

# INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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**Abstract:** India is known for its cultural heritage in the whole world. In fact it is India which has given the world the gift of art. The first art work which belongs to Paleolithic culture of the Stone Age was found in India only. The presence of these paintings has asserted India's importance for art and culture in the whole world. The Bhimbetka paintings at Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh and other paintings at Daraki-ch.attan in Indragurh hills, near Tehsil Bhanpura, Madhya Pradesh date back to 2,70,000 to 7,00,000 BCE. The north-western areas of India house the remnants of Harrappa civilization. They depict the art and culture of **Harappa civilization**. Several seals found in such excavations also depict the cultural and art richness. First Buddhist initiated the rock-cut caves and temple architecture in India. Later Jains and Hindus also started imitating them. They built several cut-rock caves temples at Badami, Aihole, Salsette, Elephanta and Mamallapuram. Buddhist literature depicts the royal palaces of Late Iron age. The stone sculptures during the reign of Maurayas have been found in Pataliputra. Pataliputra was the then capital of **Mauraya Empire**. The king **Ashoka** was a disciple of Buddhism. He had helped in constructing beautiful large stupas at the key sites of Lord Buddha. Our national symbol is also taken from the very famous Pillar of Ashoka. The famous pillar having four lions is the national emblem of India.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**Indian architecture** is rooted in its history, culture and religion. Among a number of architectural styles and traditions, the best-known include the many varieties of Hindu temple architecture, Indo-Islamic architecture, especially Mughal architecture, Rajput architecture and Indo-Saracenic architecture. Much early Indian architecture was in wood, which has not survived. Instead the earliest survivals are from the many sites with Indian rock-cut architecture, most Buddhist but some Hindu and Jain. Hindu temple architecture is mainly divided into the Dravidian style of the south and the Nagara style of the north, with other regional styles. Housing styles also vary between regions, partly depending on the different climates. Haveli is a general term for a large townhouse.

During the British colonial period, European styles including neoclassical, gothic revival, and baroque became prevalent across India. The amalgamation of Indo-Islamic and European styles led to a new style, known as the Indo-Saracenic style. After independence, modernist ideas spread among Indian architects as a way of progressing from the colonial culture. The economic reforms of 1991 further bolstered the urban architecture of India as the country became more integrated with the world's economy.

An important phase of Indian architecture began with the Mauryan period. The material prosperity of the Mauryans and a new religious consciousness led to achievements in all fields. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Selucas Nikator who visited the Mauryan court described Chandragupta Maurya's palace as an excellent architectural achievement. It was a large palace carved out of wood.

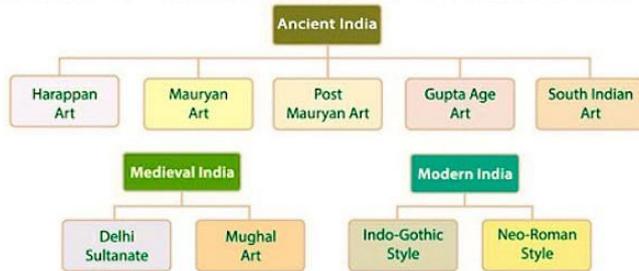
In the Mauryan period (322-182 BC) especially under Ashoka architecture saw a great advancement. Mauryan art and architecture depicted the influence of Persians and Greeks. During the reign of Ashoka many monolithic stone pillars were erected on which teachings of 'Dhamma' were inscribed. The highly polished pillars with animal figures adorning the top

(capitals) are unique and remarkable. The lion capital of the Sarnath pillar has been accepted as the emblem of the Indian Republic. Each pillar weighs about 50 tonnes and is about 50 ft high.

The stupas of Sanchi and Sarnath are symbols of the achievement of Mauryan architecture. The gateways of the Sanchi Stupa with the beautiful sculpture depicting scenes from Jataka stories are specimens of the skill and aesthetic sense of the artisans. A large number of statues of the Buddha were built by the artisans of these schools specially after first century AD under the influence of the Kushanas. Under the Gandhara school of art life-like statues of Buddha and Bodhisattavas

## II. DISCUSSION

### Classification of Indian Architecture



### HARAPPAN ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Harappans is seen to be ahead of its time. **Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa** were well-planned grid towns with wide main roadways and smaller lanes intersecting at right angles. During the Indus Valley Civilization, brick grid patterns, a well-defined city plan, immaculate drainage systems, lofty city walls, and multi-story dwellings were all common architectural elements. Every piece of the building served a definite purpose, and the city as a whole was more useful than attractive.

Mauryan and Post Mauryan Architecture Structures, sculptures, and buildings that were carved out of a single solid natural rock, exactly where it stood, are known as rock-cut architecture. India is most recognized for its rock-cut architecture, which has over 1500 documented constructions of international significance. The Barabar Caves in Bihar, which were found in the 3rd century BC, are the earliest of them. The **Ellora Caves, the Ajanta Caves**, and numerous of the **Mahabalipuram sculptures** are also world-famous rock-cut sculptures. In the post-Mauryan period, temple architecture also flourished in different parts of India.

### TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

One of the most essential components of Indian architecture is temple building. The Nagara, or Northern style, the Dravida, or Southern-style, and the Vesara, or mixed style, are the three main types of ancient Indian temple building. Even though all three genres were distinct in their way, they shared several characteristics. From the great Maurya dynasty the most famous remains are the edict pillars, erected throughout N India by the Emperor Asoka to proclaim his devotion to Buddhism. The monolithic, smooth columns are over 50 ft (15 m) high and are surmounted by lotus capitals and animal figures. Some of the pillar capitals reveal forms that suggest Persepolitan influences. Also dating from the reign of Asoka is the earliest stone ogival chaitya window, found on the portal of a small rock-cut sanctuary near Bodh Gaya. The chaitya halls were monastic sanctuaries hewn out of rock.

