

**DR.AKHAYA KUMAR MISHRA**  
**LECTURER IN HISTORY**  
**BALUGAONCOLLEGE, BALUGAON**  
**KHORDHA, ODISHA, INDIA**

## **ARCHITECTURAL SPLENDID OF MUGHALS-A STUDY**

### **Abstract**

Mankind's instinctual desire to decorate habitants has been with us for as long as the need to have shelter. This creative process has, from time immemorial, given meaning to build spaces. Architecture, sculpture, and painting once belonged together. Indeed, they were admirably intertwined at various points in history. It is only during relatively recent times in human civilization that the separation of art and architecture has taken place.

The general value of art and architecture to society has long been assumed, while the specifics have just as long been debated. Try to imagine society without the humanizing influence of the arts, and you will have to strip out most of what is pleasurable in life, as well as much that is educationally critical and socially essential. Life without the collective resources of our libraries, museums, theatres and galleries, or without the personal expression of literature, music and art, would be static and sterile – no creative arguments about the past, no diverse and stimulating present and no dreams of the future.

We know that art and architecture play an important role in promoting social and economic goals through local regeneration, attracting tourists, the development of talent and innovation, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering essential services. These benefits are 'instrumental' because art and architecture can be a means to achieve ends beyond the immediate intrinsic experience and value of the art itself. This review concentrates on identifying robust research that explores to what extent arts and culture bring these benefits to individuals, communities and society. Art can describe a building's function; it can imbue a space with a spiritual quality; it can visually enlarge a space by creating an illusion; it can confer status; it can demonstrate wealth; it can convert a neutral space into one suited for a particular ritual; it can ascertain claims about a building's owner or users; it can establish links between cultures or attempt to recover values of the past; in short:

art plays a vital role in shaping a building's identity. Architecture is not the making of an exquisite object for the select few, but has a much broader function in society.

Throughout the ages art has played a crucial role in life. Art is universal and because art is everywhere, we experience it on a daily basis. From the houses we live in (architecture) to the movies we see (theatre) to the books that we read (literature). Even in ancient culture art has played a crucial role. In prehistoric times cave dwellers drew on the wall of caves to record history. In biblical times paintings recorded the life and death of Christ. Throughout time art has recorded history. Most art is created for a specific reason or purpose, it has a way of expressing ideas and beliefs, and it can record the experiences of all people. Most art has some sort of reason or purpose behind it. It might be religious, symbolic, literal, traditional, customary, or just a preference by the artist. Most African art has a symbolic reason. Masks, pottery, figures, portraits, jewelry, baskets and clothing reflect the religious belief of the different tribes.

According to the existing research and discourses, Art and Architecture have been considered two most crucial things that reflect upon a country and its people. In Indian context, understanding them holds special significance. The word "Indian" comes with a heavy baggage of traditions, culture and ethos, which is unique and adds divinity to almost every act of life. Both art and architecture are narratives of this unique Indian baggage. There are significant examples of art works in the history of architecture. Built environments in India were designed or constructed by '*shilpis*' (master masons), artists and guilds of crafts persons till the advent of the modern era. India is the only country with the largest and most diverse mixture of tradition and culture. The fascinating nation is so enticing where the exotic monuments and enchanting destinations speak volumes about the tradition and culture of Indian people. India is home to many of the finest cultural symbols of the world which includes temples, churches, mosques, forts, sculptures, paintings, architecture, etc.. In this regard Some of the prestigious and spectacular World Heritage Sites in India during Mughal period can be discussed. They are the Kabul Bagh at Panipat and the Purana Qilla near Delhi, Humayun's tomb, Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri Buland Darwaza, the extremely ornamented Red Fort, Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas in the Red Fort, the Jam-i-Masjid and Moti Masjid and the most splendid architecture through the ages is TajMahal at Agra.

With the advent of the Mughals Indo-Muslim architecture reaches a unity and completeness which make the story of the architectural style that developed under their august patronage particularly

fascinating and instructive. The Mughal emperors were keen lovers of nature and art. They built a number of magnificent buildings, masjids, tombs, gardens, tanks etc. Under them art and architecture reached its climax. In this regard I am going to present the art and architecture of Mughal period chronologically.

