plain in nature. There was a spiral staircase and at every level there was a projecting balcony and exterior's surface was very richly carved with geometrical design and inscriptions from Quran. You can see the richly decorated balcony here with floral patterns and bell motives you can see the floral patterns and bell motives are actually again influence from Hindu architecture so even though it is an Islamic building you can see traces of influence from the Hindu architecture. This is Alai minar the unfinished Tower this was started by Ala ud din Khilji and this was supposed to be twice the height of QutubMinar but this was stopped after his death right now only the base remains in the complex.

This is Alai Darwaza this was built as a gateway to quwwat-ul Islam Mosque it was built by ala-ud-din-khilji. It has four gateways it has a square base square in plan covered by dome and all these arches are horseshoe shaped arches was built in red sandstone and wherever the horseshoe shaped arches were provided white marble was used for highlighting it and their recessed windows on the surfaces which were decorated with jalli works or lattice screen works. This is one tomb which is a very important in history of Indian architecture because this tomb of balban is made completely of rubble masonry and this was the first time that the true arch came into existence. You can see for the first time they have tried wedged shaped in constructing the arch instead of corbeling they used wedged shaped stones. This was the first building in which the true arch came into existence in India which was built in 1280 AD.

Now you are coming to the Tughlaq dynasty one of the most important examples is tomb of ghiyas-ud-din in Delhi. It was during this time that various rulers in the Delhi Sultan they started establishing their own cities and named

it after them, so some examples are Mehrauli, QilaRaipithora, Siri, Tughlakabad, Firazabad, Shergarh, Shahjahanabad so these cities were built by king and those cities were named after them they were actually fortified cities and had various complexes with them like Mosque, tombs etc. Ghiyas-ud-din also build a city called as Tughlakabad so it was so fortified City again it was meant for mainly defence purpose you can see these huge massive walls around 10 to 15 metres in height and there were eyelets for arches for shooting and these semi-circular bastions at regular intervals. You can see the scale of the fortified walls how huge the city walls must have been at those times. This is the plan of the Tomb of the Ghiyas-ud-din it is a very interesting building structure in terms of the intonation, but has 7 degrees slope and very square in plan, around 550 feet in square plan. It is built of red sandstone with the Dome on top if you see the fennel on top of the dome again it has an influence of Indoarchitecture these horseshoe shaped arches are highlighted with white marble on red sandstone it has openings on 3 side and on the Western side has the mihrab. Hence these marble base runs all around the building.

Next example of the Tughlaq dynasty is KhirkiMasjid in Delhi it is a very interesting mosque when compared to the other Mosque that we have seen till now and the plan itself is very unique instead of having one single courtyard this particular Mosque has four open courts surrounded by colonnaded structure and if you see the roof of the Dome against it alternates with dome roofs and Flat roof structure. This dome has this bastion kind of structures on all the corner which is very unique because usually for religious structures these kinds of bastion are not provided it is only for defensive structure, but in this mosque this can be seen. On these three side you have these huge flight of steps this entire Mosque built on this strong base of arches

which you can see here and on the Western side you have the mihrab you can see the one of the 4 courts here, 52 metre square in plan and the plinth 3 metres in height and 4 open courtyards each are 9 metres on a side, these courtyard service as the source of light and ventilation for the prayers conducted within the Mosque. You can see the interior images.

What happened during the Sayyid and Lodhi Dynasty is that the state treasure started to weaken so they did not build much of monuments but they did build monuments for the dead, that is the tomb architecture was the one that was thriving during the sayyid and Lodhi Dynasty period. They were the most significant monuments that were built and mostly they were built in a necropolis now known as the Lodhi Gardens out of these tombs there were two different forms one was octagonal in plan mostly it was meant for rulers they had surrounded arched, walkways and one square in height and other type square in plan that was resort for nobles of the court. They did not have any walk ways but it was two or three storey in height but on both cases it was taught by a dome. We will see one example of a tomb, this is the Tomb of Bahlul lodhi he was the ruler of the Lodhi Dynasty this is located in Delhi if you see this structure it is again constructor in rubble masonry it is roof by 5 domes the central one is alone fluted. As you can see in this particular image you have 5 domes the centre one is alone fluted surrounded by archways on all sides it has an assembly hall in the Northwest corner and all the brackets and freeze work is being done above the lintel level so again if you see the interior it is very plain when compared to exteriors surface.