



Distinctive Muslim Architectural Style of the Delhi Sultanate Period : A Fusion of Ideas of Persian and Indian Artists

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Abstract:

By Touching the form- Juice – Beauty of the objects created by nature with heart feeling, expressing it in an aesthetic form is generally called “Art”. As art makes people lives Sophisticated, it also directs them to a sense of unearthly Joy. Art takes the form of past, present and future of the country and nation irrespective of place, time and container. Thus art become the universal unit measure of civilization. This discusses how the Sultanate architecture created by combining Hindu-Muslim traditions become “Muslim Architecture” by searching for the continuing of the culture that the Turks nurtured in the traditions of Baghdad and Persian in India.

Keywords: *Delhi Sultanate, Nature, Muslim Architecture, Indo- Islamic Style of architecture, Indian Architectural Styles.*

Introduction:

Islam appeared in India not only with its military power, but also brought with it various scriptures. Art is no exception. Hinduism assimilated other outsiders (Shakas, Huns, Bactrians, Kushans) but could not assimilate Islam for its vitality and identity. However, due to the long coexistence of both civilizations, there was an exchange in the arts, especially in the field of architecture. This is how “Indo- Islamic” art emerged. But whether one’s culture influenced the other more is debatable. *Havel* felt that the Sultanate was uniquely Indian art, body and mind. He said that the pointed arches built during the Sultanate period in India are a blend of Arab architecture with Buddhist structures from West Asia. *Havel* opined that the equestrian arches, which are considered an essential part of Indian Mosques, also originated in India thousands of years ago. But this style does not exist anywhere else except Kaushambi and Orissa. For this reason, it is said that the construction of domes and arches started in this country during the Sultanate period. However, the style of supporting the roof on the bracket capital, which was seen in ancient India, was followed to some extent during the Sultanate period. However, some believe that this type of architecture came to India from Persia during the Buddhist period. On the other hand, **Ferguson, Smith**, etc. think that Hinduism had a negative influence on the architecture of the Sultanate period. **P.J. Marshal, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar** again suggests that Indo- Islamic art was neither a localized form of Islamic style nor a metamorphosis of Hindu architecture including Hindu- Buddhist- Jain art as well as exotic western, central Asian and even North African art the merger took place.

There was a background of fusion of Indian architecture with Islamic architecture. In ancient India there was a fusion of ideas of Persian (Iranian) and Indian artists. In addition, the Turkish sultans employed Indian craftsmen in the construction of the architecture, resulting in a fusion of Indian and Islamic architecture. According to **Percy Brown**, the use of experienced and skilled Hindu craftsmen in sultani architecture was conducive to building architecture in India. Due to the abundance of materials, the finest examples of Islamic architecture can be found in India. Also, when the Muslim rulers first renovated the ruins of Hindu or Buddhist temples and used them for construction, Islamic architecture was mixed in them. In many cases, the upper part of Hindu- Buddhist temples was demolished and domes were built in Islamic style. In the early Turkish period, when Hindu- Buddhist architectural patterns were demolished and arches and domes were built, the Indian style of art remained present in the mosques. Within a short period of time, the Muslims adopted the worldly beauty of Hindu-art and gave birth to a new style of architecture by carrying out the necessary reforms of Islamic architecture. From the middle of the Sultanate period, this style of Islamic architecture came to be known as “Indo- Islamic Architecture” or “Indo- Saracenic Architecture” etc. **Sarasikumar kumar** found the source of better Muslim architecture in the Syncretic ideas in India.

Methodology: The study is supported by secondary data. Given the nature of the current research, secondary sources have to be used to gather material of this exploratory and descriptive paper. Secondary data was gathered from academic working papers currently in progress, books, Journals, newspapers, research projects and websites run by the Indian government.

Discussion :

A notable feature of the architecture of the Turko- Afghan period or the sultanate period is the technique of making “Astar” with a mixture of lime, sand and water. It was previously unknown in Indian architecture. Indian architects did not know the use of concrete. The architectural technique of the Indians was to build a wall by placing stone on top of the stone and covering the building with beams. Sanctums, pillars, pinnacles, rectangular gateways, ornamentation were prevalent in Hindu architecture.

