



# The Art of Architecture under the Mughal Emperors - with special references to Shah Jahan.

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## **Abstract:**

*The study is directed on the subject of the art of architecture under the Mughal Emperors-with special References to Shah Jahan. Almost all the Mughal emperors evinced a very keen interest in the art of architecture. Quite a large number of magnificent buildings were raised by them. A common characteristic of the Mughal building is “the pronounced domes, the slender turrets at the corners, the palace halls supported on pillars and the Indo-Sarchnic gates”. Apart from all this, the decoration and delicate ornamentation of the Mughal buildings also distinguish them from the simple buildings of previous Muslim rulers of India. One of the most distinguish features of Mughal rule in India was a unique development in art of architecture. The great monuments and specimen of Mughal art even now bespeak of the glory and grandeur of the Mughal times. The Taj Mahal at Agra and Jama Masjid at Delhi still attract thousands of people, not only in India but also all over the World.*

**Keywords:** Architecture, Indo-Sarchnic, Monument, Taj Mahal, Jama Masjid.

## **Introduction:**

The Mughal emperors were the great builders. Their style of Architecture was partly foreign and partly indigenous. Babur, the first Mughals ruler in India did not hold a good opinion about the Indian architecture. He also did not at all like the buildings in Delhi and Agra. So, in order to construct good buildings of his choice, he invited the pupils of Sinam from Constantinople and employed a large number of persons for raising building. According to Tuzuk-i- Baburi, he employed 680 persons in his palace and 1491 stone-cutters in Agra, Dholpur, Gowalior, Sikri, Biyand and koil to construct various buildings, palaces and mosques. Most of the buildings constructed by him were destroyed later on. The two buildings that still exist are the mosques at Panipat and Sambhal. Humayun, son and successor of Babur, was struggling all along for the security of his throne so that he could not devote his attention towards constructing buildings. Nevertheless, he raised some buildings like “Din-i-Panah” palace in Delhi and mosque in Fatehabad.

Akbar, the Great was a prolific builder who constructed so many finest buildings during his reign from 1556 to 1605. Among his finest buildings, the notables are Buland-Darwaza, Jama-i-Masjid and tomb of Salim Chishti at Fatehpur Sikri. In addition to this, his own tomb at Sikandra and the fort of Agra and Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, and Jahangir Mahal in the fort deserve mention. In the reign of Jahangir, his Queen Begum Nur Jahan constructed Itimud-ud-Daula's tomb at Agra and Jahangir's tomb at Shahdara 3 miles away from Lahore. Aurangzeb, a stern puritan, was not at all interested in the art of architecture and did not raise any reputed building. He only constructed some mosques like Badshahi mosque of Lahore and mosque of Banaras rose on the ruins of the Vishwanath temple. On the other hand, he pulled down beautiful temples which were specimen of beauty and architecture.

### **Objectives:**

The study is specified on the subject "the art of architecture under the Mughal Emperors-with special references to Shah Jahan". So, the objectives of the study are deriving on the following grounds.

- To highlight the art of architecture adopted by the Mughals.
- To find out the measures adopted by Shah Jahan for the development of the art of architecture.
- To examine its importance in field of Indian architecture and culture.

### **Methodology:**

The entire study is prepared for an investigation through historical method. This paper is prepared depending only On Secondary Data from reliable books, journals, website etc.

### **Analysis:**

Shah Jahan, son and successor of Jahangir is considered to be the most magnificent builder of all the Mughal emperors. He evinced a very keen interest in the art of architecture. He constructed a large number of buildings at various places such as Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Kabul, Kashmir, Qandhar, Ajmer, Ahmedabad and many other places for which he spent crores of rupees. His monuments are built of snowy marbles inlaid with precious stones. According to Percy Brown "*Shah Jahan found the Mughal cities of sandstone and left them of marbles*". His buildings are also distinguished for their uncommon grace and rich decoration.

