

Amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal architecture represents a unique synthesis of two distinct architectural styles, each with its own cultural, historical, and aesthetic influences. Rajput architecture, characterized by its fortress-like structures and intricate ornamentation, building materials, style, arches etc. On the other hand Mughal architecture, renowned for its grandeur, symmetry, and extensive use of marble and red sandstone, domes, tombs, elaborate geometric design, etc. This research paper delves into the dynamic interplay between these two traditions, examining how they converged to create a distinctive architectural identity in the Indian subcontinent. The main aim of this paper is to describe the beauty of the Rajput and Mughal architecture which enriched the field of architecture of India. Through an exploration of key monuments, structural elements, decorative motifs, and socio-political contexts, this study seeks what elements were assimilated or modified in their amalgamation.

Key words: Rajput architecture, Mughal architecture, geometric design, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal architecture stands as a remarkable testament to the cultural, artistic, and architectural exchange that occurred during the Mughal period in India. This phenomenon represents a unique fusion of two distinct architectural traditions – Rajput and Mughal – which flourished in the North Indian subcontinent. The synthesis of these styles occurred against the backdrop of historical interactions between the Rajput kingdoms and the Mughal Empire, resulting in the creation of architectural masterpieces that continue to captivate scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Rajput architecture, characterized by its fortified structures, intricate ornamentation, and regional diversity, had its roots deeply entrenched in the cultural and geographical landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Meanwhile, Mughal architecture, influenced by Persian, Central Asian, and indigenous Indian elements, introduced innovations in design, engineering, and aesthetics, leaving an indelible mark on the architectural heritage of the region.

This research paper aims to delve into the intricate interplay between Rajput and Mughal architectural styles, exploring how their amalgamation unfolded, evolved, and manifested in various structures across the Mughal Empire. Through a comparative analysis of key architectural features, construction techniques, and cultural influences, this study seeks to shed light on the dynamic processes of cultural synthesis and artistic innovation that characterized the architectural landscape of Mughal India.

Drawing upon a diverse range of primary and secondary sources, including historical texts, architectural treatises, archaeological findings, and visual representations, this research endeavors to unravel the complexities of Rajput-Mughal architectural fusion. By examining emblematic examples such as forts, palaces, temples, and gardens, this paper aims to elucidate the stylistic elements, symbolic motifs, and socio-cultural dynamics that shaped these architectural marvels.

2. RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE

Rajput architecture is an architectural style notable for the forts and palaces of the many Rajput rulers, which are popular tourist attractions, many of the Rajput forts are UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Rajput architecture represents different types of buildings, which may broadly be classed either as religious. These much of a include temples, forts, step wells, gardens, and palaces. The forts were specially built for defence and military purposes.

Rajput architecture is characterized by its grandeur, intricate detailing, and a fusion of indigenous Indian styles with influences from Islamic and other foreign architectural traditions. It encompasses a wide range of structures, including forts, palaces, temples, stepwells (baoris), chhatris (cenotaphs), and havelis (traditional mansions).

2.1 CONSTRUCTION STYLES

The Hill Forts of Rajasthan (Amer, Chittor, Gagron, Jaisalmer, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore), a group of six forts built by various Rajput kingdoms and principalities during the medieval period are among the best examples of Rajput Architecture. The ensemble is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Other forts include the Mehrangarh Fort and Jaigarh Fort.



The walled city of Jaipur was formed in 1727 by Kacchwaha Rajput ruler Jai Singh II, and is "a unique example of traditional Hindu town planning", following the precepts set out in much Hindu texts. Subsequently, the City Palace, Hawa Mahal, Rambagh Palace, Jal Mahal and Albert Hall Museum were also built. Udaipur also has several palaces, including the Bagore-ki-Haveli, now a museum, built by an 18th-century chief minister.



City Palace, Udaipur



2.1.1. CENOTAPHS

A number of the Rajput dynasties built groups of cenotaph memorials for their members, mostly using the chatri form, and often at the traditional site for cremations. These include the Ahar Cenotaphs outside Udaipur, and Bada

Bagh near Jaisalmer. Individual examples include the Jaswant Thada at Jodhpur, and Chaurasi Khambon ki Chhatri, Bundi; there are many others.