The use of arches and domes in sultanate architecture added new features to the art style. **Satish Chandra**, however, believes that Islam inherited the use of arches and domes from the Romans- Arabs- Byzantines. The use of arches and domes in the Islamic period enabled the construction of large halls or spacious living rooms. The necessity of building large halls is from the necessity of congregational prayer in Islam.

Sultanate architecture was a fundamental feature of ornamentation. Drawing portraits of living animals was forbidden in Islamic precepts. Therefore, Turkic- style monuments used a combination of geometrical figures, leafy designs and verses from the Quran for decoration. The Turks added Indian symbols such as Swastika, Lotus flower, Bell etc. to the decoration. Thus, sultanate architecture is a fusion of Hindu- Buddhist architecture and Persian architecture carried by Islam. In order to discuss the sultanate style of architecture, there are mainly three styles to be mentioned:

Sultanate Architecture of Delhi and Ajmer Region such architectural masterpieces were built by the Delhi sultans. There are certain features or customs which are absent in provincial architecture. Qutubuddin Aibak captured “Qilla Rai Pithora” (Prithiviraj Chauhan’s fort) and established the capital of Delhi. A mosque named “Arai Din ka- Jhopra” was built in Ajmer during his tenure. Qutubuddin Aibak started its construction in 1200 AD. Iltutmish built a fortified wall around it. A covered archway is constructed in front of it.



Picture: Quwat - ul- Islam.

In 1193 AD Quwat- Ul-Islam masjid Qutubuddin built a mosque “Quat - ul- Islam” in Delhi as a commemoration of the Delhi victory. The Wall of this mosque is 212 feet long and 150 feet wide. The mosque was built by Hindu craftsmen bringing stones from the surrounding area. Incidentally, the mosque was built by breaking down the sanctum of a Jain temple and adding three arches to it. It was constructed as a converted Buddhist monastery and Sanskrit learning center. The style of the arches is Persian and Arabic while the feel is Indian. In front of the arch, vines- leaves – flowers and verses of the Koran were carved into designs. The interior of this pillared mosque measures 142 feet × 108 feet. The “Mihrab” is in the western wall, because of the location of Mecca on the western side of India. Only 22 pillars of this mosque still survive. The magnificent stone archway in front is still extant. The central arch is 53 feet high and 22 feet wide. The top of this arch is slightly curved (Oggee) like an English “S”. The low- roofed portion at the back suggests that it is a remnant of an earlier temple. Qutub-ud- Din probably destroyed the front of the temple and added the high domed part to make it a mosque. The size of this mosque was further increased during the reign of Iltutmish and Alauddin Khilji. Iltutmish added new vaulted roofs to the north and south of this mosque and built a new pillared roof to the east. As a result its size increased to 370 feet × 280 feet. Within the scope of this mosque he completed the construction of Qutub Minar. Two large mosques built during Qutubuddin Aibak’s reign were built to reveal the hand of the conquer who defeated the heathen. Its art style was influenced by the architecture of Asia and Egypt, but it was mainly related to the architecture and sculpture of Persia.

The construction of the famous Qutub Minar began during the reign of Qutubuddin and ended during the reign of Iltutmish. Then its height was 225 feet. Feroz Tughlaq added another 15 feet to it. It is completely

