

Rulers and Buildings

Some Important Terms

1. **Trabeate or corbelled:** A style of architecture in which roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns.
2. **Superstructure:** The part of a building above the ground floor.
3. **Arcuate:** An architectural form in which the weight of the super-structure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches.
4. **Chahar bagh:** Formal gardens placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels.
5. **Pishtaq:** The central towering dome and the tall gateway.
6. **Diwan-i Khas or am:** The ceremonial halls of public and private audience.
7. **Pietra dura:** Coloured, hard stones placed in depressions carved into marble or sandstone creating beautiful ornate patterns.
8. **Shikhara:** The top most part of a temple.

Textbook Exercises

LET'S RECALL

1. **How is the “trabeate” principle of architecture different from the “arcuate”?**

Ans. ‘Trabeate’ was a style of architecture in which roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns. Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries the trabeate style was used in the construction of temples/mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells. Example—Quwwat-al-islam mosque at Delhi.

Arcuate was an architectural form in which the weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. Example—Alai Darwaza at Delhi.

2. **What is a Shikhara?**

Ans. Shikhara was a superstructure above the main shrine (garbhagriha).

The image of the chief deity was kept here. This was the place for ritual worship where only the king, his immediate family and priests gathered.

3. **What is pietra-dura?**

Ans. It was an architectural style which Shah Jahan used in his buildings. In this architectural style coloured, hard stones placed in depressions carved into marble or sandstone creating beautiful ornate patterns.

4. **What are the elements of a Mughal Chahar bagh garden?**

Ans. Mughal Chahar bagh garden was placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels. The four divisions were symmetrical.

LET'S UNDERSTAND

5. **How did a temple communicate the importance of a king?**

Ans. Temples were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship. They were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron. We can take the example of Rajarajeshvara temple. It was built by King Rajarajeshvara. It shows that the names of the ruler and the gods are very similar.

The largest temples were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temple were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinate of the ruler. The temple was a miniature model of the world ruled by the king and his allies. As they worshipped their deities together in the royal temples, it seemed as if they brought the just rule of the gods on earth.

6. An inscription in Shah Jahan's diwan-i khas in Delhi stated: "If there is Paradise on Earth, it is here, it is here, it is here." How was this image created?

Ans. The architectural design of Shah Jahan's diwan-i khas (audience hall) at Delhi has an image of Paradise on Earth. His audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque. The pedestal on which the Emperor's throne was placed was frequently described as the quibla, the direction (west) faced by Muslims at prayer, since everybody faced that direction when court was in session. The idea of the king as a representative of God on earth was suggested by these architectural features. The construction of 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. These are some of the major features which created the image of Paradise on earth.

7. How did the Mughal court suggest that everyone the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak-received justice equally from the emperor?

Ans. Shah Jahan in his newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi emphasised the connection between royal justice and the imperial court. Behind the emperor's throne were a series of pietra dura inlays that behind the legendary Greek God Orpheus playing the lute. It was believed that Orpheus music could calm ferocious beasts until they co-existed together peacefully. The construction of Shah Jahan's audience hall aimed to communicate that the King's justice would treat the high and the low as equal creating a world where all could live together in harmony.

8. What role did the Yamuna play in the layout of the new Mughal city at Shahjahanabad?

Ans. The city of Shahjahanabad that Shah Jahan constructed in Delhi was established on the one side of river Yamuna. But in Agra the constructions were done on both sides of the river Yamuna. The imperial palace commanded the river-front. Only specially favoured nobles—were given access to the river. All others had to construct their homes in the city away from the River Yamuna. Thus, the Yamuna played an important role in the layout of the new Mughal city at Shahjahanabad.

LET'S DISCUSS

9. The rich and powerful construct large houses today. In what ways were the constructions of kings and their courtiers different in the past?

Ans. The constructions of kings were done over a large area. In those constructions they used special raw material like red sandstone, marble, etc. The kings always welcomed new architectural innovations in their constructions. They always kept direction factor in their minds. For example—placing of throne in diwan-i khas in the west direction Mughal rulers were particularly skilled in adapting regional architectural styles in the construction of their own buildings. For example—the Mughals liked the 'Bangia dome' so much so that they used it their architecture, in Akbar's capital at Fatehpur Sikri many of the buildings show the influence of the architectural styles of Gujarat and Malwa.

10. Look at Figure 4. How could that building be constructed faster today?

Ans. The building shown in Figure 4 can be constructed faster today by using highly developed machines and technologies.

LET'S DO

11. Find out whether there is a statue of or a memorial to a great person in your village or town. Why was it placed there? What purpose does it serve?

Ans. The memorial of a great person is placed in villages or towns to inspire others for doing selfless deeds like that of the great person.

12. Visit and describe any park or garden in your neighbourhood. In what ways is it similar to or different from the gardens of the Mughals?

Ans. Students are suggested to visit the park or garden situated in their neighbourhood and observe it minutely. Then find out in what ways it is similar to or different from the gardens of the Mughals.