

## -THE EXPEDITION OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE-

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24

Architecture has been the indelible canvas on which life has been sketched out. One of the best accomplishments of the Indian civilization, Indian architecture since time immemorial has acquired an imperative stature in the vocation worldwide. Right from geographical to socio - economic elements, all have paved the way for a rich architectural vocabulary that the country possesses today. India with a rich repository of culture has offered a lot of inspirational sources for architecture to thrive in. Whether it is the folklore, myriad forms of dances, plethora impressions of art or various melodies in music, each have contributed to stupendous moments in architecture.

### MAJOR INFLUENCES IN INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

The major influences in Indian architecture have been that of the Mughal Architecture noticeable in works like the Qutub Minar, Jami Masjid and the Taj Mahal; French architecture rampant in Daman and Diu, Portuguese Architecture in Goa or the British Architecture as observed in Victoria Memorial, Kolkata; Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai or the Viceregal Palace, Shimla.

### RELIGION AND ARCHITECTURE

The Indian architecture owes a lot of its existence to the different religions in India. The religious diversity in the motherland is responsible for a brimming architectural diversity practiced here.

**Buddhist Architecture:** Buddhism manifested the formal arrival of Indian architecture. Buddhist architecture gained its footing in India in the form of Stupas, Monasteries, Cave Temples, Edifices and other temples. Stupas such as the world renowned Sanchi Stupa made in stone were large halls under the umbrella of a dome which were appended by smaller structures like pillared gates, ornamented railings and lion thrones. These were the places of religious learning. Monasteries took their stimulation from forts and were embedded in stone walls. Though stone emerged as the base of most of the Buddhist temples yet wooden architecture also received much of its due in the Buddhist era. This era also gave birth to edifices in bricks which were circular free standing pillars rising to majestic heights pinnacled with a stone lion.

25

**Jain Architecture:** Unfortunately, most of Jain architecture that remains today is in ruins or excavated sites. Their architectural style involved carving out temples from rock faces. Known for building temple-cities on hills they hardly used bricks as their material. In terms of grandeur and material wealth the Jain temples are measured to be the richest in the world. With them, an accent was thrown on the expression to the interior spaces instead of concentrating only on the facades. However, in sense of architecture, they were left much behind the Hindu or Buddhist temples. Examples are numerous like Dilwara temples, Mt Abu, and the Khajuraho Temples at Madhya Pradesh.

**Hindu Architecture:** Hinduism, the major religion followed in India has given birth to a number of architectural wonders in India. Religion and spiritualism are the wheels on which Hindu architecture rests. A religion based on worshipping deities, Hinduism gave birth to architecture involving the idols into the art; thus temples were classified as per the deities. A temple in Hindu architecture is the abode of God, which is apparent in the planning too. Cave temples of Ajanta and Ellora created out of a single rock idolize the technical adeptness of the creators.

**Islam:** Alien Islam having reached India gave birth to architectural marvels. The native architecture of the places was churned with the Islamic ideology of architecture to create designs. The Mosque or Masjid till today stands as a depiction of the Muslim architecture. Muslim architecture condemns the use of idols hence open spaces in Masjids conjure up to provide a direct gateway to God. The mosque is a simplistic plan wherein an open courtyard surrounded by a pillared verandah rests under the shade of a dome. The Tomb or Maqbara construction in Mughal architecture was welcomed due to its novel concept. The resounding Taj Mahal, the most photographed monument in the world falls under this category. The Mughals gave India the 'darwaza' which was created with a four centered arch without the beam support. Palaces and forts also speak of some intricate work of the Mughals as seen in Fatehpur Sikhri. The development of Muslim style of architecture gave birth to Indo - Islamic architecture. These were characterized by



mobile van designed by Gurjit U, Courtesy Gurjit U



High Court, Chandigarh, India taken from view profile Eye-for-it under creative common license in [http://www.flickr.com/photos/gb\\_p/1231002331/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gb_p/1231002331/)

round domes, high minarets, pillars, red sandstone which later got swapped by white marble. Islamic architecture also gave rise to Mughal gardens which are characterized by their rectilinear layouts embedded in walled enclosures. Some of their typical features were the pools, fountains and canals. The Shalimar Garden and Nishat Bagh in Srinagar are some exemplary examples of the same.

**Christianity:** The Portuguese brought the Roman Catholic Church to India. A number of churches and monasteries adorn Goa till today, some of the major buildings being the Se Cathedral, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Convent of Saint Cajetan. Infact, the influence of Portuguese has been so much entrenched in Goa, that it gets reflected in the Goan culture too. The architecture here echoed the post-Renaissance European architecture in the form of old mansions, remains of fortifications and defenses. . The churches have been heavily inspired from architectural characteristics of ‘classical examples’.

## 26 STYLES IN ARCHITECTURE

Multitude styles of architecture classify the Indian architecture. Being a land of traditions India’s traditional architecture is its heritage which has span across a number of centuries. Different periods in the nation have offered a number of architectural specimens.