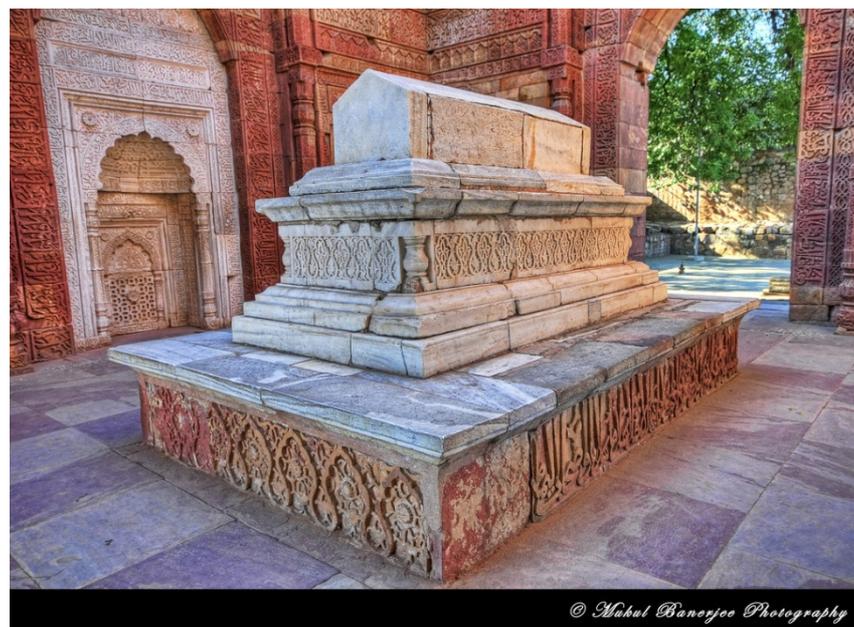
built in Islamic architecture. This architectural monument is dedicated to Sufi sant Khwaja Qutubuddin kazi. The exterior of the Qutub Minar is covered with stone.



Qutub Minar

Most of the stone is quarried by destroying previous structures. It is modeled on the 12th century Bostan Minar in Persia. This four storied minaret features a hanging cornice. According to Cunningham, the Construction of the Qutub Minar has a lot in common with the hollow dome style of architecture in ancient India. Vincent Smith, however, says that the minarets architects were Muslims, but the Craftsmen were Hindus.

Tomb of Iltutmis:



Tomb of Iltutmis:

Itutmis self- built mausoleum is heavily influenced by Persian art. It is quadrangular monument. Diagonal arches are used in it. The building has only one room. It has been made colorful and lively by using red-sandstone on the gray granite stone exterior. The structure also has Indian architectural influences, with pillared roofs and fine pointed arches. Also some architectural monuments of Itutmis period are Jami Masjid of Badaun, Hauz- e- Shamsi, shamsi idea etc. Balbon built a “Red Palace” for himself in Delhi. His memorial was also a fine example of Indo- Islamic architecture.

Alai Darwaza:



Alai Darwaza

Alauddin khalji the Jami Masjid on the burial site of sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya. According to marshal,it was the first mosques in India built entirely Islamic lines. The famous “Alai Darwaza” of Qutub Minar was built during the reign of Alauddin.

It’s arch very beautiful and a Lofty dome was built over it. Looking at the arches, the style of construction of the walls, the style of construction of the dome, it can be understood that its construction style is completely unique and none other. The fine workmanship and decoration of the walls of the Alai Darwaza also deserves special mention. For this reason the” Alai Darwaza” is given the status of “one of the finest Jewels of Islamic architecture” in India. During the reign of Alauddin, a new city called “Siri” was built near Delhi. A palace with 1000 pillars was built here. There is no sign of it now. Alauddin excavated reservoir with an area of 70 acres at Hauz- Khas near Siri Nagar in old Delhi. Some of the khalji style architecture can be seen outside Delhi as well. Incidentally, khalji architecture was characterized by profuse ornamentation and fine craftsmanship.

The Tughlaqabad monuments is “pleasant for chaste moderation”. It has less ornamentation, no excess of lines. Sarasikumar Saraswati said about the comparison of khalji and Tuqhlaq architecture- “It marked contrast to the rich and elaborate ornamental style of the khalji buildings, those of the Tughluqs are characterized by a stark Design, bordering almost puritanical severity”.

