

6

Indo-Islamic Architecture

6.0 INTRODUCTION

During 8th century A.D. Turkish, Arabian and Mongolian cultures started invading into the main cultural stream of India. When these foreign cultural people started living in India during medieval period, they employed local Hindu masons for constructing their architectural marvels i.e. mosques, palaces, tombs, *maqbaras*, *madarsas* and forts/fortresses. It is because of this reason that we see the mixture of various cultural influences in these architectural works of medieval India. Thus a new Indianised style of semi-circular domes, mehrabs (conical minars which were earlier being used for temple niche of the Buddhists or Hindu deities) came into existence. Squirish forms of columns, mosques without minars, small arched niche (semi-circular) conical columns, are some of the other examples of the mixture of cultural style.

In this lesson, examples of only three following monuments of medieval India have been taken up in which all the qualities of the mixture of various cultural influences in the art of Indo-Islamic Architecture are well established.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, the learner should be able to :

- tell the names of the enlisted monuments;
- describe general introduction of the given monuments;
- differentiate the stylistic differentiation of architecture of enlisted monuments;
- explain construction materials, its place, style, and qualities of architecture of a given monument;
- identify the main features of Indo-Islamic Architecture.



Qutub Minar

6.2 QUTUB MINAR

| | | |
|--------|---|--------------------------|
| Title | - | Qutub Minar |
| Medium | - | Red and White Sand stone |
| Date | - | 1206 to 1232 A.D. |
| Site | - | Delhi |
| Size | - | Height - 72.56 meters |

General Description

Qutub-ud-din Aibek, the first of the slave Dynasty ruler, first of all started getting this *minar* constructed as a 'symbol of Victory' but later he sponsored it to his Dilli (Delhi) master Sufi Saint - Bakhtiyar Kaki as a gift. This *minar* is known as '**Qutub-minar**'. This minar is a good example of Indo-Turkish style of Architecture. Its boldly projected balconies on each storey, carved arabic scriptures on stones (they are mostly inscriptions from Quran and titles of the Emperor) and rope-winding stair-cases are its special features. This is the highest *minar* of India measuring **71.3 meters high**.

Red and white sand-stones are used in constructing the Qutub-minar. On its top floor marble stones are also used. Stucco lime-mixture as mortar for cementing its constructional work has been used.

Qutub-ud-din Aibek could get only its first storey constructed during his rein - 1206 to 1210 AD; Afterward king Iltutmish got the 2nd, 3rd and 4th storeys completed. But at the end (though badly conceived) 5th storey was constructed by Emperor Firozeshah Tughlук of Tughlук dynasty.

Qutub-minar is situated at Mehrauli in Delhi

Style of Architecture

Qutub-minar is most famous for its '*Shankh*' like form;

its strong ribs supporting its balconies; geometrical decorative carvings and arabic inscriptions along with pure Indian decorative symbols in its stylistic construction.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (6.2)

Tick mark (✓) the right answer

- (a) Qutub Minar was built as a symbol of
- Victory
 - Love
 - Religion
- (b) Top floor of Qutub Minar is built of
- Sand stone
 - Marble
 - Bricks
- (c) This Minar is good example of
- Mughal architecture
 - Hindu architecture
 - Indo-Turkish architecture



Taj Mahal

6.3 TAJ MAHAL

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| <i>Title</i> | - | <i>Taj Mahal</i> |
| <i>Medium</i> | - | <i>White marble stone</i> |
| <i>Date</i> | - | <i>1632 to 1654 AD</i> |
| <i>Site</i> | - | <i>Agra</i> |
| <i>Size</i> | - | <i>Groundplan 580 meters X 305 meters, Height - 187</i> |

General Description

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan is a well known figure until today for its building construction activities especially for Taj Mahal. He got Taj Mahal constructed as a memorial for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. In this building there are two tombs (graves) - one of his wife Mumtaz and the other of his own. In fact such memorial buildings constructed over the tombs are called 'Maqbaras'. Construction of Taj Mahal is a fine blend of Indian and foreign styles of architectural art.

White marble stone from Makrana mines in Rajasthan was brought for the construction of Taj Mahal, and lime stucco was used as mortar for cementing its constructional work.

