

Original Article

Distinctness of Islamic Architecture in Odisha

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Received: 12 July 2023

Revised: 17 August 2023

Accepted: 02 September 2023

Published: 16 September 2023

Abstract - This chapter unfolds the unique Muslim architectural technique as evident in mosques like Zuma Masjid, Qadam Rasul and Balu Bazaar. The difference between Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture was clearly marked. The Hindu temple had a sacred chamber, icons, carved figures, spires, etc, with a trabeated construction method. On the other hand, the mosque facing the direction of Mecca and encompassing a rectangular open space employed the accurate method. There were no idols or images as it was prohibited in Islam. There were true arches, tiles, painted plaster, tiles, calligraphy, arches and domes. Apart from mosques, there were tombs and secular structures like forts, palaces, gardens and pavilions.

Keywords - Din-Panah, Zuma Mosque, Muhammadia bazaar, Ujalkhan Masjid, Khirin tree.

1. Introduction to Islamic Architecture

Islamic architecture has developed considerably from the first Islamic building of Kaba and the Grand Mosque surrounding it. When Islam came to the Indian subcontinent, a new era began. Islam had to confront an existing style of architecture that was very old and developed. The difference between Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture was clearly marked. The Hindu temple had a sacred chamber, icons, carved figures, spires, etc, with a trabeated construction method.

On the other hand, the mosque facing the direction of Mecca and encompassing a rectangular open space employed the accurate method. There were no idols or images as it was prohibited in Islam. There were true arches, tiles, painted plaster, tiles, calligraphy, arches and domes. Apart from mosques, there were tombs and secular structures like forts, palaces, gardens and pavilions. Gradually, there became a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim styles and the Indo-Islamic architecture developed with its own identity.

The city of Delhi was the primary focus of the architecture of the Sultanate (1206-1526). The monuments of the early phase liberally used materials from razed Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist temples. But the genius of the indigenous artisans and masons made it unique, which blossomed in the course of time. Qutub-ud-Din Aibak (r.1206-1210) built the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque in 1192, laid the foundation of the famous Qutb Minar in 1199 and started the construction of Ahrai-din-ka Jhompra of Ajmer in 1200. Apart from using columns, beams, capitals and brackets of dismantled Hindu monuments, the monuments blended Islamic and Indian styles. The geography, size and settlement pattern of Delhi changed considerably with the foundation of new cities by the Sultans. Alauddin Khalji (r.1296-1316) constructed the Siri fort with its thousand

pillared palace. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (r.1320-1325) built the fortress city of Tughluqabad in Delhi between 1321 and 1325. The batter or the sloping walls became a novelty of the Tughluq architecture. The tomb of the Sultan, built of red sandstone with a dome of white marble, was a perfect example of blending of trabeate and accurate method. Muhammad Tughluq (r. 1125-1351) constructed the Royal residence of Jahanpanah along with the Begumpuri mosque. Firuz Shah Tughluq (r.1351-1388) was a great builder. His newly built city of Firoz Shah Kotla is an extant example of his architectural liking. In 1504, Sikander Lodi (r.1489-1517) established the new town of Agra. The use of double domes in monuments was a novelty of Lodi architecture. The subcontinent came under the influence of Islamic architecture in provinces. There was the tomb of Rukn-i-Aim in Punjab. Bengal witnessed the establishment of the new city of Gaur and the mosque of Sikander Shah (1358-1389). The mosques of Atala and Jhanjari were built in Jaunpur. Kashmir, Gujarat and Deccan had their own architectural activities.

Architectural developments accelerated at a greater pace after the Mughals in 1526. From the time of Babur (r.1526-1530), the Great Mughals took the art of building to dizzy heights with their magnificent tombs, mosques, palaces, forts and gardens. The aesthetic sense, opulence, ornamentation and political stability of the Great Mughals were reflected in it. Humayun (r.1530-40 and 1555-1556) built Din-Panah (Refuge of Religion) in Delhi. His queen Haji Begum constructed the Mausoleum of Humayun in 1564, a landmark in the history of mughal architecture. Akbar's period (r.1556-1605) witnessed the use of red sandstone with white marble inlay, painted designs, many side pillar shafts, Hindu decorative motifs and Islamic arabesque, geometrical and calligraphy. The forts of Agra, Lahore, Allahabad, etc and the monuments in the capital