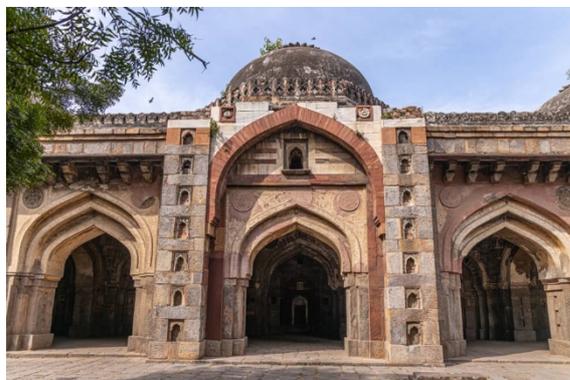
Tughlaqabad Fort :



Tughlaqabad Fort

Tughlaq architecture is much more robust and material oriented. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq built a palace Fort called “Tughlaqabad” to the east of the Qutub Minar. A lake is formed around the river Yamuna by damming its course. The mausoleum of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq is built on a high alter of red sandstone. The pentagon on the alter is of this “SamadhiSoudha”, the dome is built of marble stone. On one side of it IA a pillared wall; it has no decoration. Several palaces and forts were built during the reign of Muhammad- bin- Tughlaq. Apart from “Jahanpana” near Delhi, he built a fort and victory pillar at Daulatabad in the Deccan. Delhi’s “Vijoymandal palace” was also built during his tenure. During the period of Feroz Tughlaq, a comfortable Muslim arches and Hindu beamed roofs can be observed. He built the palace fort of Firozabad(Firoz shah kotla) in old Delhi. An Ashoka pillar was brought from Topra in Panjab to beautify this palace. This pillar was installed by cutting a two and a half feet hole in the roof of this palace. Also “Houjkhas”(Tomb of Sultan Feroz), kali Masjid and khidki Masjid were built during Feroz Tughlaq’s Reign.

Math - ki- Mosque:



Math - ki- Mosque

Sloping walls one of the characteristics of Tughlaq architecture. Combination of muslim arches and Hindu beams and frames is noticeable in the palaces of this period. A greater combination of beams, roofs and arches can be seen in the palaces of the sultans during the a Lodhi and Syed dynasties. A return to ornamental and finely created architecture become a notable feature of Lodi architectures. Math- Ki- Masjid built by Sikandar Lodi is referred to by John Marshall as the finest architecture of the late sultanate period. Rajasthani and Gujrati architectures built by Lodi's are also considered as Lodi architecture. Most of the tombs of the Lodis were built on octagonal alters, adopted from Hindu architectural styles. This trend of "Hindu relations" which can be observed in Lodi architecture can also be observed in Mughal architecture. A far- reaching influence of Lodi architecture on mughal architecture can be observed. **Ferguson** calls the architecture of the Sultanate period "Muslim architecture; .it is more reasonably to Indentity this architectural style as "Indi- Saracenic; which is a mixture of Indian style with ancient Persian art practices. Ferguson divided the architecture of the Sultanate into 13 categories. Of these, 6 are entirely sultanate centered :

- i) Sultanate architecture- It was mainly influenced by the architecture of Ghazni and was built on a fusion of Eastern and Western architecture.
- ii) Pathan style: Architectural patterns throughout North India built between 1193- 1554 AD. After Alauddin khilji's death in 1316 AD, this new style developed through the rise of local powers. Here are local traditional arts architects worked accordingly.
- iii) Jaunpur Style: During the period of the Sharqi Sultans(1394-1476 AD), an architectural style can be seen in the Jaunpur region. They have nothing of their own. But such architectural structures are absent elsewhere in India.
- iv) Gujrati Style: During the reign of the Independent sultans of Gujrat (1396-1572), a more advanced and grandiose style of architecture emerged in Gujrat than at Jaunpur. Almost all of them are dominated by Jain temples. But they Lack individuality.
- v) Malava Style: A distinct architectural style developed between 1401- 1568 AD centered on Mandu, the capital of Malava. The Malava style however, could not deny the influenced of the Delhi style.
- vi) Bangla style: Bengal enjoyed almost Independent until it came under the role of the Mughals in 1573 AD. A distinct architectural style was born during this period, with the construction of several palaces and mosques in Gaur and Pandua. The architecture of Bengal was influenced by the regions climate and Folk arts.

Provincial Architecture of the Sultanate Period:

Ferguson divides the Islamic architectural styles of the Sultanate period into several categories, the architectural traditions that developed outside the Delhi Sultanate are mainly those of Gujrat, Malav, Jaunpur and Bengal.