2.1.2. HAVELIS

Arched gateways, jharokhas, miniature paintings, balconies and detailed mirror works are found in the Rajput havelis. The sculptures on the niches of the outer and inner walls of the havelis were inspired from the folk tales. Besides these one would easily come across painted, stone and stucco murals and a plethora of wood carvings. These havelis in Rajasthan were actually the residing places of affluent businessmen.



Some of the [Ahar Cenotaphs](#) outside Udaipur

The features of Rajput sculpture make them the perfect examples for Indo-Iranian architecture. The themes of the sculptures were rooted in the folk tales. But these sculptures and the Rajput architecture, at large, differed from the Hindu style as their spirit is strictly Iranian.

2.2. CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS

2.2.1. JHAROKHA

Jharokha is a kind of suspended or overhanging enfolded balcony generally characteristic of Rajasthani architecture. The Jharokha balcony is basically stone window which projects from wall plane and are generally employed for additional architectural beauty to the mansions and also as a sight-seeing platform. One of the most significant purposes it served was to permit women in pardah to witness the events without being noticed themselves.

2.2.2. CHHATRIS

Chhatris are the elevated pavilions or porches in dome shape and are the best illustrations of the architecture of Rajasthan. The Chhatri stands as a symbol of honour and pride used to portray the fundamentals of admiration in Rajasthan's Rajput architecture. In Hindi the term Chhain refers to a canopy or an umbrella. The Sheknawati area of Rajasthan held chhatris in the place meant for cremation of distinguished and wealthy personalities which were later on tailored as a typical characteristic in all constructions of Rajasthan.



2.2.3. JAALI

Jaali is normally a perforated stone or latticed screen, usually with an ornamental pattern, many came into existence on account of the pardah system, which did not allow women to be seen in public, but enabled women to observe the outside world by remaining out of sight.

2.2.4. STEPWELL (BAORI)

Stepwell otherwise known as bawdi or baoli is a pond or well where water can be filled by climbing down steps. Stepwells are also known by other names such as kalyani, pushkarani, barav or vaav. Bawdis are quite common in the western part of India particularly in Gujarat and Rajasthan and date back to several hundreds of years. The fences of the trenches were made up of stone blocks with the absence of mortar, with steps to reach water body.

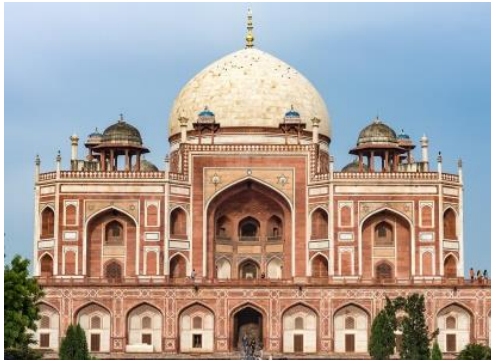
2.3. MATERIALS

Rajput architecture, spanning several centuries, employed a variety of materials, reflecting the technological capabilities, regional availability, and cultural preferences of the time. Some of the primary materials used in Rajput architecture include:

- **Stone:** Stone was a predominant material in Rajput architecture, particularly for monumental structures like forts, palaces, and temples. Various types of stone were used, including sandstone, marble, granite, and limestone. Sandstone, with its ease of carving and availability in the region, was particularly popular. Marble, prized for its white color and luster, was often used for decorative elements and inlays.
- **Brick:** Bricks were commonly used as a construction material, especially in buildings where intricate detailing was not required. Brick structures were often plastered or decorated with stucco, frescoes, or tiles to enhance their appearance.
- **Wood:** Wood was utilized for structural elements, particularly in residential buildings and palaces. Wooden beams, columns, doors, and window frames were common features, especially in regions with abundant forest resources.
- **Metal:** Metal, particularly iron and bronze, was used for various architectural elements such as door fittings, window grilles, decorative motifs, and sculptures. Iron was also employed in the construction of gates and fortifications due to its strength and durability.
- **Lime mortar:** Lime mortar was commonly used as a binding material for masonry construction. It provided cohesion between stones or bricks and offered a durable yet flexible bonding agent.
- **Terracotta:** Terracotta, or baked clay, was used for decorative elements such as ornamental tiles, sculptures, and pottery. It was often molded into intricate patterns and designs and used to adorn the facades of buildings.