The state of uncertainty in the days of Babur and Humayun was not, however, favourable, for any outstanding contribution to the development of art and culture. Babur himself was a born aesthete with a keen sense of perception for the beauties of nature and art. He is said to have undertaken several building projects of ambitious character in India that involved the employment of numerous workmen at Agra, Dholpur, Gwalior and other places. In his Memoirs he says that “680 workmen worked daily on my buildings at Agra --- while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings at Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Kiul.”<sup>1</sup> It is said that his schemes, mostly consisting of the laying out and construction of pleasure gardens, pavilions, etc. had no sacramental or sentimental association and the consequent neglect through centuries had been responsible for their disintegration. Of one of the mosques that Babur built within the Lodi fort at Agra he complains that “it is not well done” and that it “is in Hindustani fashion”.<sup>2</sup> He praises, no doubt, the remarkable skill and dexterity of the Indian workmen and was particularly impressed by the palaces of Man Singh and Vikramjit within the fort at Gwalior which, he<sup>3</sup> says, “were singularly beautiful, though built in patches without any regular plan”. Though admiring the manipulative skill of the Indian builders and their excellent workmanship Babur was not moved by what he saw of Indian architecture of the time. He strongly expressed dislike of the state of building art in India and is reported to have invited from Constantinople several pupils of the celebrated Albanian architect, Sinan, to help him in his building projects.

Son of an aesthete father and himself aesthetically inclined, Humayun undertook, in the early years of his reign, the building of a new city at Delhi, to be called the Dinpanah (‘World Refuge) as the “asylum of the Wise and intelligent persons”. It was to consist of a magnificent palace of seven storeys, surrounded by delightful gardens and orchards of such elegance and beauty that its fame might draw the people from the remotest corners of the world”. The Humayun-Namah of Khondamir<sup>4</sup> gives a graphic account of the laying of the foundation stone of this imperial city, the first of the Mughul capitals, so to say. “The walls, bastions, rampart and the gates of the city” are also reported to have been nearly finished within a year of the laying of the foundation stone.

With regard to the achievements of the first two Mughul emperors in the field of architecture Percy Brown says:

“The material records which have survived of both Babur’s and Humayun’s contributions to the building art of the country are therefore almost negligible. On the other hand, the indirect influence of their personalities and experiences on the subsequent art of the country cannot be overlooked. Babur’s marked aesthetic sense, communicated to his successors, inspired them under more favourable conditions to the production of their finest achievements, while Humayun’s forced contact with the culture of the Safavids is reflected in that Persian influence noticeable in many of the Mughul buildings which followed.”<sup>5</sup>

It was with Akbar that the Mughul architectural style, as an individual and distinctive tradition, may be said to have begun, He undertook various building projects in different parts of his empire and was responsible for the initiation and direction of a vigorous programme of building activity that was assiduously continued by his successors,

The mausoleum of Humayun at Delhi supplies an important landmark in the history of the building art of the Mughuls as heralding the new movement. Erected by his widow, Haji Begam, during the early years of Akbar’s reign, it is one of the most striking monuments of Indo-Muslim architecture, The work was begun in 1564, and took eight years to be completed. The building itself is supported on a wide square platform, 22 feet in height, with gracefully arcaded sides. The arches recall the Persian design and form and the piers are ornamented with inlays of white marble emphasising their graceful lines. The entire building is laid within an enclosed quadrangle designed as a formal garden and approached by an imposing gateway in the middle of each of the perimeter walls.

Like Babur, Akbar also recognised and appreciated the technical skill and dexterity of the Indian workmen and fully exploited them in his own architectural undertakings. During his long reign he initiated many ambitious architectural projects, and his creations in this field bear the impress of his own remarkable personality and character. He was planning his structural projects simultaneously with the building of his father’s tomb at Delhi.

We may now turn to the architectural projects of Akbar. The regulations regarding buildings, which is described by Abu-’l-Fazl in detail in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

The first of such royal residences to be erected was the fortress lace at Agra which was completed in eight years (1565-1573).It was built “under the superintendence of Muhammad Qasim Khan, the overseer of the buildings and ships”.<sup>6</sup> In plan the fort takes the shape of an irregular semi-circle

lined along the right bank of the river Jumna. The massive enclosure wall consists of a solid red sandstone rampart, nearly seventy feet high and one and a half miles in circuit, and represents the first application of sized and dressed stone on such a huge scale. Contemporary records consider the construction of this enormous mass as a remarkable feat of achievement and it is stated that “from the top to the bottom fire-red hewn stones, linked by iron rings, are joined so closely that even a hair cannot find its way into the joints.”<sup>7</sup> This massive fabric, with its embattled parapets, machicolations, string-courses, etc. has a solemn artistic grandeur, beautiful as well as effective for its purpose.