**Cave Temples:** These were the habitats of many Buddhist and Jain monks who after renouncing their secular lives chose to settle down in caves. These were natural caves at first which were later on excavated by man’s hand. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that the cave temples in India remain unparalleled. The intricacies involved, the scale, the ingenuity of the carvings coupled with the architectural perfection have yet to find a contender as seen in the Elephanta and Ajanta and Ellora caves.

**Stone Temples:** Though the oldest temples were built in brick and wood stone became the preferred material gradually. Till today, South India has these grand stone temples intact. The carvings for these stand out and the whole of the building comes across as a sculpture. Examples are many as in Golden Temple, Amritsar; Sun Temples at Konark and the Durga

Temple, Aihole.

**Wooden Architecture:** This style of architecture is noticeable in Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala. All main Indian monuments might be built in stone but the principles that have been followed are those of wooden construction. Ancient India abounded in stone and since the architecture was started with wooden origins, their style of posts and beams kept on being carried further on.

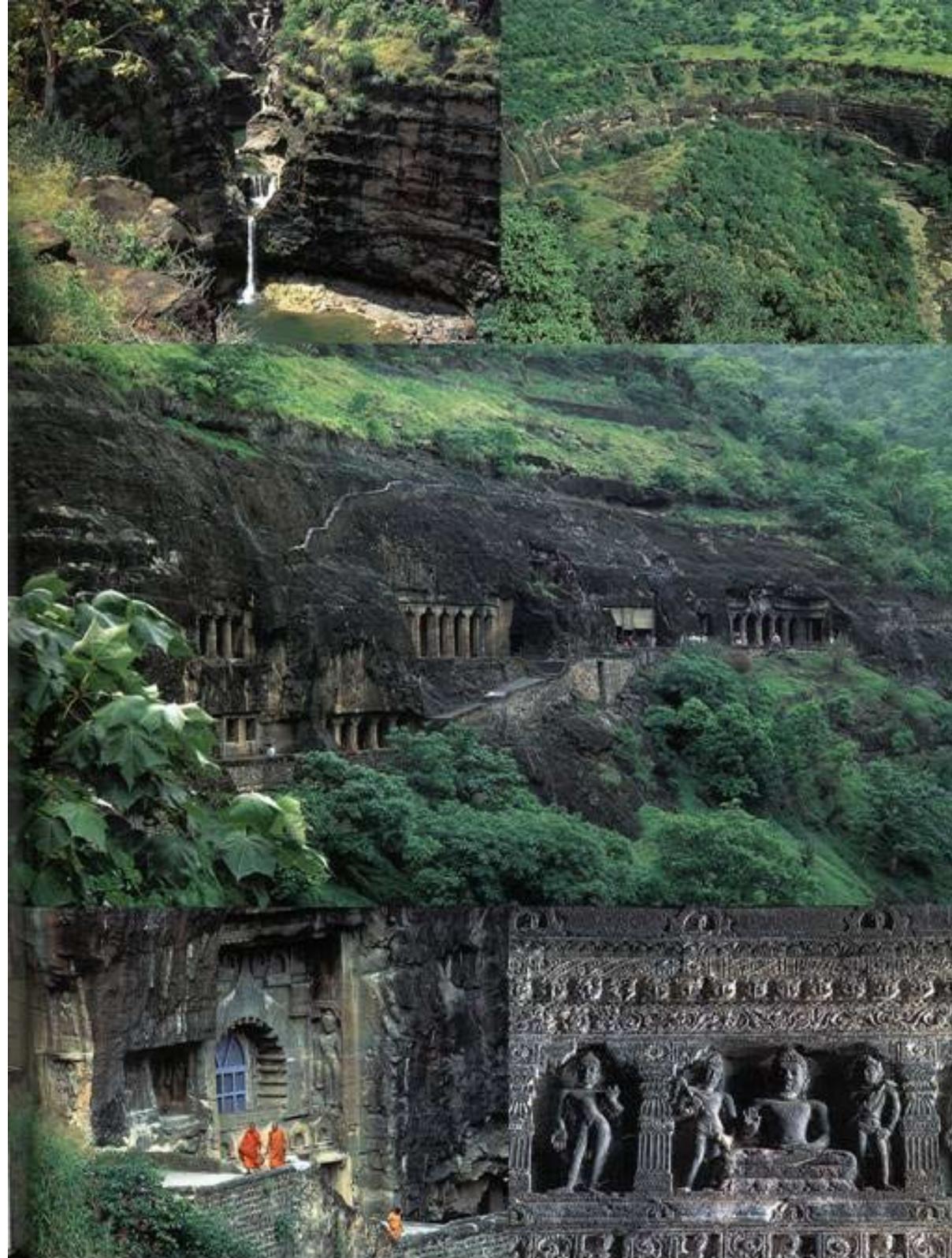
**Rock Cut Architecture:** One of the most spectacular specimens in Indian Art, rock cut architecture was more of a sculpture than architecture. Buddhist and Jain monuments were prodded as a result of rock cut architecture. Inside these structures - windows, balconies and gates were carved out. The Rathas at Mahabalipuram are one of the finest examples of this style of architecture.