Rajput architecture is an architectural legacy that stands as a testament to the Rajput rulers' artistic vision, cultural pride, and architectural prowess. From the early temples to the grand fortresses and magnificent havelis, each architectural style reflects the historical, cultural, and religious ethos of the Rajput dynasty. Through centuries of evolution, Rajput architecture has embraced diverse influences while retaining its distinct identity. Today, it continues to inspire awe and admiration, reminding us of the splendid artistic heritage of Rajasthan's Rajput rulers.

3. MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE



Humayun's Tomb, with exterior iwans, four-centred pointed arches, and a central bulbous dome visible

Mughal architecture is distinguished by an elegant style in which careful linear divisions of spaces and surfaces took priority over the more three-dimensional combination of elements that distinguished earlier Indo-Islamic architecture.

Another distinguishing characteristic was the use of red sandstone as a building material, along with white marble. Brick was sometimes still used for domes and arches, but in these cases it was usually faced with plaster or stone as a finish.

3.1 MAIN CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS

The bulbous domes, the slender minarets with cupolas at the four corners, large halls, massive gateways and delicate ornamentation. White marble and red sandstone was favoured. Semi-precious gemstones were popular (jade, crystal, etc.) . Used arches sparingly.

ARCH-

- A curved symmetrical structure spanning an opening and typically supporting the weight of the bridge, roof or wall above it. Have the curved shape of an arch.
- Pointed arch are mostly used at mughal period.
- The main advantage of the pointed arch was that it concentrated the thrust of the vault on a narrow vertical line that could be supported by the flying buttresses, a major feature of mughal architecture.

MINARETS

- Onion or bulbous domes are mostly used at mughal period. An onion dome is a dome whose shape resembles an onion . Such domes are often larger in diameter than the drum upon which they sit, and their height usually exceeds their width. These bulbous structures taper smoothly to a point.

DOMES

- The dome, arguably the most prominent feature of Mughal/Islamic/Indian architecture, is a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven. According to Islam, God's throne in paradise is a gigantic pearl on four pillars through which the rivers of grace run through.

A minaret is a distinctive architectural structure akin to a tower typically found adjacent to mosques .Generally a tall spire with a conical or onion shaped crown, usually either free- standing or taller than associated support structure. The basic form of a minaret includes a base, shaft, and gallery. Styles vary regionally and by period. Minarets provide a visual focal point and are traditionally used for the Muslim call to prayer.

CONSTRUCTION:-

A minaret is a distinctive architectural structure akin to a tower and typically found adjacent to mosques. Generally a tall spire with a conical or onion-shaped crown, usually either freestanding or taller than associated structure.

MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE DIVIDED INTO TWO PHASE

RED STONE PHASE :-

The first phase in which the buildings were principally constructed in red sandstone during the reign of babur, humayun and akbar.

The main characteristic features of red stone phase are :-

- Used red stone mostly.
- Symmetry and balance stressed.
- Bricks, decorated with "terra cotta" and glaze.
- Semi-precious gemstones were popular (jade, crystal, etc.)
- Domes are semi-circular.

MARBLE PHASE :-

○ The second phase, when white marble was largely employed to the luxury taste of shah jahan. The main characteristic features of marble phase are :-

- Red stone was substituted by white marbles and precious stones.
- The pietra dura style became a popular feature of this period.
- Semi-circular domes are replaced by the bulbous domes.

3.1.4. DECORATION

Decorative motifs included geometric and floral designs, as well as elaborate inscriptions in Arabic, Persian, and even in local languages during the late Mughal period. Decoration was commonly executed in tile or stone.

Tilework was more commonly applied to the exterior of buildings and existed in two main types: cuerda seca and mosaic tilework. *Cuerda seca* tiles were decorated with coloured glazes separated by dark lines, while mosaic tilework consisted of single-coloured tile pieces that were cut



and fitted together to create larger patterns

3.3 GENERAL FEATURES

- Usually, the decoration on 'Islamic' buildings is mathematical and geometric in design with sharp, crisp corners. Because Islam forbids any representation of Allah, and restricts images of the human figure considering such art in line with idolatry, religious buildings in particular are decorated with combinations of geometric pattern, calligraphy depicting phrases from the Quran, and arabesque patters.
- *Geometric* pattern often plays on the number four, a number which symbolically stands for perfection. Infinitely repeating patterns also are seen to represent the unchanging laws of God.
- The *arabesque*, a repeating pattern of foliage, is another popular form of non-figurative representation, and illustrates the beauty of creation and the bounty that can be expected in Paradise for the faithful.

