

Some Architectural Replications of Adil Shahi of Bijapur

Dr. Ratnakar Hosamani

PDF scholar Dept. of History,
Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi

Abstract

Architecture under the Adil Shahi reached good artistic skill and made so many wonderful monuments in their kingdom, they adopted mixture of Hindu and Islamic artistic feature in their Architectural form, the Adil Shahi rulers were patron of unique artistic style. The main features of Adil Shahi are emphasis on minarets in preference to multiple or large domes, beautifying of monuments through surface decoration and artistic parapets. The new style of architecture is visible in the buildings constructed during the reign of Ali I. "constricted necks". Ornated brackets. The dome is perhaps the most prominent feature of the mosque. It is more elegant than the famous Gol Gumbaz, though less the half in its size. According to Fergusson, 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture' this mosque "is more remarkable, however, for the beauty of its details than either the arrangement or extent of its plan."

Key Words; Art, Architecture, Style and Tomb

Introduction

Architecture was the main field in which the Muslim rulers in India gave expression to their love of beauty. It created an opportunity for their mind and the Hindu mind to influence each other. The architecture that developed in Bijapur under the patronage of the Adil Shahi Sultans was an example of this influence. The Adil Shahi rulers were great patrons of architecture. They made Bijapur one of the most magnificent cities in the whole of India. The royal court was a centre of the masters and admirers of art and architecture. Artists, Musicians and painters of eminent position and universal reputation such as Malik Sandal, Faruq Hussian and Malik Yuqut were patronized by the rulers. Consequently, to quote Percy Brown, "the art in Bijapur immediately proceeded to find itself and to develop into the most aesthetically and constructional competent manifestation of architecture in the whole of Deccan."

Glimpse of Adil Shahi

The history of the Adil Shahi dynasty commenced in 1489 when Yusuf Adil Shah, one of the Governors of the Bahamani Kingdom, broke away and established the Adil Shahi dynasty with Bijapur as its headquarters. The Adil Shahi kingdom soon grew from strength to strength and for almost 200 years it became the showpiece of Muslim architecture and literature. The Adil Shahi kings played a vital role in the development of Urdu language. The Mushaira has its origin in Bijapur. Almost all the kings who ruled over Bijapur were patrons of art and architecture and encouraged all the arts. No wonder, the City is dominated by several ruins of the period. Bijapur can be divided into three sections-the citadel, the fort and the city. Both the citadel and the fort are massively built and were once surrounded by a moat. The fort, which is broken in many places has 106 bastions. The moat surrounds the entire fort and is between 30 feet to 40 feet deep. In the second half of 16th century, and 17th century under the aegis of Adil Shahis, the capital city of Bijapur occupied a prominent place among the celebrated cities of India. It was a great centre of culture, trade and commerce, education and learning etc. It was known for its own culture called, Bijapur Culture. During Bijapur's heyday of glory there was a conflux of different communities and the people. Sometimes in many respects it surpassed the great cities of Delhi and Agra of Mughal India. Thus Bijapur was fairly large town under the early Sultans of Adil Shahi dynasty. The capital progressed slowly, however its star was in ascendancy since the accession of Sultan Ali Adil Shah I in 1558. His victory in the Battle of Talikota in 1565 and further campaigns in the Krishna-Tungbhadra regions brought enormous wealth. Hence he began to spend lavishly on its decoration. Under him every year saw some new building, a palace, a mosque, a bastion,

or a minaret peeping up its proud head triumphantly. His successor Ibrahim Adil Shah II added, so to say, a pearl necklace, Ibrahim Rouza to enhance the beauty of Bijapur, and Mohammed Adil Shah crowned it with a priceless gem called Gol Gumbaz. Thus the Adil Shahi monarchs poured their heart and soul in the capital city.

Main Features of architecture and monuments of Adil Shahi of Bijapur

The main features of Adil Shahi are emphasis on minarets in preference to multiple or large domes, beautifying of monuments through surface decoration and artistic parapets. The new style of architecture is visible in the buildings constructed during the reign of Ali I (A.D. 1558-A.D. 1580) such as Jami Masjid, Gagan Mahal and Anand Mahal. However, rubble and plaster used in these early constructions were soon replaced by polished stone and the indigenous or local ideas particularly in the building of caves were adopted. Some improvements were made and new ideas adopted. In the tomb architecture, for example, the square type continued but with a pyramidal outline which admitted a greater play of light and shade. The Adil Shahi mosques consisted of prayer halls, the "enclosing cloisters being dispensed with except in a very few cases, their facade consisting of three or five arches". In case of three arches, the middle one was usually bigger flanked by smaller two. Another significant change was in the shape and position of the dome. Dome no longer covered the entire roof. Its size was considerably reduced.