The Delhi Gate, also known as the Hathi Pol, stands on the western side and forms the principal entrance to the citadel. One of the earliest of Akbar’s buildings (it is said to have been completed in 1566), its noble conception, at once fresh and virile, indicates the inauguration of a new era in the art of building. It is a massive structure designed on the usual scheme of an arched entrance flanked by two substantial bastions projecting from the rampart. The bastions are octagonal in shape and rise up boldly, each with an octagonal domed kiosk at the top. The entire surface is richly decorated by inlay as well as by coloured glaze. The patterns in white marble inlay on the arcades and panels, both inside and outside, are the most effective against the warm red texture of sandstone fabric. The patterns in coloured glaze consist of winged dragons, elephants and birds, in defiance of the Islamic injunction against the representation of living forms, and strikingly illustrate the liberal spirit of toleration that marked all the activities of this enlightened emperor.

There is no doubt that the creator of this impressive gateway was imbued with a fresh spirit, free and unrestrained. It has been aptly put: “The buildings of the Akbari period are remarkable for their animation, which reflect the spirit of the time, but few are so vibrant in their character as this monumental gateway at Agra fort.”<sup>8</sup>

Abu-’l-Fazl relates in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that within the fort the emperor built “upwards of five hundred edifices of red stone in the fine styles of Bengal and Gujarat”.<sup>9</sup> This statement is significant. We are familiar with Akbar’s versatility and his desire to build up a great architecture, distinctively Indian in character. For this he wanted gifted artists from all parts of Northern India to share in his own architectural undertakings, and assembled them together to work with his master builders who, under his enlightened leadership, were inspired by the same spirit of catholicity.

Akbar's buildings at Agra occupied the southern angle of the fort and were lined along the parapet of the eastern wall overlooking the river. Among those them Akbari Mahal completed in 1571 and Jahangiri Mahal appears to be a later erection. The View of this interior court with the colonnades on its four sides, richly ornamented as they are, is one of impressive grandeur. The system of construction is trabeate, the pillar. the beam and bracket and the Hat ceiling forming the 'principal features of construction. To sum up, one may quote Percy Brown who says: "in the general character of the fort at Agra there is a resemblance to the fortress at Gwalior, with its palaces of Man Singh built early in the century, which cannot be accidental. The elephant gateway, the cupolas of Amar Singh's gateway, the palaces rising out of the fort-walls, the planning of these palaces, and also some of the carved details, all indicate that the Rajput citadel, which had moved Babur to admiration some forty years before, was used freely as a model by his more fortunately placed grandson.' <sup>10</sup>

The forts that Akbar started at Lahore almost at the same time and at Allahabad some twenty years later appear to have been carried out on the same grand scale. There is, however, a greater picturesque effect added to the Lahore palaces, perhaps due to the aesthetic predilections of Akbar's son Jahangir. The Allahabad fort has been shorn much of its architectural interest.

The most ambitious and magnificent of the emperor's architectural undertakings is the new capital city that he built on the ridge at Sikri, 26 miles west of Agra. This city was subsequently named Fatehpur (city of victory) after Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1572. The conception of the new imperial headquarters, it is recorded, is connected with the circumstances that attended the birth of Prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir. At Sikri lived a saint, Shaikh Salim Chishti, who foretold the birth of a son to Akbar who would survive the emperor. One of the queens having become enceinte soon after, Akbar took her to Sikri and built for her a magnificent palace, now known as Rang Mahal. The place was thought to be auspicious and Akbar conceived the idea of building an entirely new capital city at the place on a rocky eminence by the side of an extensive artificial lake. The scheme matured into the greatest of all his architectural projects, and this splendid city with its grand mosque, its delightful palaces and pavilions, its spacious official buildings and other edifices, bears witness to Akbar's magnificent achievements as a patron of the building arts. Here we have one of the finest groups of Mughul buildings. Conceived and built as a single unit the work was pushed on with such phenomenal speed that, as if by magic, palaces, public buildings, mosques and tombs, gardens and baths, pavilions and water-courses were called

into being beneath the barren sandstone ridge of Sikri. In his autobiography Jahangir writes that “in the course of fourteen or fifteen years that hill full of wild beasts became a city containing all kinds of gardens and buildings, lofty edifices and pleasant places attractive to the heart.”<sup>11</sup> The splendour and prosperity of this capital city also evoked high praise from Europeans like Father Monserrate and Ralph Fitch, the latter describing it as greater than London with a teeming population and full of merchandise from many countries.<sup>12</sup>

The city of Fathpur Sikri occupies a rectangular area, running roughly north-east to south-west. It is enclosed by bastioned walls round its three sides, the fourth being protected by the lake. Nine gateways pierced the fortress walls and of these, the Agra gate formed the principal entrance to the city. From this gate a road led straight to the Diwan-i-‘Am (hall of public audience) and further on to the great congregational mosque, the Jami‘ Masjid. that stands apart from the official and residential buildings situated on the flattened crest of the ridge. The other buildings of more or less utilitarian character, such as the caravanserais, gardens, etc. are ranged round and principally down the slope of the ridge to the north.

