

INDO-ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

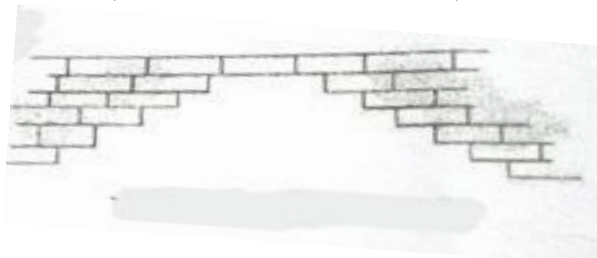
The establishment of the Delhi sultanate marked a new phase in the cultural development of the country. When the Turks came to India, they not only had a well-defined faith in Islam to which they were deeply attached but also had definite ideas of government, arts, architecture and so on. The interaction of Turks with Indians resulted in the evolution of a rich Indo-Islamic architectural style.

The architectural device generally used by the Indians consisted of putting one stone over another, narrowing the gap till it could be covered by a stone or by putting a beam over a slab of stones which is known as the method. The Turks introduced the arch and in architectural formations. The use of arch a number of advantages. The dome provided a pleasing skyline. The arch and dome dispensed with the need for a larger number of pillars to support and enabled the construction of large halls with a clear view.

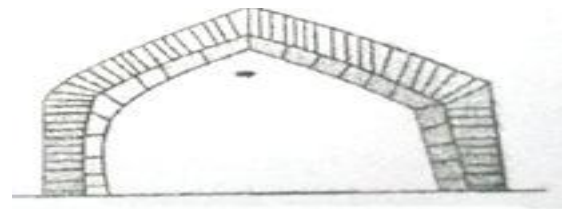
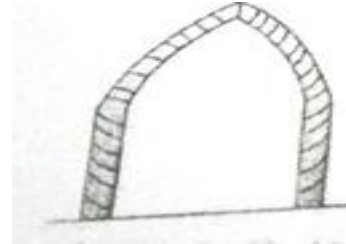
Such places of assembly were useful in mosques as well as in palaces. The arch and dome needed strong cement, otherwise the stones could not be held in place. The Turks used fine quality mortar in their buildings.



LINTEL BEAM Method
(Traditional Indian Method)

**Turkish arch and Vaults**

Libari Turks (Arch)



Dome method (sq. inches across the corners
of four walls)

FIG. 2.4 Evolution of Indo-Islamic
Architecture

The Turks abstained from representation of human and animal figures in the buildings. Instead, they used geometrical and floral designs, combining them with panels of inscriptions containing verses from the Quran. Thus, the Arabic script itself became a work of art. The combination of these decorative devices were called arabesque. They also freely borrowed Hindu motifs such as the bell motif, lotus and so on. The skill of the Indian stone-cutters was fully used. They also added colour to their buildings by using red sand stone, yellow sandstone and marble.

When the Turks came to India they first converted temples and other existing buildings into mosques. Examples of this are

the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque near Qutub Minar in Delhi (which had originally been a Jaina temple, then converted into a Vishnu temple by some Hindus, and finally into the mosque by the Turks) and a building at Ajmer called Arhai Din Ka Jhonpra (which had been a monastery). The only new construction in the mosque in Delhi was a facade of three elaborately carved arches in front of the deity room which was demolished.

The most magnificent building constructed by the Turks (founded by Alauddin and completed by Iltutmish) in the thirteenth century was Qutub Minar at Delhi. The tower standing at 72.5 m was dedicated to the Sufi saint, Qutub-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki. Although traditions of building towers are to be found both in India and West Asia, the Qutub Minar is unique in many ways. It derives its effect mainly from the skilful manner in which the balconies have been projected yet linked with the main tower, the use of red and white sandstone and marble in panels and in the top stages, and the ribbed effect. Ala-ud-din built his capital at Siri, a few kilometres away from the site around the Qutub, but hardly anything of this city survives now. Ala-ud-din planned a tower twice the height of the Qutub, but did not live to complete it. But he added an entrance door to the Qutub, called the Alai Darwaza. It has arches of very pleasing proportions. It also contains a dome which, for the first time, was built on correct scientific lines.

