

Evolution of Ancient Architectural styles

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ABSTRACT OF THE STUDY:

This project dives into ancient Indian architectural wisdom and explores how it can solve modern-day problems. At its heart is the Vastu Purusha Mandala a traditional way of planning that balances our buildings with the environment and the five natural elements (Pancha Bhoota). We are not just looking at features like central courtyards (Aangan), stone screens (Jaali), or stepwells (Baoli) as cultural relics- we see them as sophisticated and natural cooling technologies. By designing buildings that ‘breathe’ and align with the sun and wind as taught in ancient texts like the Mayamata. we can keep our spaces cool without destroying the planet.

Keywords: Architecture, environment, culture, technology.

INTRODUCTION:

Indian architecture is among the oldest and most varied architectural traditions in the world due to its constant evolution. Indian architecture is not merely the construction of buildings; it is a visual expression of India's culture, spirituality, and way of life. Temples, mosques, palaces, forts, and urban spaces narrate stories of dynasties, devotion, and craftsmanship that have shaped Indian civilization across centuries. Vastu Shastra is sacred science that brings health, wealth, and happiness

वास्तुशास्त्रमिदं पुण्यं सर्वकामफलप्रदम्।

गृहविन्यासविज्ञानं धर्मार्थकाममोक्षदम्॥

Ancient Roots of Architecture in India :

The earliest known urban culture on the Indian subcontinent was Indus civilization. Although the southern sites may have persisted into the second millennium bce, the civilization's nuclear dates seem to be between 2600 and 1900 BC. The Indus civilization was the largest of the three ancient civilizations in the world, with Mesopotamia and Egypt being the other two. It is known that the Indus civilization included over 100 towns and villages, many of which were relatively small, in addition to two sizable cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. The two cities' remarkable size suggests political centralization, either in two large states or in a single great empire with alternate capitals, a practice with parallels in Indian history. The two cities were originally perhaps one mile (1.6 km) square in overall dimensions. Harappa may also have succeeded Mohenjo-daro, which is known to have been repeatedly destroyed by extraordinary floods. In Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, the population was estimated to be between 23,500 and 35,000 and 35,000 and 41,250, respectively. Compared to the main Indus sites, the southern part of the civilization, on the Kathiawar Peninsula and beyond, seems to have originated later.

Classical & Medieval period Temple Architecture and other monuments in India :

Indian temple architecture is a reflection of the subcontinent's artistic brilliance, regional customs, and religious beliefs. Geographical location, materials, and cultural customs all had an impact on the centuries long development of various architectural styles in various regions of India. In general, there are three main types of Indian temples: Vesara, Dravida and Nagara. Each style reflects the diversity and depth of India's architectural legacy with its own structural characteristics, layout and ornamental elements. Alongside the Dravida style of South India, the Nagara style of temple architecture emerged in northern India during the late Gupta period in the fifth century CE. These temples typically lack ornate gateways or boundary walls and are constructed on an elevated stone platform with steps leading to the sanctum. The shikhara, a tall, curved tower that rises above the garbhagriha and represents cosmic and natural order is the most characteristic aspect of the Nagara style. An amalaka or kalasha is frequently used to crown the shikhara, enhancing its vertical emphasis. The shape of the shikhara is used to further categorize Nagara temples. Usually, the design consists of one or more Mandapas positioned on the same axis and a circumambulatory path around the sanctum. The walls of the temple are covered in elaborate murals and sculptural reliefs. The Osian Temple in Gujarat the Sun Temple at Konark, the Sun Temple at Modhera, and the Kandariya Mahadev Temple are notable examples. Mughal architecture represents one of the most remarkable legacies of medieval India, shaped by a synthesis of Persian, central Asian, and Indian traditions. Among these, Persian influence played a dominant role due to the cultural background of Mughal rulers and migration of Persian architects and craftsmen to India. Key Persian elements incorporated into Mughal architecture include the charbagh garden layout, double domes, iwans, Pishtaqs, Muqarnas decorations and calligraphy with intricate tilework. These features are prominently visible in major Mughal monuments such as Humayun's Tomb, Fatehpur Sikri, the Taj Mahal, Jama Masjid and Shalimar Bagh. Although Persian influence gradually declined with the weakening of Mughal power. Its architectural legacy to inspire later regional, Sikh, Indo-saracenic and modern Islamic architecture in India.

शिल्पेषु दृश्यते देशस्य स्वभावः।

Colonial Influence of Architecture in present and Ancient days :

Several European nations traveled by sea to India during the Age of Discovery is 15th–17th centuries. In an effort to expand their colonies and engage in trade. When Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in 1498, The Portuguese became the first Europeans to reach India. This signaled the start of European influence in India. Then the Dutch, French, and British tbuilt colonies , trading posts throughout India and frequently vying for dominance. From 1498 until 1961 the Portuguese controlled areas like Goa, Daman and Diu. The Dutch presence which lasted from 1605 to 1825 was primarily commercial and ended as a result of British expansion. Pondicherry, Chandernagore and two French-established settlements were ruled by the French until 1954. After engaging in trade in 1612 and eventually gaining political dominance, the British eventually became the leading colonial power. India was officially under British rule from 1858 until its independence in 1947.

देशकालानुरूपेण स्थापत्यं परिकल्पयेत्।

Varahamihira really looked at a building as if it was a member of the family. In his writings he suggests that before you even start, you should basically get to know the land- smell the dirt, feel the ground to make sure . It's a place where life can actually thrive. His whole idea was that if you align your walls with the rhythm of the sun and stars the house stops being just a box and starts being a place that actually looks out for your health and keeps your mind calm.” Modern architecture follows the principle of “less is more,” focusing on clean lines, simple forms and minimal decoration. It commonly features bold linear elements, floor-to-ceiling windows and materials like glass, steel, and wood. Both styles prioritize functionality, natural light and sustainable living, while differing in material choices and spatial expression.

ऋतेन बद्धं हि जगत्।

CONCLUSION:

The nature if the land is reflected by its art The Sanskrit sentence " emphasizes the profound connection between a nation's artistic heritage and its intrinsic character.

चिरस्थायि भवेद् वास्तु यत् शास्त्रेण निर्मितम्।

The Indian architectural history of India reflects a continuous process of evolution shaped by geography, cultural, religion, and external influence. from the well planned urban settlement of the Indus valley civilization to the symbolic and regionally diverse temple traditions of the classical and medieval periods, Indian architecture demonstrates both continuity and innovation. The Mughal era introduced a refined synthesis of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian elements, leaving behind monumental structure that combined aesthetics with engineering excellence. Colonial rule further transformed the architectural landscape through European planning principles and construction techniques. In the modern and contemporary period, architecture has shifted towards functionality ,simplicity, and sustainability.

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