### THE GUPTA PERIOD

Buddhist art flourished during this period, which has often been described as a golden age. A famous rock-cut monastery at Ajanta consists of several chaitya halls and numerous residential viharas. Both facades and interiors

contain elegant relief sculpture, while interiors are covered with painted murals that feature superb figures drawn with a gracefully sinuous line. As in all periods, there is little difference in the images of the major Indian religions, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain. Large stone figures, stone and terra-cotta reliefs, and large and small bronzes are made in the refined Gupta style; the level of production is uniformly high. After the 7th cent., although the rulers of the Pala and Sena dynasties (730–1197) were Hindu, significant Buddhist art was created.

### **GUPTA ARCHITECTURE**

Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh is a Vishnu Hindu temple built during the early 6th century, near the end of the Gupta period. For reasons that are not entirely clear, for the most part the Gupta period represented a hiatus in Indian rock-cut architecture, with the first wave of construction finishing before the empire was assembled, and the second wave beginning in the late 5th century, after it ended. This is the case, for example, at the Ajanta Caves, with an early group made by 220 CE at the latest, and a later one probably all after about 460. Instead, the period has left almost the first surviving free-standing structures in India, in particular, the beginnings of Hindu temple architecture. As Milo Beach puts it: "Under the Guptas, India was quick to join the rest of the medieval world in a passion for housing precious objects in stylized architectural frameworks", the "precious objects" being primarily the icons of gods.

The most famous remaining monuments in a broadly Gupta style, the caves at Ajanta, Elephanta, and Ellora (respectively Buddhist, Hindu, and mixed including Jain) were in fact produced under other dynasties in Central India, and in the case of Ellora after the Gupta period, but primarily reflect the monumentality and balance of Guptan style. Ajanta contains by far the most significant survivals of painting from this and the surrounding periods, showing a mature form which had probably had a long development, mainly in painting palaces.

Many temples and sculptures are found in south India. They depict the Dravidian style of art. Several temples and caves are a depiction of advancement in art and craft. The oldest Dravidian architecture having monolithic rock relief and sculptures is at Mamallapuram. It is known as the shore temple. This age has so many temples that India feels proud of its heritage. UNESCO has recognized several sites as heritage sites. For e.g. the rock cut temples of Pattadakal, Badami, Aihole etc.

### **MEDIEVAL PERIOD ARCHITECTURE**

With the arrival of Turks during the thirteenth century came a new technique of architecture- the architectural styles of Persia, Arabia and Central Asia. The engineering features of these buildings were the domes, arches and minarets. The palaces, mosques and tombs built by the rulers had these features which were blended with the features of the indigenous architecture and a new synthesis in architecture was achieved. This happened because the Turkish rulers of Delhi utilized the services of the local Indian craftsmen who were very skillful and had already constructed beautiful buildings. In the buildings that came up we find the simplicity of the Islamic structure as well as the detailed sculptures and designs they made on their own indigenous structures. A middle path was followed in all their designs in the architecture of this period.

#### **BAHAMANI**

The Bahamani sultans borrowed from the styles of Persia, Syria, Turkey and the temples of Southern India. The Jama Masjid at Gulbarga is quite well known. The court yard of this mosque is covered with a large number of domes and is the only mosque in India which has a covered courtyard.

#### **MUGHALS**

The advent of the Mughals brought a new era in architecture. The synthesis of style which began earlier reached its zenith during this time. The architecture of Mughal style started during Akbar's rule. The first building of this rule was Humayun's

Tomb at Delhi. In this magnificent building red stone was used. It has a main gateway and the tomb is placed in the midst of a garden. Many consider it a precursor of the Taj Mahal. Akbar built forts at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. The Buland Darwaza reflects the grandeur of the mighty Mughal empire. This building was made following Akbar's victory over Gujarat. The Art of the Buland Darwaza is about 41 m high and is perhaps the most imposing gateway in the world. The tomb of Salim Chishti, Palace of Jodha Bai, Ibadat Khana, Birbal's House and other buildings at Fatehpur Sikri reflect a synthesis of Persian and Indian elements. During the reign of Jehangir, Akbar's Mausoleum was constructed at Sikandra near Agra.

### **THE MODERN ERA**

Little of the glorious tradition of Indian artistic achievement survived British rule. Indian artists adapted Western techniques and produced gouache paintings to suit the tastes of European buyers. Patua scrolls, containing swiftly executed watercolor illustrations of many subjects, became one source for the revival of Indian themes during the 20th cent. A growing nationalist sentiment pervaded Indian art in the early decades of the 20th cent. Along with the conscious assimilation of Western styles.

### **CONCLUSION**

Indian art dates back to the dawn of civilization. Several buildings have now become well-known tourist sites. India has long been known for its unique patterns and art. On the Indian subcontinent, several historical relics have been discovered. As a result, the environment is said to be ideal for conserving historical relics.

The Mughal architecture began in the reign of Akbar. He reared many important buildings. The crowning achievements of his reign was the building of his new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, 40 km from Agra. Fatehpur Sikri is a romance of stones. The Art of the Buland Darwaza is the most imposing gateway in the world. The tomb of Saint Salim Chisti is exquisite in its beauty. Jodha Bai Palace is a fine example of ancient Indian architecture. The Jama Masjid was built with the influence of the Persian style. The Dewan-i-Amm and the Dewan-i-Khas are famous for their planning and decoration. The Ibadat Khana and Panch Mahal are another notable buildings. The Panch Mahal is a pyramidal structure in five storeys. It was built on the pattern of a Buddhist Vihara.

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