Lot of change took place in shape too, it was not necessarily hemispherical but of various types-spherical, bulbous, and pyramidal and in some cases the domes had "constricted necks". The vacuum thus created was filled by constructing minarets and providing "more domed finials at prominent places and angles". The cornices were supported in highly ornated brackets, the designs of which were borrowed from the wooden architecture of the Hindus.

The trellis-work parapet of Adil Shahis was unique feature of Indo-Muslim style of architecture which developed in Deccan. The arch, too, underwent a change. It was no longer angular and had assumed graceful contours. The Bijapuri buildings possessed beauty of their own, highly ornamented as they are with carvings on stone usually of geometrical patterns but in Athar Mahal we come across frescoes of human beings. Other important features of Adil Shahi style are flat ceilings, pointed and well proportioned arches. The early Adil Shahi buildings are not very attractive but they throw light on the formative stages of the development of the distinct Bijapuri style. Among them we may mention, Rauza-i-Shaikh at Gulbarga, Ek Minar ki Masjid (1513-14) at Raichur, Jami Masjid of Yusuf (1512).

These buildings mostly built of unpolished stone; rubble and concrete clearly show that the distinctive Bijapuri style had not yet developed. The dome is still hemispherical and the architect is still groping in the dark. It is much later than in Ibrahim's old Jami Masjid we find four minars of average size at the corners of the roof. But here we discover for the first time 2 tall minars over the two central piers of the facade. Later on, the dome was to take their place. Ikhlas Khan's mosque removes some of the defects noticed in the preceding constructions and in addition to the two tall minars in the centre, "an elegant two storeyed kiosk crowned by a small dome covers the roof above the central mitrab". Haidariya mosque is better designed and well proportioned but it has no dome. Its tall minars are covered by bulbous domes. The mosque of Ain-ul-Mulk and Ali Shahid Pir are definitely superior as regards their planning and decorative beauty of the monuments.

The Ali Shahi Pir mosque is quite rich, its facade is pleasing and attractive mainly due to the arrangement of its arches, and its beautiful carvings, the supporting brackets representing the elephant motifs lend grace and charm to the whole structure. The first four sultans of Adil Shahi dynasty lie buried at Gogi Gulbarga district. It is a simple structure belonging to the early period when Bijapuri style had not yet developed and had not distinctive character.

Even the tomb of Ali I at Bijapur has no real merit. However, Ain-ul-Mulk's (1556) tomb belongs to the formative stages. It is a huge building having a well designed dome on the top. Its surface decoration

particularly the lace-like tracery, however, is striking. Ail Adil I's Jama Masjid is one of the earliest monuments of Bijapur. It was never completed yet it is regarded as one of the finest specimens of the Bijapuri style of architecture. The mosque is rectangular about 400 ft. from east to west and 280 ft. from north to south. The dome is perhaps the most prominent feature of the mosque. It is more elegant than the famous Gol Gumbaz, though less the half in its size. According to Fergusson, 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture' this mosque "is more remarkable, however, for the beauty of its details than either the arrangement or extent of its plan."

Mecca Masjid so called because it is said to be a correct imitation of the mosque at Mecca, is one of the prettiest and smallest mosques in Bijapur. It stands in the centre of a paved yard, and is surrounded by an arched corridor supporting a terrace which rims round the mosque on a level with the roof. It has a beautiful well proportioned hemispherical dome, cornice or chajja and fine arches of the facade which lends beauty and charm to the whole structure.

Gagan Mahal, completed sometimes in 1561 A.D., now roofless, served the twin purpose of a royal residence and darbar hall. Its chief architectural importance lies in the wide arch in front of the central hall in contrast to the narrow arches forming its facade. There was definite improvement in the style of architecture during the reign of Ibrahim II which was reflected in the construction of the front minar, ornamentation of cornices, and the parapet.