Gujrat: Notable architectural monuments in Gujarat include the Jami Masjid (1323 AD) at Camber and the Hilal Khan Qazi Mosque (1333AD) at Dholka near Ahmedabad. The grand Jami Masjid built in Ahmedabad in 1411 AD is modeled after Mecca. The main feature of this mosque is the 15 parallel rows of stone domes on 260 pillars at horizontal level. Sufficient open space has been left in it to illuminate the "Liwan". They have little Indian heritage.

Rani Sipara mosque



Rani Sipara mosque

In Ahmedabad's smaller mosques- Muhafiz Khan's mosque at Dholka(1485 AD) and the Jami Masjid at Champaner (1508 AD)- stone is used is throughout and is ornate in many ways. The "Liwan" of the Jami Masjid in Champaner is distinguished by two minarets flanking the main entrance and eleven domes at the top. It is one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in India. The decoration and glory of Rani Sipara's mosque is also impeccable. **Ferguson** calls it "The most exquisite gem of Ahmedabad. Another magnificent architectural feat of Ahmedabad is the ornate arched "Tindarwaja" gateway. Incidentally, sultan Ahmed Shah destroyed the city of Ahmedabad. He beautified the city with many palaces mosques, archways etc. Ahmad Shah's mausoleum is also beautiful.

Malav: Mandu in Malav is particularly notable for its urbanization and architectural features. According to Marshall, Mandu is the best among the fortified cities of India. The architectural masterpieces built in Mandu, the New capital of Malav, were built in the Islamic style of Delhi. The main structure of Mandu is the Jami Masjid (1454 AD). According to Ferguson, there is no such beautiful structure in the whole of India. The mosque is surrounded by a large courtyard with five pointed arches in the west, two in the East and three similar arches in the north and West. There is a dome on the "Mihrab". One dome each of the same size is located in the north- west and south- west corners. There are also many domes throughout the roof. The walks of the mosque are painted in white marble on red stone. Among the palaces of Mandu are "Rupmati Mahal" and "Bajbahadur's palace. **GhulamYazdani** calls these architectural feats "fancy". The exterior of the huge palace called "Jahaj Mahal" is Submerged in water during monsoons. Then the palace appears to be floating on water.

Jaunpur:

Red door mosque picture



Red door mosque

A distinctive architectural style developed in Jaunpur in the Gangetic Valley of Northern India. Barbak's mosque (1377 AD) and Atal Mosque (1408 AD) both exhibit Jaunpur architectural features. The influence of Persian architecture is evident in both mosques. Both mosques have large domes over their entrances. But the wall for the minaret is rectangular, not the usual round. It can be assumed that an attempt was made to use them as the construction of the minaret, but it was not possible to construct the complete minaret. However, it was not possible to build the complete minaret. The shape of the arches and domes in the interior of the mosque is similar to the structure of other mosques. Jami Masjid (1438 AD) and Red- Darza mosque reflect the fusion of Hindu- Muslims architecture in the quadrangular pillars. Hindu architects built palaces and mosques in Jaunpur. The elements of various monuments were collected from old temples. For this reason additional Hindu influence can be observed in Jaunpur architecture.

Bangla:

As stone is not readily available in Bengal, the use of brick instead of stone can be seen more in Bengal architecture. The brick and stone style, with stone outside and brick inside, was widely practiced in Bengal during the pre-sultan period. Most of the architecture of Gaur and Pandua in Bengal is made of brick and lime and mud. Earlier lime was used for floors in Bengal. Muslims introduced the method of gluing lime to Bengal. Lime began to be used for arches, cornices and roofs in the pillars in Bengal, arches were built in the shape of thatched rice paddies. Various types of monuments were built in Bengal mainly in an effort to decorate the capitals. Most of the monuments are built of brick or Terracotta tiles on Square foundations. The use of colored and enameled tiles can be observed in mainly areas. Probably, this craft entered Bengal from China during the Sultanate reign.

The oldest Muslim architecture in Bengal is Jafar Khan Ghazi's Tomb (1258AD) at Tribeni (Saptagram) in Hooghly district. It also has a mosque. As Rakhaldas Banerjee has shown, it was formerly a Hindu monument. There are two open-roofed quadrangular houses beside the almost dry river. It was used as a Tomb.