city of Fatehpur Sikri reflected Akbar's penchant for building activities. The monuments built during the reign of Jahangir (r.1605-1627), like the tombs of Akbar at Sikandara near Agra and the tomb of Itmaduddaula, marked the relationship between the edifices of Akbar and Shahjahan. The Indo-Islamic architecture reached its pinnacle of glory under Shaha Jahan (r.1627-1658). Splendor and perfection in this 'Age of Marble' were accompanied by inlaid mosaic work of costly stones (pietra dura), engrailed arches with cusps, massive ornamentation, etc. The forts of Agra, Lahore and the new capital city of Shajhanabad in Delhi with its magnificent palace cum fortress known as Lal Qila (Redfort), the famous Peacock throne in the Diwani--i- Am (Hall of Public Audience) and above all the Taj Mahal were testimony to the 'golden age' of Shah Jahan. The landscape architecture with its marvelous gardens of Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, gardens of the Fort in Agra, the tomb gardens of Humayun in Delhi and the gardens of Taj Mahal reflected the sophistication of the art of Mughal art of garden making. The mausoleum of Safdar Jang, constructed in 1753 in Delhi, was the last monument of any significance of the Later Mughals.

The Islamic people constructed many elementary schools and colleges to give teaching to Islamic students. Free funds are there for management; many exist now, too. The schools at Khatbinshahi, Cuttack, Pattamundai, Binjharpur, Ali, Amahat and Saradghapur, at Soram (Puri) are illustrations which reflect the support extended by the Mughuls by teaching Islamic pupils in Odisha.

Odisha was a region where Islamic saints were profusely sustained. These saints showed unflinching love and devotion to their spiritual works. Presented mystery and magic influenced people of both Hinduism and Islamic communities. Maximum numbers of Mousoleum are found in Odisha.

The existence of the mausoleum and centre comes from various areas of Odisha. Some are in Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Pipli, Gopa, Kakatpur, Nanikpatna, Balipatna, Satyabadi, Kendrapada, and Binjarpur funds are given for the Mousalem of Muslim holy man. We may say that Muslim saints progressed even faster than the spiritual domain of the Hindus.

They also got love and respect from non-Muslim people and went to remote areas many times in Odisha, like Kakatpur, to spread their spiritual mission for mankind. Pipli is a vital place of Islamic rule, where we find Nouselemn of Muslim saints, which is dated to the 16th and 17th centuries, having great respect for Hindu rule.

We can see that some non-Muslims gave sirin or khiri to late Muslim holy men. Historical architecture like anchray wep the greatest gift for the people of the Muslim period. They emerged with the support mainly of Islamic organizations. A large number of moasoleums, places of worship and fortified places constructed when the Mughals were ruling are pieces of evidence which suggest that

Odisha did not deficient in Muslim monuments. However, very few are said to have standard monuments.

The administrative centre of Odisha was Cuttack when the Mughals were ruling, so they had the advantage of belonging to Islamic architecture. The quality of being worthy of attention and special. Those are (a) zuma mosque at Balu bazaar, (b) The Masjid at Diwan-i-bazar, and (c) Tha Qadam Rasul at Chaudhury bazaar, Cuttack.

2. Zuma Mosque at Balubazar

This mosque is exceptional for its prettiness and the quality of being magnificent. It was the period of Aurangzeb, Zebunisa, the Shahzada Begum, daughter of Aurangzeb, who started the footing of a splendid Masjid to worship God, and the building was finished from Nawab Nazim Ekram Khan in 1102 A.H. or 1689 A.D.

This monument is so attractive and giant in size in Cuttack. The exceptional part is that it is built on the lower surface of the earth. The flats surface towering a small single-story building. An underground passage was there when one went from the front side to the back side. A person who visits from the front road, the height of Masjid-like yards (150 × 75) shows an extremely beautiful place. The yard shows a 'haug' for the act of washing oneself. The magnificent building is prepared to meet large numbers of supporters for spiritual worship and to spread integration and fraternity.

The Masjid was built following the Turkish Masjid by having four splendid towers in every place off the side of an area and a cupola at the centre. The three splendid round cupola by some other cupola adds exceptional beauty to the Monument Aset of steps heading from one floor of the building to another; typically, inside the building on either part of a Masjid is an important character in which one can enjoy the scenic view of Cuttack town. The unusual thing about this architecture is its beauty of inscription, which looks attractive and confidently attracts public attention. One went to this place and became amazed at its beauty and architecture.