Undoubtedly the most impressive creation of this new capital city is the grand Jami‘ Masjid which has been aptly described by Fergusson<sup>13</sup> as the ‘glory’ of FathpurSikri and as having been ‘hardly surpassed by any in India. Being the first of the great congregational mosques, usually associated with the chief cities of the Mughuls, it is at the same time a magnificent monument and a model for the others that followed.

After his successful campaign in the Deccan the emperor was resolved to commemorate his victory by the erection of a triumphal archway. The southern entrance to the Jami Masjid at Fathpur Sikri was considered to be a suitable position, and the original entrance was replaced by the construction of a massive portal. This was known as the Buland Darwaza Which, with its immense bulk towering above the buildings of the city, represents one of the most striking compositions ever known. It is a complete structure by itself, raised over a lofty stepped terrace, 42 feet in height, and consists of a large hall and a number of smaller apartments through which access is obtained to the inner quadrangle of the mosque. From the terraced platform to the finial it is 134 feet in height, the total height, including that of the supporting terrace, being 176 feet. The width of the front is 130 feet, while from front to back it measures 123 feet. Being an afterthought and conceived for a distinct purpose it has to be judged as a self-contained and individual unit, and as such it has hardly any parallel in any other country. “The Buland Darwaza”, Percy Brown says,

“is a work of great force, especially when viewed from the ground below, as then it presents an appearance of aspiring and overwhelming strength without being weighty and pretentious.”<sup>14</sup>

Two other later additions were made within the mosque enclosure. One of these is the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti. It is a small and attractive building in marble, square in plan, and stands on an inlaid marble platform with a projecting portico on the south erected in 1571 by Nawab Qutb-ud-din Khan, and with its marble fabric and wealth of fanciful ornament it has a soft and effeminate grace in definite contrast to the robust style of Akbari architecture. Close by and to the east of the tomb of the Shaikh stands the mausoleum of Islam Khan, a grandson of the saint, that was built of red sandstone in 1612.

At Fathpur Sikri the civil and residential structures are, by far, the more numerous. Though not imposing in size generally, they are singularly interesting as elegant types of office and domestic buildings of the period. Among them some noted were the Daftar Khana or the office, the Diwan-i-Khas, the hall of private audience, Jodha Bai's palace, Birbal's house

Two other buildings are also notable productions because of the delightful elegance of their setting as well as workmanship. One of them, known as Turkish Sultana's house and another one is the house of Miriam. According to Fergusson, Turkish Sultana's house is “one of the richest, the most beautiful and the most naturalistic of Akbar's buildings. It is impossible to conceive anything so picturesque in outline or any building carved and ornamented to such an extent without the smallest approach to being overdone or in bad taste.”<sup>15</sup> The house of Miriam also represents a small, but perfect, residential building characterized by a chaste simplicity of design. It is said that the building was once profusely gilded for which it was known as Sunhera Makan or the golden house. The Panch Mahal at Fathpur' Sikri, described by some scholars as a rather “fantastic creation” is an unusual structure which displays in a singularly interesting manner the architectural preferences and ideals of the emperor. It consists of a tall pyramidal structure of five storeys, each storey designed as an open pavilion supported on clusters of pillars of graceful designs. The principal element in the composition is the hypostyle arrangement of each storey, the ground floor consisting of eighty-four pillars, the number diminishing gradually in each successive upper storey; the topmost one, which is crowned by a domed canopy, is supported on four pillars. In spite of the arrangement being so simple, the entire structure is of noble and dignified proportions.

Jahangir's contributions to the building art appear to have been rather insignificant when compared to the vast and ambitious projects of his father on the one hand and those of his son on the other.

During the early years of his reign Jahangir had completed Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandra, five miles west of Agra. It represents a unique creation; and it is apparent that it owed its conception to the versatile ideas of Akbar. The building was completed in 1613. It is some kind of alteration and modification of the original design took place, either unconsciously on the part of the builders, or due to undue intervention of Jahangir, of which we have several instances recorded in his autobiography.<sup>16</sup>

In the history of Mughul architecture Jahangir's reign marks the transition between its two grand phases, namely the phase of Akbar and that of his grandson Shah Jahan. The most important feature of the period of transition is noticed in the substitution of red sandstone by white marble.

Jahangir also loved colour and this was imparted to the buildings of his period by encaustic tiling; and the system of *pietra dura*, i.e. the inlaid mosaic work of hard and precious stones of various hues and shades, began towards the end of his reign.

A keen lover of nature, Jahangir delighted in pleasure gardens and is known to have constructed several such pleasancess. The Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir is one of the most charming of his undertakings in this direction. Jahangir's mausoleum at Shahdara near Lahore, cannot claim to have any architectural distinction.