The most famous building of Shah Jahan is Taj Mahal of Agra which is considered as one of the wonders of the world. This unique building was raised by him in honour of his beloved wife, Arjumand Banu Begum, popularly known as Mumtaz Mahal. Before the commencement of the building, Emperor Shah Jahan invited eminent artists from various parts of the empire and even from outside. The plan of the Taj Mahal was thoroughly discussed and its model of wood was approved by the Emperor. The master architect of the Taj Mahal was Ustad Isa who was assisted by his son, Mohammad Shariff. About 20,000 artisans worked for 22 years under the able guidance of master architect Ustad Isa who was paid a salary of Rs 1,000 per month. At last, the building was completed at a cost of 3 crores of rupees. The building has evoked universal admiration. Peoples from all parts of the world come every day to see this love in stone of Taj Mahal. It is variously praised as "*Queen of architecture*", "*Dream in marble*". Taj Mahal is the finest example of Mughal architecture, a style that combines elements from Persian, Islamic and Indian architectural styles. According to

Rabindra Nath Tagore, it is an “*Immortal tear on the cheek of eternity*”. According to Percy Brown, “*It seems as if the hand of the nature and the hand of men had united and done their utmost to produce a spectacle of extremely moving beauty*”.

Besides the Taj Mahal, the other famous buildings of Shah Jahan are Moti Masjid of Agra, Jama Masjid of Delhi, Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas in the Red Fort of Delhi and Peacock Throne. Moti Masjid built at a cost of Rs 30 lakhs in 5 years is regarded as the purest and loveliest house of prayer. Jama Masjid built at a cost of Rs 10 lakhs is also quite impressive and pleasing. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, “*Diwan-i-Khas is highly ornamented than any building of Shah Jahan and nothing can exceed the beauty of the inlay of precious stone with which it is adorned*”. Shah Jahan himself characterized it as “Paradise upon the Earth”. The Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan built at an enormous cost of Rs 1 crore and studded with gems and rubies presented a rare specimen of beauty and art. The exquisite Peacock Throne with a canopy supported on twelve pillars adorned with precious jewels built in seven years by Bebadal Khan and the celebrated Koh-i-Nur added to the pomp and magnificence of Shah Jahan’s court. Old Delhi was founded as Shahjahanabad by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in 1639. It remained the capital of the Mughals until the end of the Mughal dynasty. It is approximately shaped like a quarter circle, with the Red Fort as the focal point. The old city was surrounded by a wall enclosing about 1,500 acres with numerous gates: Nigambodh Gate, Kashmiri Gate, Mori Gate, Kabuli gate, Lahore gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkman Gate, Delhi Gate, etc. Enormous market place had further divided the city. One of the most prominent among them was situated to the west of the Red Fort’s Lahore gate, presently known as Chandni Chowk.

### **Conclusion:**

Over the centuries the monuments of Mughals have been subject to neglect and decay. More recently, air pollution caused by emissions from foundries and other nearby factories and exhaust from motor vehicles has damaged the mausoleum, notably its marble facade. A number of steps have been taken to reduce the threat to the monument, among them the closing of some foundries and the installation of pollution-control equipment at others, the creation of a parkland buffer zone around the complex, and the banning of nearby vehicular traffic. Night viewing of the Taj Mahal was banned from 1984 to 2004, because it was feared that the monument would be a target of Sikh militants. A restoration and research program for the Taj Mahal was initiated in 1998. Progress in improving environmental conditions around the monument, however, has been slow. The Taj Mahal has increasingly come to be seen as an Indian cultural symbol. Some Hindu nationalist groups have attempted to diminish the importance of the Muslim influence in accounting for the origins and design of the Taj Mahal.

Shah Jahan’s reign has been described as a golden period in the medieval history in India. This is true in one respect only and that is the domain of the art of architecture. His buildings represent the climax in the evolution of the Mughal architecture in this country.

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