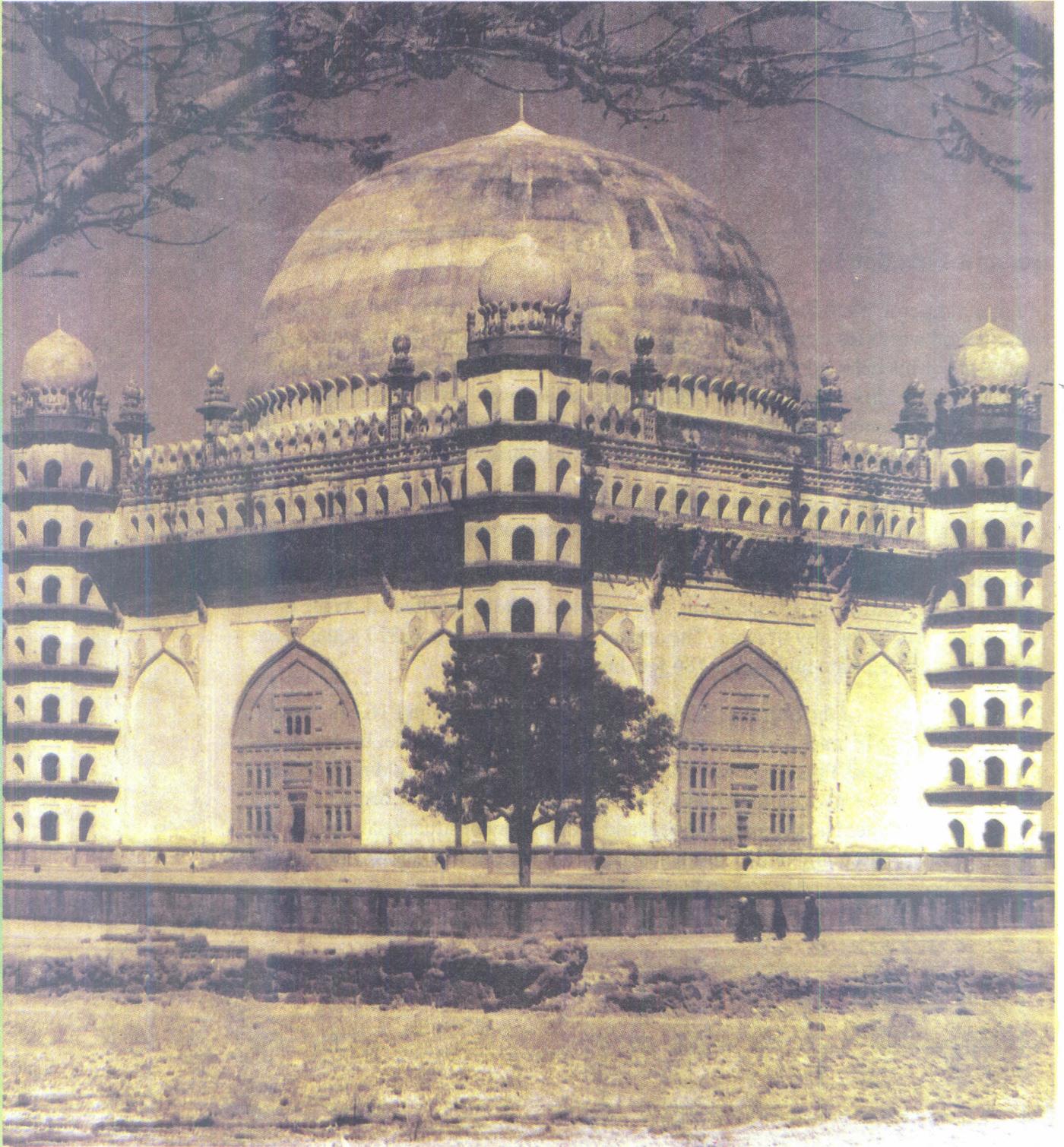
Shah Jahan ruled from 1628 to 1658 A.D. and during this period he spent twenty two years for the construction of Taj Mahal. This beautiful building is situated on the bank of Yamuna river in the city of Agra. The area of the main building is 313 square feet. The highest dome of the building is 186 feet high.