3.3 STYLES

- The Mughals did not simply construct Central Asian architecture on Indian soil.
- *Babur* and had little opportunity to build in their short reign, so it was really Akbar who started the Mughal tradition of building, and he had been distanced from his Timurid heritage by this stage *Humayun*.
- Whoever was ruler also affected the dominant style. *Akbar* and *Shah Jahan* were the two greatest patrons. Akbar was a more forthright encourager of Hindu input.

4. RAJPUT - ISLAMIC FUSION

The fusion of Rajput and Mughal architecture represents a captivating blend of two distinct cultural and architectural traditions, resulting in structures of unparalleled grandeur and beauty. This architectural synthesis emerged during the Mughal Empire's expansion into the Indian subcontinent, as Mughal rulers sought to integrate indigenous architectural elements with their own Persian and Central Asian influences. In this fusion, Rajput architecture's ornate carvings, delicate jali work, and vibrant frescoes harmoniously merged with Mughal architectural features such as bulbous domes, intricate marble inlays, and expansive gardens. Examples like the Amber Fort in Jaipur and the City Palace in Udaipur exemplify this fusion, where the imposing fortresses of the Rajputs are adorned with elegant Mughal-inspired palaces and courtyards. The fusion of Rajput and Mughal architecture not only reflects the cultural synthesis of the time but also stands as a testament to the architectural innovation and artistic brilliance of the builders and craftsmen of medieval India.

Rajput and Mughal architecture, two distinct yet intertwined traditions, have left an indelible mark on the landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Rajput architecture, rooted in the indigenous building practices of various Rajput clans, flourished from the 8th to the 19th centuries, encompassing a vast array of forts, palaces, temples, stepwells, and cenotaphs. Characterized by its robust fortifications, intricate carvings, delicate jali work, and vibrant frescoes, Rajput architecture reflects the military prowess, cultural heritage, and artistic sophistication of the Rajput kingdoms. In contrast, Mughal architecture emerged during the rule of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent, blending Persian, Central Asian, and Indian influences to create a unique architectural style. Mughal architecture is renowned for its grandiose monuments, characterized by bulbous domes, symmetrical layouts, intricate marble inlays, and expansive charbagh gardens.

5. ANALYSIS

The amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal architecture represents a significant era in Indian history, where the fusion of these two styles gave rise to some of the most iconic monuments. For your research paper, analyzing this blend involves examining various elements such as design principles, motifs, construction techniques, and the socio-political context that facilitated this synthesis. Here's a structured approach to conducting your data analysis:

RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE	MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE
• Historical Context	
Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, Rajput architecture was deeply rooted in Hindu culture and traditions.	Originating from Central Asia, the Mughals brought Persian and Islamic architectural styles to India.
• Architectural Features Analysis	
Hindu symbols and mythological themes.	Islamic geometric patterns and calligraphy
Fortifications and palace complexes of the Rajputs.	Symmetry and garden layouts
Elements- Jharokhas, jaali, Stepwells, chajjas	Elements- Dome, Arches, Minarets
Materials- Stone, Metals, Bricks, Teracotta, Wood, Lime Mortar	Materials – Red Stone, White Marble,
E.g – Amer Fort, Jaipur, City Palace, Udaipur.	E.g. - Humayun's Tomb (Delhi): Fatehpur Sikri

6. CASE STUDY

CITY PALACE, UDAIPUR

A fusion of Rajputana and Mughal architecture styles, displaying the royal grandeur of ancient Indian Kingdoms, the Udaipur City palace is a architectural masterpiece, to be visited and explored in your holidays.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The City Palace showcases a combination of Rajput and Mughal architectural styles. The Rajput influence is evident in its towering turrets, domes, and intricate carvings, while the Mughal influence can be seen in its expansive courtyards, arched gateways, and use of marble

- **Rajputana Architecture:** The predominant architectural style of City Palace is Rajputana, which showcases the fusion of Mughal and Rajasthani influences. The extensive use of marble, intricate carvings, ornamental arches, and delicate mirror work exemplifies the exquisite craftsmanship of the artisan.