3. Qadam Rasul, Cuttack

The Qadam Rasul was surrounded from every part by a stone tower, which is the gravey of the Islamic people of Cuttack. It was said that when Kalapahar participated in occupying Odisha, Haji Syed Alimulah Daga, who was a relative of Syed Nashim of Masher from Persia, came with the holy image of Hajab in Arabia having the official seal of maccasharif, marked by its kindness which was hiding inside the Khirin tree Kukuriapada village of sungara in Cuttack subdivision. An area where the holy image was installed got an identity as Rasulpur. The success and the process of restoration of Qadam Rasul in times of illness and physical disorder is known to all. Hawabshuja Uddin Muhammad Khan, Subahdar of Odisha, during the rule of Aurangzeb, wanted to give devotion to the devotional image. This was unacceptable because the connection to Rasulpur was worse and more difficult, so Shah-Uddin

talked his minister Muhammad Ali into giving the command to the official of Sungra to reinstall the image in Cuttack. These types of commands were made with two arguments; the initial reason was that Shja-Uddin, a supporter of various impressive architecture in Odisha, was interested in constructing architecture matters of the devout sanctuary.

Secondly, he wanted to bring the devoted image to an area of great significance which would be able to reach the maximum number of mankind. By this command of transfer of image, the Qadam Rasul was transferred from Rasulpur and was situated in Jobraghat on river Mohanadi in 1099 A.H. The ruler assigned a job to one official, Munshi Hasdmand Khan, to supervise the sanctuary's management. The area was later known as Hashamant Shahi, and today also bears the same name.

Nawab Shuja-Uddin Muhammad Khan provided fifty acres of area to Qadam Rasul for management and built a rectangular block of hard material used for building a cupola and encircle tower. Again, the Safi Islamic Shrine was constructed under the reign of Alivadi Khan. The next 90 acres of area was donated. King Farrukh-Siyar granted to acres. In the next phase, Jamuji Bhons's Nagpru Raja donated zlacres.

Then, we see four tiny, powerful fortifications of square-shaped stone on four sides of an enclosed area of land that was used for a particular purpose. A Masjid constructed in 1130 A.H. (1718 A.D) in Qadam Rasul garden, with its monumental attractiveness equivalent to Ujalekhan Masjid in Muhammadia bazaar.

The vital nature of establishing the tower and hall was that it was constructed in Odia fashion and by Odia craftsmen and builders. If we consider the monument's design, it is a single attractive example of a Muslim monument. In fashion, it was very similar to Diwan Bazaar Masjid and Zuma Mosque, Balu Bazaar. For spiritual sanctuary, Qadam Rasul had a giant burial ground. Muhammad Taqi Khan put underground the Subahdar of Odisha. The rest of the important people who were buried there were Fatehkhan, Ajam Khan, Bahur-i-sultan and many others. There are various established shrines were equipped for these dignified people. Some Shrines of holy men are shahid pani, which is equipped here.

In the interior of Qadam Rasul, there was a storage chamber for water and a travelers' restroom consisting of eight rooms. The large region came under the compound. The compound featured a giant barrier constructing a large monolith and was shaped rectangular.

4. Diwan Bazaar Masjid

The other Masjid having vital features at Cuttack was the Diwan Bagan Masjid. It may belong to the past Shahi Masjid in Odisha, constructed when Aurangzeb ruled from 1658-1669. The Masjid was not constructed on the rectangular slab on the block from the lowest upant of the

base of a column. The Masjid has three cupolas, but one cupola size is bigger than the other two. It constitutes four minor towers. Two structure is found inside the Masjid. The next architectural objects of the Masjid are six capitals and tree 'hajras' found on opposite sides. The arched roof and carved top on two supports in the building shaped like half a sphere arched roof and mini walls were a few monumental examples attractive for its charmer.

5. Ujale Khan Masjid

Ujale Khan Masjid at Muhammadia Bazaar, Cuttack also has very crucial importance. It was constructed in 1128 A.H. (1716 A.D.). It is constituted of three cupolas, of which two on both sides are tinier in size than the big one in the middle. It had three carved structures but did not have towers. Masjid charm is in its construction clarity and splendor. In dimension, it is less than the Fatehkhan Rahman Majid interior of the Bunbati building but akin to its looks.

6. Fateh Khan Rahman Masjid

In building and monument, the Fateh Khan Rahman Majid and the Ujale Khan Masjid could come in one group. Their building fashion is not similar to the other buildings at Cuttack. In the forming of the plan and the way of its implementation, we found no similarity between Zuma Masjid and Diwan Bazaar Masjid until they had remarkable importance in the setup. The exact time of the construction of Fateh Khan Masjid is not known. But it seems that a few Islamic officers of Barabati Fort may have constructed the Masjid.

