

CBSE Notes Class 7 Social Science History Chapter 5-Rulers and Buildings

Rulers and Buildings

Between the 8th and 18th Centuries- two kinds of structures built by kings and officers: 1) forts, palaces, garden residences and tombs – safe, protected and grandiose places of rest in this world 2) structures meant for public activity including temples, mosques, tanks, wells, caravanserais and bazaars. Kings were expected to care for subjects and hence by building structures for their use and comfort, they wanted to get praise from the people. Construction was mostly carried out by others including merchants. Built temples, mosques and wells, nevertheless, domestic architecture – large mansions (Havelis) of merchants–survived only from the 18th Century.

Engineering Skills and Construction

Monuments give insight into the technologies used for construction. Roof, for example, is manufactured by placing wooden beams or a slab of stone across four walls. However, to make a large room with elaborate superstructure requires more sophisticated skills. Between the 7th and 10th centuries, architects added more rooms, doors and windows to buildings. Roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns-a style of architecture called “trabeate” or “corbelled”, which was used in constructing temples, mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells (baolis) between 8th and 13th centuries.

Temple Construction in the Early Eleventh Century

King Dhangadeva of the Chandela dynasty constructed the **Kandariya Mahadeva temple** dedicated to Shiva in 999. It had an ornamented gateway leading to an entrance and the main hall (mahamandapa) where dances were performed. Image of the chief deity was kept in the main shrine (garbhagriha)-the place for ritual worship where only the king, his immediate family and priests gathered. The Khajuraho complex contained royal temples where commoners were not allowed entry. The temples were decorated with elaborately carved sculptures.

The **Rajarajeshvara temple at Thanjavur** has the tallest shikhara amongst temples of its time, so building it was not easy as there were no cranes in those days and it was too heavy to lift manually the 90 tonne stone for the top of the shikhara. Hence, the architects built an inclined path (not too steep) that started over 4km away to the top of the temple, placed the boulder on rollers and rolled it all the way to the top. The path was dismantled after the temple was constructed, but the residents of the area remembered the experience of the construction of the temple for a long time. Even now a village near the temple is called Charupallam, the “Village of the Incline”.

Two noticeable technological and stylistic developments from the 12th century-(1) Architectural form called “arcuate”-the weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows were sometimes

carried by arches. (2) High-quality limestone cement- mixed with stone chips, hardened into concrete- increasingly used in construction- helped make the construction of large structures easier and faster.

Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

Temples and mosques beautifully constructed- reasons: they were places of worship, were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron- Example of Rajarajeshvara temple built by King Rajarajadeva for the worship of his god, Rajarajeshvaram-King took God's name as it was auspicious and he wanted to appear like a god-via the rituals of worship at the temple one god (Rajarajadeva) honoured another (Rajarajeshvaram)-Largest temples were all constructed by kings- lesser deities in the temple were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler-it was a miniature model of the world ruled by the king and his allies. Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of god-Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the "Shadow of God". An inscription in the Quwwat al-Islam mosque-God chose Alauddin as a king (he had the qualities of Moses and Solomon, the great lawgivers of the past). The greatest lawgiver and architect God created the world out of chaos and introduced order and symmetry.

With the advent of the new dynasty to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral rights to be rulers. Building places of worship helped rulers with the chance to proclaim a close relationship with God, especially important in an age of rapid political change-rulers offered patronage to the learned and pious- tried to transform their capitals and cities into great cultural centres-brought fame to their rule and their realm-made precious water available by constructing tanks and reservoirs- Sultan Iltutmish constructed a large reservoir just outside Delhi-i-Kuhna-called the Hauz-i-Sultani or the "King's Reservoir."

Rulers often constructed tanks and reservoirs – big and small – for use by ordinary people. Sometimes, these tanks and reservoirs were part of a temple, mosque or a gurdwara (a place of worship and congregation for Sikhs).

Why were Temples Targeted?