Two other tombs built towards the end of Jahangir's reign, represent more successful achievements in respect of design as well as execution. Historically they are also interesting as foreshadowing the subsequent developments of the Mughul architectural style. One is the mausoleum of I'timad-ud-Daula, father of Jahangir's famous consort Nur Jahan, who erected it in 1626. It is situated at Agra, on the left bank of the river Jumna. within a garden enclosed by a wall, measuring 540 feet each way and pierced by red sandstone gateways, one in the middle of each side, It stands on a raised terrace and consists of a square building of 69 feet side, with an octagonal turret in two stages, surmounted by a domed cupola, thrown out at each angle, and with a square pavilion, covered by an angular canopy, placed in the middle of the terraced roof. The interior consists of a simple arrangement of a central cenotaph Chamber enclosed by connected rooms. An agreeable light is introduced in the interior, both in the lower and upper storeys, by exceedingly delicate open lattice work, aptly described as a "gossamer of fretted grilles".<sup>17</sup> Entirely composed of white marble, the building is covered throughout by rich mosaic of *pietra dura*., the first and certainly one of the most successful applications of this class of ornamentation in Mughul monuments.

Another tomb, that of 'Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Kharman at Delhi, was built towards the end of Jahangir's reign or shortly after. It marks a significant link between the tomb of Humayun at Delhi and that of Shah Jahan's queen, the celebrated Taj Mahal at Agra.

It was during the time of Shah Jahan that Mughul architecture reaches its supreme exuberance. The character of this exuberance has already been indicated. Like his grandfather, Shah Jahan was a great patron of the building arts and beautified his capitals with splendid palaces and other buildings. Though not gifted with the same originality and nobility of imagination, as that of his grandfather, Shah Jahan was also a great builder. His projects were many and compare favourably with those of Akbar in vastness and extensiveness.

The predilection for marble is graphically illustrated by Shah Jahan's replacements of the earlier sandstone buildings of Akbar at Agra, described as "barbaric abominations" by a court panegyrist, by marble palaces and pavilions, extolled as masterpieces of "this august reign when .... lovely things reached the zenith of perfection."<sup>18</sup> Not only that, he projected a new capital city at Delhi, that of Shahjahanabad where he built a fortress, at Delhi and Agra he built two grand congregational mosques wonderfully effective and enshrine the remains of his beloved consort he raised up at Agra that grand mausoleum building, the far-famed TajMahal, enthusiastically eulogized by many enamoured visitors as a "dream in marble"

In Lahore fort Shah Jahan's erections consist of the Diwan-i-'Am, a hall of forty pillars, the MusammanBurz, the Shilsh Mahal, the *Khwabagh* and other buildings in the north-western sector of the fort. Originally, they appear to have belonged to the same style and character, as in Shah Jahan's buildings at Agra and Delhi, the emphasis being on marble fabric and picturesque decoration by pietra dura and other costly modes. The Moti Masjid ( Pearl mosque)at Agra built by Shah Jahan, described by Fergusson <sup>19</sup> as "one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere." Situated on a high eminence it commands a line view of the palaces, pavilions. and courts. Completed in 1654, the entire building is of pure white marble raised on a stylobate of red sandstone.

In 1638 Shah Jahan began at Delhi the construction of a new capital city, that of Shahjahanabad, to contain within its perimeter a sumptuous palace fortress for the accommodation of the imperial household and court. The city was of the shape of a quadrant on the right bank of the river Jumna, with the palace at the apex of the river and the grand congregational mosque, the Jami' Masjid, at an angle formed by two wide streets traversing from the main gates of the fortress to the city gates.

The palace fortress, the Red Fort as it is known because of the red sandstone fabric of its rampart walls, has been designed on an unprecedented scale with all the amenities of the busy and luxurious life of an imperial house and court provided for within its walls in a regular and systematic order. Built at one time and by one of the most splendid of the Mughul emperors, it excels the other Mughul palaces in the largeness of its conception, in the uniformity of its arrangements and in the magnificence of its execution.

The fortress with its halls, palaces, pavilions and gardens was completed in 1648 when, on an auspicious day the emperor entered it ceremonially and formally inaugurated the new capital city. The fortress is planned in the shape of a parallelogram, with its angles slightly canted off, and measures 3200 feet by 1600 feet exclusive of the gateways. It is encircled by a massive rampart wall of red sandstone, relieved at intervals by boldly projecting bastions with domed kiosks on the roof. It has two main gateways, one in the middle of the western wall and the other in the south. The former, known as the Lahore Gate, forms the principal entrance and faces the ChandniChauk of historic memory and the latter to the south gate, known as Delhi Gate.