7. Tomb of Shah Mansur

Shah Mansur was a holy man of greatness, and from his benevolent work became famous in both Hinduism and Islam. Both the Hindus and Muslims visit the shrine of the holy man. The Islamic architecture is, however, not limited to Cuttack only; the Muslims were the central authority of power in spite of the fact that they constructed different areas of division. The vital examples are Abu Nasin Masjid at Jajpur, the Dargah-i-Takta an alamgini maintained at Balichandrapur and Qadam Sharif at Balasore.

8. Abu Nasin Masjid at Jajpur

The Abu Nasin Masjid at Jajpur was constructed by Abu Nasin Khan. He was the son of Shaista Khan, the deputy Nasim of Odisha. When Aurangzeb was ruling, he gave the Nizamship of Odisha to Prince Muhammad Agam, his son, who was also entitled to the job of superintendent of Odisha.

The Masjid was erected splendidly, having four towers. The towers in the middle were less in dimension than the other two big towers that got out of the building. The masjid has three cupolas. A few holes are marked inside the cupola on the upper covering of the building. It seems they may engage this building to prevent it from being known. Then, we see three beautiful goth-like

structures on the entrance to a room made from the east side. On the walls of the Masjid, it was engraved, "During the reign of Aurangzeb his grandeur arrived at the star and continued to exist there until the grandeur of the stars to the reign of Nawab." His morality was for off admiration, explaining that the Nawab existed in Jajpur city, a masjid of very high importance that its cupola could hide the sky by itself.

T. Motte, the European voyager who went to Jajpur in May 1766, was excited about the building of the Masjid and commented, "This building is constructed with the fashion of the Turdhis Madjid had a high tower in every corner of the building in which unpleasant acute sorrow gone away." Building the Masjid with its monumental edifice was a different fashion in Odisha. The Masjid was said to be constructed from the remnants of a ruined non-Muslim worship building.

9. Dargha Takht-i-Suleman in Cuttack District

The shrine existed in the high areas of Ali hills with an elevation above 2,500 feet in Mauza Charinagal, Cuttack, having a simple structure style and having only one room encircled by a cupola. There was a raised level surface on which people could stand encircled with a smaller thickness of restrictive barrier opened in its Northern part. There was a tall sloping land built for the receiving of saints and to offer convenience to pilgrims. Then, on the opposite side of the monument, there was a holy water chamber. Dargha Takht-i-suleman in Cuttack was not considered important because of its monumental structure. The shrine built in 1724 A.D. was built by Shuja-Uddin Muhammad Khan, an official of the region during the time of Nushid Quli Khan I. Munshid Quil Khan I was the ruler of Odisha. We find the name of the person engraved on the shrine, Shuja-Uddin Muhammad Khan, as he

constructed the shrine. There is a significant tale added to the shrine. Because of one pious Ulema, Sulaman visited the top of the mountain, and in the dense jungle, he started Hamaj. Then, an Islamic sepoy went to this place and noticed the banner at the top of the mountain. After seeing the mountain, the sepoy made a promise that if they got victory in the war, they would help construct the pious pirsahab. Then, the sepoy won the fight, and correspondingly, the shrine Takht-i-sulaman was constructed.

Shuja-uddin Muhammad Khan and Nurshid Quli Khan I, and Raja Januji Bhonsla granted some areas to Muslim religious groups for charitable purposes, so the profit they got from these funded areas were utilized in the maintenance of shrine and the others for Fatiha, Shrini and also for the visitors' hospitality and construction of the shrine. The pilgrims went to the shrine to pay homage to the devoted saint.

10. Conclusion

Nunshid Quli Khan I, father-in-law of administrator Shuja-Uddin Muhammad Khan, was the connoisseur of many Islamic architecture. He passionately supported the creation of monuments. His heir granted some land for the conservation of Qadamsharif situated at Balasore. Taqi Khan constructed a huge entrance for the Qadam hurrif. Again, Taqi Khan built a shrine in the succeeding period. The offering was formed in 1729 A.D. Though Odishan architecture did not possess some uncommon standards along with the architecture of Mughal India, Zuma Mosque at Balu bazaar was the most important work that epitomizes the Islamic architecture of Odisha. With its distinctive and magnificent glory, the Mughal administrators supported building monuments. They continued the heritage to a great extent.

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