Since temples were built to demonstrate a King's devotion to God and their power and wealth- when they attacked one another's kingdoms they often targeted these buildings. Early 19th century, Pandyan King Shrimara Shrivallabha invaded Sri Lanka and defeated king, Sena I (831-851). According to a Buddhist monk and chronicler Dhammakitti " , he removed all the valuables ... The statue of the Buddha made entirely of gold in the Jewel Palace ... and the golden images in the various monasteries – all these he seized." In order to avenge this blow to the pride of the Sinhalese Ruler, the next Sinhalese ruler, Sena II, ordered his general to invade Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas. The expedition made a special effort to find and restore the gold statue of the Buddha. Early 11th century, Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital-filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers. The list included: a Sun-pedestal from the Chalukyas, a Ganesha statue and several statues of Durga; a Nandi statue from the eastern Chalukyas; an image of Bhairava (a form of Shiva) and Bhairavi from the Kalingas of Orissa; and a Kali statue from the Palas of Bengal. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, contemporary of Rajendra I- attacked the temples of defeated kings-looted their wealth and idols-not a very important ruler at that time-by destroying temples – especially the one at Somnath – won credit as a great hero of Islam.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

The Mughal architecture was complex-Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan personally interested in literature, art and architecture-Babur described his interest in planning and laying out formal gardens, placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels-garden called Chahar bagh, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters. Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan built some beautiful Chahar baghs in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi-architectural innovations during Akbar's reign-architects turned to the tombs of Central Asian Ancestor Timur for the inspiration-central towering dome and the tall gateway (pishtaq) important aspects of Mughal architecture (visible in Humayun's tomb)-tomb placed in the centre of a huge formal Chahar bagh-built in the tradition known as "eight paradises" or hasht bihisht – a central hall surrounded by eight rooms- constructed with red sandstone, edged with white marble- During Shah Jahan's reign different elements of Mughal architecture was fused in grand harmonious synthesis-his reign witnessed huge amount of construction in Agra and Delhi-ceremonial halls of public and private audience (diwan-i khas o am) was carefully planned-located within a large courtyard, these courts were described as chihil sutun or 40 pillared halls-Shahjahan's audience hall resembled a mosque- pedestal where his throne was placed was described as the qibla, the direction faced by Muslims at prayer since everybody faced that direction when the court was in session-architectural features suggest the idea of King as a representative of God on earth-connection between royal justice and the imperial court emphasised by Shah Jahan in his newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi-behind emperor's throne was series of

pietra dura inlays that depict the legendary Greek god Orpheus playing the lute- belief is that Orphus's music could calm ferocious beasts until they coexisted together peaceably-Shah Jahan's audience hall aimed to communicate that the king's justice would treat the high and the low as equals creating a world where all could live together in harmony-Shah Jahan's capital was Agra-nobility had homes amidst formal gardens built in the Chahar bagh format, also known as "Riverfront garden." Shah Jahan adapted the river-front garden in the layout of the Taj Mahal-white marble mausoleum was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was to its south. Shah Jahan develops this architectural form as a means to control the access that nobles had to the river. In the new city of Shahjahanabad, constructed in Delhi, the imperial palace commanded the river-front and only especially favoured nobles– like his eldest son Dara Shukoh – were given access to the river. All others had to construct their homes in the city away from the River Yamuna.

Region and Empire

Between 8th and 18th centuries-construction activity increased-rise in sharing of ideas across regions-traditions of one region adopted by another-Examples: In Vijayanagara, the elephant stables of the rulers were strongly influenced by the style of architecture found in the adjoining Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda-In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri. In Bengal, local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut- Mughals liked this "Bangla dome" and adapted this to their architecture- Many buildings in Akbar's capital at Fatehpur Sikri follow architectural styles of Gujarat and Malwa. Authority of the Mughal rulers waned in the 18th century, but the architectural styles developed under their patronage were constantly used and adapted by other rulers whenever they tried to establish their own kingdoms.