This style made its appearance in Rangin Masjid and Bukhari Masjid at Bijapur and Chand Sultanas' Masjid at Gulbarga. However, it reached its culmination in Ibrahim Rauza and Mihtar Mahal mosques at Bijapur, Mokhdum Qadiri's mosque at Bidar and the Purani or old Masjid at Karachur in Gulbarga. Ibrahim Rauza (A.D. 1626-A.D. 1627), a mausoleum built on the orders of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, is an important building which for its "technical accuracy, and skilled artistry, delicate and minute carvings of different patterns" occupies an important place in the field of Indian architecture.

It consists of two buildings, a tomb and a mosque. The tomb considered as the most ornate building in Bijapur, consists of a square chamber, surrounded by a double row of arches forming two open colonnades. The flat stone ceiling of the chamber composed of stone slabs without any apparent support is a remarkable achievement of the architect. The exterior walls of the chamber have been decorated with beautifully carved out inscriptions and a variety of geometric and foilage patterns.

Mehtar Mahal built around 1620 is an ornamental gateway leading to a mosque and garden. The style of ornamentation and carvings point to the time of Ibrahim Rauza when the decorative art was at its best. It is a "tall tower-like construction, about 24 feet square, rising into three storeys to a total height of about 66 feet". Its attractive features are richly ornated balconies supported by brackets which are "covered by a highly ornamental overhanging cornice resting on richly wrought-stone struts." It is indeed one of the most beautiful and ornated buildings of Bijapur.

Asar Mahal and Jal Mandir also belong to this phase of Adil Shahi style of architecture. The latter day structures include the famous Gol Gumbaz which is the mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-56). This circular dome is regarded by Percy Brown "as one of the finest structural triumphs of Indian builders, if only on account of its stupendous proportions."

It is immensely well-balanced and proportioned building with a dome (with 144 feet diameter externally) which is regarded as the second largest in the world. Fergusson was at a loss to understand how such a structure could stand. It is as famous for its dome as its whispering gallery. On entering the building, a person is struck by the loud echoes which fill the place in response to his footfall. Its high walls are decorated with arches, three on each side, the central one being bigger in size flanked by a smaller one on each side.

The style of architecture continued vigorously in later years as is evident from the incomplete tombs of Jahan Begam (1660), and Ali II (d. 1627). In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, a few tombs such as that of Khawas Khan and Shah Amin were constructed which are octagonal in plan but the mausoleum of

Abdur Razzaq is a square one. They do not, however, possess any architecturally distinctive character. Though technology and the field of architecture have made significant progress in the present century, people still have to depend on artificial means of lighting and ventilation owing to lack of farsightedness in designing. But the summer palace built by Mohammad Adil Shah between 1627 and 1656 A.D. at Kumatagi tank, 10 km from Bijapur city, is a classical example of proper utilization of available resources to protect the residents from the summer heat.

Conclusion

The name and fame of the Adil Shahi of Bijapur stands due to their contribution to the field of architecture style they have been introduced in the Deccan plateau. They have been to be greatest protector and preserver of Architectural remain of their times, they have build all type of monuments of both Hindu and Muslim combination in their style of approach. The architecture produced by the Adil Shahi Sultans was neither Islamic nor Hindu, but a mixture of both. It is otherwise called as the Dakhni School of Indo-Saracenic architecture. The conception of building which was born in the minds of the rulers was executed and molded by the Hindu artisans, the outcome of which could be the splendid monuments of mixed styles. Form where did the Bijapur Sultans get these artisans and the architects? It was from Vijayanagar. After the disintegration of the Vijayanagar kingdom in the battle of Banihatti all the artisans, architects and dancers migrated to Bijapur either as prisoner of war or as refugees¹⁰. And they were employed in the building activities at Bijapur by the Sulatans, with the result exuberant building activity began and magnificent edifice were raised in the later part of the 16th and 17th centuries at Bijapur. Ferguson remarks that during that period their capital was adorned with a series of building as remarkable as those of any of the Muhammadan capital of India with an exception of Agra.

References

1. Satish Chandra, Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals, Part II, (Har-Anand, 2009),
2. Sen, Sailendra (2013). A Textbook of Medieval Indian History. Primus Books
3. Percy Brown : Indian Architecture, Vol. II (Islamic Period)
4. Jadunath Sarkar : India of Aurangzeb, XC-XCII.
5. Henry Cousens : Architectural Remains.
6. Basheerud-din Ahamad : Waqiat-i-Mamaliqat Bijapur, Vol. II.
7. H.K. Sherwani : Dakhni Culture.
8. James Ferguson : History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, Vol. II.