At the eastern end of the above-mentioned square courtyard stands the Naubat Khana (Music Pavilion), a double-storeyed building, which leads, again, to another great rectangular court, 550 feet by 385, with the hall of the Diwan-i-‘Am at its eastern apex. This hall of public audience has been designed in a stately manner to suit the solemn functions for which it was intended. It is built of sandstone, but was originally covered with shell plaster polished to the smoothness and whiteness of ivory to it in with the white marble structures that stand around. It is a colonnaded hall, open on three sides and enclosed at the back, the facade showing an arcade of nine foliated arches springing from double columns in the middle and from four at the corners. The interior corresponds to the facade in having similar arcades in three aisles, while set in an alcove near the back wall is the canopied platform in white marble, richly inlaid with precious stones, intended for the imperial throne. The superb magnificence of this throne platform, known as *Nashihmam-i-Zill-Ilahi* (seat of the shadow of God), at once visualises the splendid pageant of the grand Mughuls in days of their supreme brilliance.

The palaces and halls along the eastern wall represent the most resplendent creations in white marble, and on these the highest skill was lavished, particularly in decorative treatment. With a succession of turrets, kiosks, golden domes, projecting balconies, overhanging the sandstone ramparts, they present a fine view from the river, the three towers-Asad Burz and Shah Burz at the

two corners and Musamman Burz in the middle. The inside, with the picturesque gardens with fountains, flower beds, pavilions placed within ornamental pools and the Nahr-i-Bihisht (Stream of Paradise) with its rippling water-course traversing the palace area, represents also a fine and magnificent setting for the superb structures. All combined, we have in the sumptuous lay-out and arrangement of the palace area a confirmation of the truth of the Persian couplet, inscribed on the Diwan-i-Khas, that “if there is a paradise on the face of the earth, it is this, it is this, it is this”.

The *Diwan-i-Khas*, also known as the Shah Mahal, is an open colonnaded hall of one storey enclosed at the back by marble trellises. The front consists of a fine arcade of five foliated arches springing from massive piers, with similar arches, but of varying sizes, on the two sides. The interior is divided into bays and aisles by massive piers carrying foliated arches that support the flat roof. At the top may be seen a beautiful kiosk at each corner. The building is entirely in white marble; but the chaste and elegant appearance of the facade is lost in the interior by a bewildering maze of rich and lavish ornamentation distributed over every available space in brilliant colour, lustrous gold and costly pietra dura. The ceiling also was plated with gold, patterned with arabesques and flowers; but this has since disappeared. Fergusson<sup>20</sup> considers it to be “if not the most beautiful, certainly the most highly ornamented of all Shah Jahan’s buildings.”

But even this splendid hall recedes into the background by the conception of the Rang Mahal, also called Imtiyaz Mahal (palace of distinction) in Shah Jahan’s time and described by a modern critic as the “crowning jewel of Shah Jahan’s seraglio”.<sup>21</sup> Its sumptuous appearance confirms the statement of the court chronicler that “in excellence and glory it surpasses the eight-sided throne of heaven, and in lustre and colour it is far superior to the palaces in the promised paradise”<sup>22</sup>

The grand Jami Masjid at Delhi, the largest and most well-known in the whole of India, forms also an essential element of the scheme of the city of Shahjahanabad. Begun in 1644. It was completed in 1658 when Shah Jahan had already ceased to reign. It is of the usual orthodox plan of an open courtyard with ranges of cloisters on three sides and the prayer chamber on the west. The courtyard has in the centre a reservoir of water for ritualistic ablution and is approached by three gateways, one in the middle of each cloistered side. It has a severe and imperious aspect, and the “uncompromising rigidity of its long horizontal lines, the harsh black and white inlay of its domes and minarets, its very vastness which necessitates the unending repetition of each detail, all combine to give this otherwise magnificent structure a character which never wholly attracts”.<sup>23</sup>

All the architectural creations of Shah Jahan may be thrown into shade by that superb conception of the mausoleum that the emperor raised up at Agra to enshrine the mortal remains of his beloved consort, Arjumand Banu Begam, better known as Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal, as it is called after the title of the empress, stands on an elevated ground on a bend of the river Jumna so that it has a fine view from whatever angle it is seen. As usual, the conception takes the form of a garden tomb, the whole being placed within a rectangular court enclosed on all sides, except on the river front, by a high wall with octagonal turrets, surmounted by domed pavilions, at the corners, and approached by a grand portal in the middle of the southern wall. The rectangle of the court is aligned north and south with the garden occupying a square of about 1000 feet side on the south and the raised terrace of the tomb building and two other accessory structures in the oblong portion at the northern end overlooking the river. The design, to a certain extent, is unconventional, the plan of the courtyard being rectangular, not square, and the tomb itself being situated, not at the centre of the court, but at one end. What impresses the visitor is the beautiful harmony that exists among all parts of the conception. All arrangements, beginning from the entrance portal, lead on, and converge to, the main theme of the entire composition, namely the superb mausoleum building poetically described as a "tender elegy in marble".