- **Mughal Influence:** The Mughal influence is evident in the arches, domes, and intricate detailing found within City Palace. The fusion of Mughal and Rajputana architectural elements is particularly pronounced in the Amar Vilas, a beautiful hanging garden terrace that offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape



Notable Structures and Features:

- **Badi Mahal:** Located at the highest point of the palace complex, Badi Mahal, or the Garden Palace, is a magnificent structure that once served as a pleasure pavilion for the rulers. It provides panoramic views of the city, lakes, and surrounding hills.
- **Mor Chowk:** Mor Chowk, or Peacock Courtyard, is a stunning example of intricate artwork. Its walls are adorned with beautiful peacock motifs crafted with colored glass and vivid detailing, showcasing the exemplary craftsmanship of the artisans.
- **Chini Chitrashala:** This part of the palace is known for its mesmerizing collection of Chinese and Dutch tiles, depicting mythological scenes, royal processions, and delicate floral patterns. It offers a unique blend of Oriental and Indian artistic traditions.



The City Palace of Udaipur is often referred to as a fusion of Rajput and Mughal architecture due to its unique blend of design elements and architectural styles from both traditions. Here's why it's considered a fusion:

- **Architectural Fusion:** City Palace showcases a unique blend of Rajputana, Mughal, and European architectural influences. The fusion of these styles gives the palace its distinctive character and sets it apart from other palaces in Rajasthan
- **Materials and Construction Techniques:** The palace is constructed using locally sourced materials such as marble, granite, and sandstone, which are characteristic of both Rajput and Mughal architecture. These materials were meticulously crafted by skilled artisans using traditional construction techniques .
- **Decorative Elements:** The City Palace features a rich array of decorative elements that draw inspiration from both Rajput and Mughal traditions. Intricate jali work (lattice screens), delicate mirror work, vibrant frescoes, and elaborate mirror-inlay designs adorn the palace's interiors, reflecting the artistic sensibilities of both cultures
- **Layout and Design:** The layout of the City Palace reflects a synthesis of Rajput and Mughal design principles. Its sprawling complex consists of multiple courtyards, pavilions, and gardens arranged in a manner reminiscent of Mughal gardens, while the intricate detailing and ornamental motifs bear the hallmark of Rajput craftsmanship

The City Palace in Udaipur is a magnificent architectural masterpiece that weaves together various styles and influences, resulting in a breathtaking beauty. Its intricate carvings, exquisite artwork, and panoramic vistas make it a must-visit destination. These intriguing facts about City Palace, Udaipur, provide a glimpse into its rich history, architectural splendor, and cultural significance

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the synthesis of Rajput and Mughal architecture stands as a testament to the dynamic interplay of cultural, artistic, and architectural influences during the Mughal period in India. Through the amalgamation of Rajput fortifications, ornamentation, and regional aesthetics with Mughal innovations in design, engineering, and urban planning, a new architectural vocabulary emerged that reflected the rich diversity and cultural synthesis of the era.

By examining emblematic structures such as forts, palaces, temples, and gardens, we have witnessed the seamless integration of Rajput and Mughal elements, resulting in architectural masterpieces that continue to awe and inspire. The fusion of materials, techniques, and symbolic motifs not only exemplifies the creative ingenuity of the architects and artisans involved but also reflects the socio-political context in which these structures were conceived and constructed.

Moreover, the amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal architecture serves as a lens through which we can explore broader themes of cultural exchange, religious syncretism, and imperial patronage in Mughal India. The architectural landscape of the Mughal Empire reflects not only the grandeur and opulence of the ruling elite but also the resilience and adaptability of local traditions in the face of cultural hegemony.

In essence, the amalgamation of Rajput and Mughal architecture stands as a shining example of the power of cultural synthesis to transcend boundaries, bridge divides, and create enduring legacies that continue to resonate with audiences around the world. As we marvel at the splendor of these architectural marvels, let us also celebrate the diversity and resilience of India's architectural heritage, ensuring that it remains preserved and cherished for generations to come.

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