At the four corners of the building there are four *minars* each having 163 ft. height. The double layered domes and minarets are constructed in Iranian style, but its arches and balconies are in Persian style. The main emphasis of this building has been especially laid on the layout, proportions of its different parts and on the beautiful arabic inscriptions. Geometrical decorative motifs and some other constructional aspects like cubical brackets, designing of the basements and the high level of platform are some of the best representations of Indian style of architecture.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (6.3)

Fill up the blanks

- (a) Shah Jahan built Taj Mahal as a _____ of his wife _____.
- (b) Taj Mahal is situated on the bank of _____, in the city of _____.
- (c) Taj Mahal is built of _____ stone.
-



Gole Gumbad

6.4 GOLE GUMBAD

| | | |
|--------|---|---------------------------|
| Title | - | Gole Gumbad |
| Medium | - | Baked bricks |
| Date | - | 17th C.A.D. |
| Site | - | Bijapur |
| Size | - | Inner area 1600 sq. Meter |

General Description

During 14th century A.D., there were many small kingdoms especially in South India. One of these kingdoms was known as Bahmini Kingdom. Besides the Indian architectural style, the 'Gole Gumbad' of Bijapur had the influence of Egyptian, Turkish and Persian architecture as well which was built by the Bahmini king.

In the construction of Gole Gumbad, baked bricks have been used which have been cemented with lime stucco.

Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur built the Gole Gumbad in the 17th C.A.D.

It is situated at Bijapur city of Karnataka.

STYLE OF CONSTRUCTION

The double layered roofing style of Iran has been used in construction of Gole Gumbad. In India, this is the biggest dome among all the domes of the world in which the inner layer of the dome is rounded in semi-circular form whereas the outer layer is conically narrowed upward giving it a bulbous look. There are four octagonal *minars* at the four corners which have seven storeys each. The inner area of this building is 1600 square meters.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (6.4)

Tick mark (✓) the right answer

- (a) In the construction of Gole Gumbad the material is used.
- Marble
 - Baked bricks
 - Granite
- (b) It was built by
- Ibrahim Adil-Shah
 - Muhammad Adil Shah
 - Yusuf Adil Shah
- (c) It is situated at
- Agra
 - Bijapur
 - Golconda

6.5 SUMMARY

After studying three historical monuments as given in the curriculum, you might have concluded that the history of medieval India is full of so many ups and downs on account of which a lot of cultural interaction took place which creates a large panoramic picture in front of us. In the history of architectural art of India during medieval period, the construction of *mehrab*s, domes and the mixtures of cementing mortars are the gifts of Turkish techniques. We can simultaneously very well see the *swastika* symbol, bell shape forms, lotus carvings and *kalash* (a pious earthen pituitary shapes) used as decorative motifs which are purely Indian in their style and form, gifted to the Indo-Islamic Architecture. Many tombs - *mehrab*s and *maqbaras* were constructed and their surroundings were developed into beautiful decorative parks/gardens. But special attention was laid on the strength of the buildings during construction time.

6.6 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Keeping in mind the Indo-Turkish style of architectural art, explain the main features of the architecture of **Qutub-minar**.
2. Write down the three main reasons of calling '**Taj Mahal** as a very good example of Mughal architecture'.
3. The Dome of **Gole Gumbad** of Bijapur is a double layered roofing dome. Keeping this fact in mind draw a picture and write about the style of double layered bulbous dome.
4. Write the name and colour of stone used in the construction of **Taj Mahal**.

6.7 ANSWERS OF INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 6.2 (a) Victory, (b) Marble, (c) Indo Turkish Architecture
 6.3 (a) Memorial, Mumtaz, (b) Yamuna river, Agra, (c) White marble stone
 6.4 (a) Baked bricks, (b) Muhammad Adil Shah, (c) Bijapur

6.8 GLOSSARY

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Indo-Islamic | - | a new style in which elements are combined both from Indian and Islamic style. |
| Scriptures | - | religious book |
| Stucco | - | kind of plaster |
| Mortar | - | mixture of lime-sand and water used for cementing stone or circles in a building. |
| Inscription | - | writings on monument, metal plates, stone etc. |

6.9 EXTENDED ACTIVITIES AND ABILITIES

If possible find out the occasion (s) of visiting DELHI, AGRA and BIJAPUR to have a first hand experiences of observing and enjoying the beauty of historical monuments like Qutab-minar, Taj Mahal and Gole Gumbad.