The entrance portal, rising up to a height of about 100 feet, is by itself a monumental composition and has been called "a worthy pendant to the Taj itself". Its central archway offers a magnificent vista, a framed picture so to say, of the snow-white mausoleum building standing at the farthest end. The facade is divided into an enormous arched alcove within a rectangular frame, with a similar smaller fronton in two storeys on each side and a turret with a domed pavilion at each corner. The red sandstone fabric is profusely inlaid with white marble and mosaic of precious stones. Along the frame of the central alcove are inscribed Quranic texts in black letters, inlaid on white marble ground, in such a manner that the letters appear to be of the same size throughout the entire height. The black marble inlay of inscriptions on white marble surface constitutes one of the most effective ornamental motifs in the decorative scheme of the Taj Mahal, used with the charming elegance of embroidery, not only on the gateway but also on the mausoleum building. The arched alcove opens into an octagonal chamber with a smaller room on each side and a staircase at each corner leading to the upper storeys.

The marble platform of the mausoleum building is exactly 313 feet square and a little over 22 feet in height from the garden level. It is approached by two flights of steps concealed within a passage

in the middle of the south side. At each corner rises a stately white marble minaret in four storeys ending at the top in a neat pavilion crowned by a graceful dome. From the level of the garden the total height of each minaret is 162 feet. The tomb building rises abruptly from the centre of this substantial platform and externally is a square of 186 feet side with each corner canted off. Each facade consists of a huge arched alcove, set within a rectangular frame, in the centre flanked by similar arched recesses in two stages on each side and chamfered angle. The entire facade is richly ornamented by inscriptions of Quranic texts in black letters on white surface within rectangular bands, and flowers, arabesques and other patterns in precious inlay. In elevation the scheme resolves into two parts, each approximately of equal height. The lower consists of the enormous facades with chamfered corners forming the ground storey, and the upper of the milk-white soaring dome with its encircling domed pavilions. From the garden level the entire height of the building is over 200 feet, a remarkable achievement carried out in effeminate marble.

The interior arrangements of the building are equally elegant and illustrate the sense for a unified and balanced design. In the depth of the marble platform is accommodated the subterranean crypt containing the graves proper. Above we have an octagonal hall in the centre, forming the cenotaph chamber, with two-storeyed apartments, one at each angle, all linked up by radiating passages and corridors. The cenotaph chamber is covered by a vaulted ceiling just below the central dome, while the angle-apartments have each a domed pavilion over the roof of the second storey. Light is admitted into the interior by double perforated screens of white marble set in arched recesses. The cenotaphs are composed of lovely white marble of the most translucent kind and are covered all over with the most beautiful ornamentation in costly *pietra dura*.

The decorative scheme consists principally of floral and arabesque patterns in costly *pietra dura*. In contemporary records we have an account of as many as forty-two kinds of precious stones having been used in the *pietra dura* works, and the infinite skill of the workmen is clearly evident in the perfect and finished execution of the intricate patterns ranging from the broad scroll-works on the arch spandrils, soffits, etc. to the tiny floral motifs on the cenotaphs and the marble grille encircling them. The numerous shades of this rich kind of ornamentation are so elegantly and perfectly blended that even a close observation and scrutiny fail to discover the points of unison in any part, although a powerful microscope might reveal as many as seventy to ninety such pieces in the composition of a single small flower.<sup>24</sup> The marble trellises with their varied patterns show also an inimitable delicacy of carving along with a fine sense of effective design. The structure

and its ornament are in perfect unison with each other, and the balanced design of the entire conception and its beautiful setting have almost a universal appeal.