The Tughluqs were the next great builders after the Ilbaris or the early Turks. Ghiyas-ud-din and Muhammad Tughluq

built a huge palace-cum-fortress complex called Tughluqabad. By blocking the passage of the Yamuna, a huge artificial lake was created around it. The tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din, built by Muhammad Tughluq, marks a new trend in architecture. To have a good skyline, the building was put up on a high platform. Firoz Shah Tughluq built the famous Hauz Khas (a pleasure resort) and the Kotla (fort) at Delhi. The forts of Tughluqs are marked by the sloping walls or the 'batter' which gives the effect of strength and solidity to the building. However, we do not find any batter in the buildings of Firoz. Second, they made an attempt to combine the principles of the arch and dome with the slab and beam in their buildings. This is markedly found in the buildings of Firoz. In the Hauz Khas, alternate stories have arches and the lintel and beam. The same is to be found in some buildings of Firoz's Kotla fort. Finally, Tughluqs generally used the cheaper and more easily available greystone and therefore, their buildings have minimum decoration because it was not easy to carve this type of stone.

The Sultanate of Delhi (1206-1526) ★

summary

Muhammad Ghori's conquests became the nucleus of a new political entity in India—the Sultanate of Delhi—and the beginning of Muslim rule in India. This period can be divided into five distinct periods, viz.

Dynasty Period

(i) The Slave Dynasty 1206-1290

- (ii) The Khilji Dynasty 1290-1320
- (iii) The Tughlaq Dynasty 1320-1414
- (iv) The Sayyid Dynasty 1414-1451

- (v) The Lodhi Dynasty 1451-1526

In the thirteenth century, Shams-ud-din Iltutmish or Iltutmish (1211-1236), a former slave-warrior, established a Turkish kingdom in Delhi, which enabled future sultans to push in every direction. Within the next 100 years, the Delhi Sultanate extended its way eastwards to Bengal and southwards to the Deccan, while the sultanate itself experienced repeated threats from the north-west and internal revolts from displeased, independent-minded nobles. The sultanate was in constant flux as five dynasties rose and fell: Mamluk of Slave (1206-1290), Khilji (1290-1320), Tughlaq (1320-1413), Sayyid: (1414-1451) and Lodhi (1451-1526). The Khilji Dynasty under Ala-ud-din (1296-1315) succeeded in bringing most of South India under its control for a time, although conquered areas broke away quickly. Power in Delhi was often gained by violence—19 of the 35 sultans were assassinated—and was legitimised by reward for tribal loyalty. Factional rivalries and court intrigues were as numerous as they were treacherous; territories controlled by the sultan expanded and shrank, depending on his personality and his fortunes.

Both the Quran and sharia (Islamic law) provided the basis for enforcing Islamic administration over independent Hindu rulers, but the sultanate only made fitful,

progress in the beginning, when many campaigns were undertaken for plunder; and temporary reduction of fortresses. The effective rule of a sultan depended largely on his ability to control strategic places that dominated the military highways and trade routes, extract the annual land tax, and maintain personal authority over the military and provincial governors. Sultan Ala-ud-din made an attempt to reassess, systematise and unify land revenues and urban taxes and to institute a highly centralised system of administration over his realm, but his efforts were aborted. Although, agriculture in North India improved as a result of new canal construction and irrigation methods, including what came to be known as the Persian wheel, prolonged political instability and parasitic methods of tax collection brutalised the peasantry. Yet trade and a market economy, encouraged by the free-spending habits of the aristocracy, acquired new impetus from both inland and overseas. Experts in metalwork, stonework and textile manufacture responded to the new patronage with enthusiasm.

The Lodhis further developed the tradition of combining many of the new devices brought by Turks with indigenous forms. Both the arch and beam are used in their buildings. Balconies, kiosks and caves of the Rajasthanii-Ghjarati style are used. Another device used by the Lodhis, was placing their buildings, especially tombs, on a high platform, thus giving the building a feeling of size as well as providing a better

skyline. Some of the tombs are placed in the midst of gardens. The Lodhi garden in Delhi is a fine example of this. Some of the tombs are of octagonal shape. Many of these features were adopted by the Mughals later on and their culmination is to be found in the Taj Mahal built by Shah Jahan.

**Babur before the Battle of Panipat**

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur founded the Mughal Empire in India after, defeating Ibrahim. Lodhi in the Battle of Panipat in 1526. At the age of 14, Babur ascended, the throne of the Central Asian kingdom of Ferghana. His, greatest ambition was to rule Samarkand. He fought many battles in the pursuit of this goal; winning and losing his kingdom many times In the process. In 1504, he ventured into what is now, Afghanistan and conquered Kabul. His position in Central Asia was precarious at best. In order to consolidate his rule, he invaded India five times, crossing the River Indus each time. The Mughal age is famous for its, many-faceted cultural developments. The Timurids had a great Cultural tradition behind them. Their ancestral kingdom at, Samarkand was the meeting ground of the cultural traditions of Central and West Asia. The Mughals brought with, them Muslim cultural traditions from Turkcolranian areas, which inspired the growth of the Indo-Muslim culture.

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