Baro Shona Masjid, West Bengal

Barasona Masjid

As Bengal was independent for a long time, a district culture was born centered around the Gauda and Pandua. The Barasona Masjid of Gaur (1526 AD) is an exquisite architecture of Bengal built during the Sultanate period. The mosque is spread over a large area with several low domes of the same height, with an open courtyard in front. The "Chhotosona Masjid" of Gaur is also similar in structure. Both mosques are decorated with glazed tiles and painted exterior walls. It is probably from this that the word "sona" (gold) was used. One of Gaur's structures was the Feroz Minar (1490AD). This brick Minar is not round like the minarets built in North India. Although art experts note the influence of Irish architecture in the minarets architecture, this connection is not possible due to Geography. Also other architectural monuments of Gaur are "Loughton Mosque", "Shot Dome" of Bagerhat, "Kadam Rasul" and "Dakhil Darwaza".



Adina mosque

Adina Masjid built by Sikandar Shah at Pandua is one of the largest mosques in India (1360 AD). The use of parts of Hindu temples in the construction of this mosque is evident. This mosque had numerous arcades and four hundred pillars, many beautiful arches and 378 domes. The size of the mosque is 597 feet × 159 feet. The structure of the mosque was built around a large courtyard. The prayer area of the temple is like a forum with five aisles on the western wall and three on the Eastern side. Saracenic influence can be clearly seen in the construction of the mosque. One part of the mosque is slightly higher than the other part. It is built with black pavement laid on rows of pillars. Perhaps the sultan and his family used to come here for prayers through a separate entrance. It was called “Badshah ka Tattva” for this reason.

Eklakhi Masjid:



The Eklakhi Masjid of Pandua is a structure with an area of 80 Sq.ft. It has a huge dome built of lime and lime on its top. Probably the construction of this mosque cost a lakhi of coins so it got its name. Remains of another structure have been found at Pandua. It is called “Hamman”. Built within the palace group, the structure is multi-storied, made of brick. The floor of the house seems to have been covered with stones. Water was drawn up from a nearby reservoir by oxen or horses and conveyed to the various baths through Terracotta channels. This “Hamman” was not found anywhere in India except Delhi and it is popularly said that Sultan Firoz Tughlaq invaded Bengal for this reason alone.

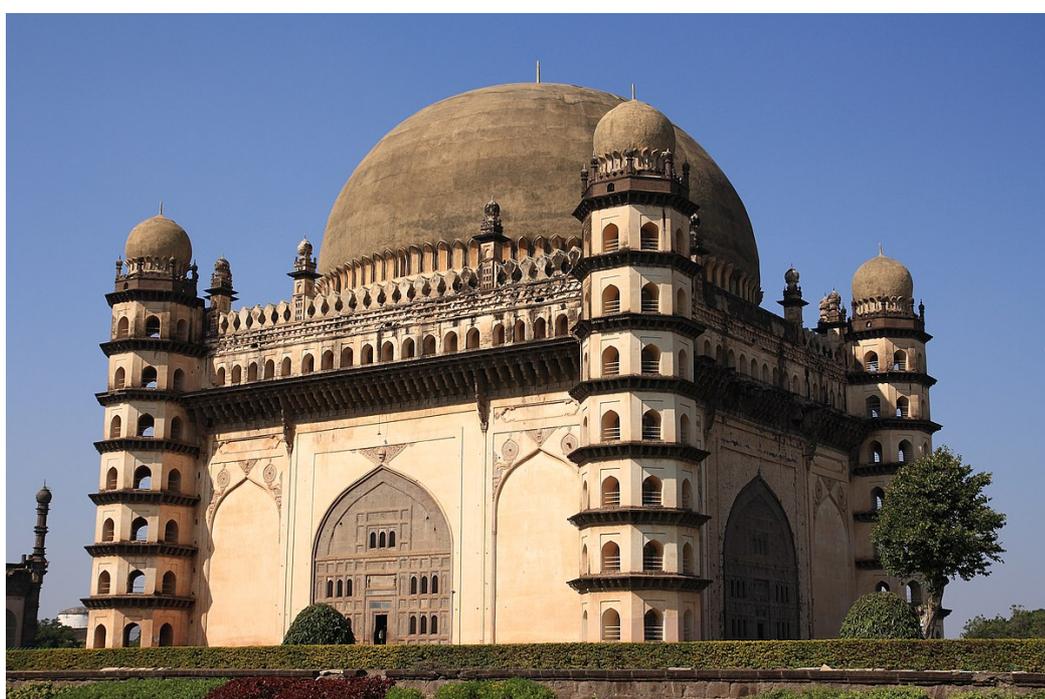
Brahmani and Bijapur- Golkunda:



Gulbarga Jami Masjid

Another style of architecture was nurtured by the Bahmani sultans during the Sultanate period. The Bahmani style is influenced by Indian, Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish architecture. Architectural masterpieces are mainly built around the capital Gulbarga. It is said that the Jami Masjid at Gulbarga was designed by an architect from Cordova after the main mosque of that country. It has arched porches to the East, North, and South and a dome at each corner. The main dome is located at the head of the “Mihrab”. Generally there is a courtyard in the middle of the mosque but in Bahmani the courtyard is covered. The main part of the mosque has 63 small domes on the roof. The structure’s rows of strong domes, foliated ornamented perforated walls and arches in the Persian style are considered to be the complete Indian form of Saracenic architecture. On the outside of the mosque wall, however, the decoration is absent. Apart from this mosque, other structures of the Bahmani kingdom have Indo- Persian influence similar to the structure of North India.

Tomb of Adil Shah:



The mosque and palaces built by the sultans of Bijapur in the Deccan are unparalleled in architecture. At the very end of the fifteenth century, Adil Shah established the Adil Shahi dynasty in Bijapur. The round- domed architecture of Adil Shah’s mausoleum is a masterpiece of southern Muslim art. It has four minarets at its four corners and the upper dome is completely circular. There is no such big round dome anywhere else in India. Around the same time, Qutub Shah established an independent sultanate in Golconda as well. The dome over the sultans tomb here is slightly different from the dome of the Bijapur mosque. Bijapur domes are completely circular. But Golconda domes are narrow at the bottom, round in the middle and tapered at the top. There is no small difference between the structure of the mosque of North India and the structure of the mosques of the South.

The architectural development of the Sultanate period centered around Vijaynagar and Rajasthan. The pillars and forts of Rana Kumbha of Mewar in Rajasthan and the palaces built by various Rajput kings bear a distinct architectural signature. The temple of Vithal Swami built by Raja Krishnadev Ray is the best example of temple architecture in Vijaynagara. Goumras, Mandapas etc. Of the temples built by the

southern Vijaynagar kings show Hindu architectural style. Ekambarnath and Bardaraj of Kanchi Swami Temple is rich in architecture and sculptures.

Conclusion :

During the sultanate period, we generally identify the architectural style built under the patronage and encouragement of different sultans as “Sultanate Style”. The architecture of the Sultanate period is all strong and solid. There is no touch of softness and tenderness in them. Completely new types of domes and arches and beautiful designs of Jail or Jafri can be noticed in them. In mosques or mausoleums, ornamental forms of Arabic letters are often used as architectural decorations. James Ferguson called this style of architecture “Muslim architecture”. This nomenclature is not accurate. The architecture built during the Sultanate period was influenced by Saracens and partly by Ghazni, but it was not free from the influence of traditional Indian architecture. Have wrote – The style of the Arab countries was rich in one- dimensional consonants, where only color was used. But the use of multi- dimensional colors and play of light was one of the aspects of Indian architecture. This was made possible by the use of a variety of stone geometries. Attempts to blend these two styles can be seen in the monuments built during the Sultanate period. Apart from the architecture of the Delhi centered, East and Central West Indian sultans, a distinctive Muslim architectural style developed during the Sultanate period in South India centered on Bahmani, Bijapur, and Golconda. The trend of Hindu architecture continued, centered around Rajasthan and Vijaynagar. The later mughal architectural creations – standing on the solid foundation of Sultanate architecture- emerged in an unparalleled form.

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