By its stately and perfect proportions, the delicacy and purity of its lineaments, its milk-white texture, assuming different hues and tones at different times and under different conditions, the flawless execution of the structure and of its varied ornaments, and, lastly, by its picturesque setting aided by the ingenuity of man, the Taj Mahal at Agra stands as a creation of superb beauty and magnificence, not only in Mughul architecture but in Indian architecture as a whole. There have been controversies regarding the designer of this lovely monument and a statement of Father Sebastian Manrique was responsible for initiating the belief that the Taj owes its design to a Venetian, Geronimo Verroneo.<sup>25</sup> There are contemporary documents recording the names and respective salaries of the builders, artists and craftsmen responsible for the creation of the monument, the chief being Ustad 'isa who, according to *Diwan-i-Afridi* (manuscript in Khuda Bux Oriental Library, Patna), was a citizen of Agra. The garden, though typically Mughul, was the work of a Hindu garden-planner of the name of Ranmal who came from Kashmir. The attribution of the pietra dura ornamentations to a French jeweller, named Austin de Bordeaux, has also to be discountenanced, as the task is stated to have been entrusted to a group of Hindu craftsmen from Multan and Kanauj. The writer of the inscriptions, Amanat Khan Shirazi, came from Qandahar, while the maker of the dome, Ismail Khan Rumi, apparently hailed from Constantinople. The list of the principal artists, masons and craftsmen, together with the countries of their origin, as we have in the contemporary chronicles, indicates how the whole eastern world was laid under contribution in the creation of this mausoleum that still stands as a notable monument in the entire range of eastern architecture.

With its luminous beauty and picturesque setting the Taj has been attracting enamoured visitors from far and near, and each one has a reaction according to his own emotions and susceptibilities. According to Rabindranath the Taj as a "tear-drop" wrung from the sorrowing heart of the emperor while Bayard Taylor says that Taj as a "fabric of mist and moonshine with its great dome soaring up like a silvery bubble".

The reign of Aurangzeb saw the rapid dissolution of the Mughul architectural style. "There are few things", says Fergusson<sup>26</sup> "more startling in the history of this style than the rapid decline of taste that set in with the accession of Aurangzeb".

The productions of Aurangzeb's reign are few and are of a decidedly inferior quality. Two mosques, erected during his reign, deserve brief mention. The first is the Moti Masjid within the Delhi fort. It is a small but graceful structure in marble of the most polished kind. The curved eave over the central archway of the sanctuary is noteworthy and the second one was the Jami' or Badshahi mosque at Lahore, built in 1674 by Aurangzeb's Master of Ordnance, Fidai Khan Kuka, is a more vigorous composition and has an imposing appearance in spite of the partial collapse of a few of its eight minarets which constituted the chief feature of its design.

The tomb of Aurangzeb's queen Rabi'a-ud-Daurani at Aurangabad illustrates in a pathetic manner the rapid deterioration of the Mughul architectural style. Erected in 1679 it is a frank imitation of the Taj Mahal at Agra, though on a much smaller scale. The difference between this tomb, known as the Deccani TajMahal, and Shah Jahan's masterpiece is striking in view of so short an interval that separated the two monuments, and shows in an effective manner the rapid decay and impoverishment of the style. Compared to the TajMahal, the tomb of Rabi'a-ud-Daurani is a very mediocre production which, as Fergusson says, "narrowly escapes vulgarity and bad taste".<sup>27</sup> With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the grand empire vanished as well as the spirit of the Mughul architectural style Vanished.

## Conclusion

The important influence architecture has in our lives and that we as human beings are dictated by our surroundings. The color on the walls can drastically change our moods, the arrangement of chairs in our living rooms can alter our social perspective, and the interior design of our personal spaces can remind us of the values and interests that we embody. There are five key ways that arts and architecture can boost local economies: attracting visitors; creating jobs and developing skills; attracting and retaining businesses revitalizing places; and developing talent.

Art is a form of self-expression. It is a medium of non-verbal communication where you tend to describe what you feel without even saying it. People visit art galleries and museums to know how creative minds tend to describe various nuances of life. More often than not art describes life.

Art is not only an enriching experience. Moreover it adds to the beauty in our lives. A book without a picture is less preferred than an illustrated one. The aesthetic beauty of art is the reason why it makes its way in our households. It provides an admirable taste to our senses.

India is always known for its culture and art. Architecture again is a form of art that finds a deep rooted place in our lives. The forts of the Mughal era and the temples of South are a fine example of this. The British architecture is also significant. Today in Indian household too what is to be build and how, to have a perfect view of beauty is significant. People spend lakhs on paying architects to have a beautiful place to live in. One amongst the seven wonders, Taj Mahal is again an epitome of marvelous Indian (Mughal) art.

Art provides a voice to the soul. It helps us to know what and who we are. It enhances and helps us realize our potential and illuminates the path we should follow. It makes us face to face with our abilities, skills and wants. Creativity and optimism becomes a part of our life. Art in the form of painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, calligraphy, etc. is known as a pen to write our emotions. These forms of art are long known and followed as ambitions by aspiring creative minds.

Though art is relished by people but its value is not as much compared to the other fields. Architect and painters don't find value of their art enough to sustain their lives. It is still believed to have a personal space in one's life. Art is a hobby of an individual and it serves less on sustenance. This is the reason why we should promote and value art. It not only gives pleasure to our senses but is a true reflection of someone's soul.

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