## POST INDEPENDENCE ARCHITECTURE

Post independence, master architect Le Corbusier created the City Beautiful, Chandigarh. In what was the first and the only planned city of the country, modern architecture received its footing here. Corbusier’s influence was further on also seen in a number of other buildings in India. Ahmedabad was coming up in its own ways with some buildings to reckon with. Delhi was refurbished where a number of projects were started – housing, pavilions. Projects like the Asiad Village, the Bahai Temple were some of the achievements.

## MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Post independence also proved to be a daunting task for the architects, who were left at a junction of basking in the glory of the past or lunging forward with new-fangled concepts. To some extent, architects were successful in creating an architecture which could define the post-independence era. But sadly even today the metropolitans in the city are represented or known by buildings which were made before independence- Victoria Terminus and the Gateway of India symbolize Mumbai, Kolkata is known by the Victoria Memorial, New Delhi by Rashtrapati Bhavan and Chennai by the Victoria Memorial Hall.



Modern architecture in India is referred to the modern way of thinking. Right from commercial architecture, urban design and redevelopment, low cost architecture to housing, institutional, industrial and sensitive issues like conservation; all have acquired an exceptional connotation.

**Late Achyut Kanvinde** has been regarded a pioneer of the modern movement in India. His influence on the wide use of flexible concrete column and beam grid in India has been much acclaimed. However, his main contribution to India's built environment remains giving priority to people's need over imposing intentions of designers. The Iskon Temple and National Institute of Bank Management at Pune are some of his hallmark architecture.

**Laurie Baker** was renowned for his initiatives in cost effective architecture in India. His architecture has been associated with brick (largely exposed), landscaped courts, jaalis, traditional Indian sloping roofs. He did profess that an architect's design responsibility is realised when the user is not just kept in mind but understood by his manner of living, within the space as well as in the regional spirit of collective growth, in the physical as well as time frames.

Traditional architecture has become synonym with **Raj Rewal**. His buildings have a distinguishing look owing to their trademark pink-red image and the use of natural stones especially sandstone. His work is not a replication but a subtle reiteration of the past on its way to contemporary architecture. **B V Doshi's** works are monitored as an essential gauge of Asian identity in the global milieu. He is better known for his preference of exposed materials and subdued natural tones.

**Charles Correa** has brought forth a skilful use of colour in Indian architecture. His architectural vocabulary implies adeptness in comprehending traditional architecture and in merging the modern typology with South Asian elements. The visual imagery and treatment of surfaces brings an element of youthfulness in all his projects. His famous project namely Cidade de Goa shows his artistic play of light and shade on the walls.

**Christopher Charles Benninger** has brought to light the use of materials in their natural form. Laying stress on the context of his design, his creations marry nature with buildings.

## CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

Contemporary Indian architecture to a large extent is reflected in its new boom of corporate campuses, shopping malls, and skyscrapers, many of which reflect a growing trend of sustainable architecture. It can at best be defined by architects who have induced a multi disciplinary approach to architecture which includes consideration of climate, ecology, energy efficiency, engineering and programming skills, use of 3d for better visualization, alternative technology and lost cost architecture.

**Hafeez Contractor** is associated with the term 'high rises'. Having brought the culture of skyscrapers to India, he has taken a lead in the globalization process as far as Indian architecture is concerned. His buildings speak of modern materials, bold forms and innovative techniques. **Prem Nath** with his creative construction marvels believes in functionality and sustainability. His eye for nuances has simulated impressive paraphernalia of projects from all quarters. His recent works have focused on environment friendly architecture. **Karan Grover** is credited for giving 'green buildings' their due recognition in India. His belief in the heritage and built landscape of India surfaces out in his projects. His thorough reinterpretation of vernacular building elements assimilated in the contemporary scenario has resulted in energy efficient buildings. Architecture hasn't been able to boast of many women counterparts. **Brinda Somaya** with her traditional design idioms and conservation as her focus has held on her own in this field. Courtyards, corridors, jaalis, low wind sills, high ceilings and pergolas mark her contemporary spaces. **Rajiv Kathpalia's** tryst with new forms which are worthy of a new India brings out the rare combination of the past and an impending future. His imaginations rooted in India interspersed with technological innovations have brought him a lot of glory. **Kamal Malik**, reverberating with 'corporate architecture' delves on concepts for his designs through an in-depth study of the need, climate, material and society. Proficient in handling huge urban forms,

his buildings convey an articulate individualistic style. **Bimal Patel** has been credited of using elements growing out of an Indo - Islamic architectural heritage. The use of courtyards, corridors with an intricate work of light and shade form the base for his climate responsive designs. **Shahrukh Mistry's** designs speak of traditionalism combined with green standards and sustainability. His use of granite to break the monotony of brick housing has been an important segment in Indian architecture. Simple spatial diagrams and a unique solution reflected in the structure, spaces and form are the hallmarks of **Sanjay Mohe's** architecture. Loud architecture is alien to him; it's the quietness and the functionality in his buildings which invite you inside. **Dean de Cruz and Gerard da Cunha** are crucial names in Goa's architecture. Dean De Cruz has stuck to climatic conditions, open plans and cost efficiency as his criterion for design whereas Gerard da Cunha has attained credibility in his use of natural stone and is known for his eco-friendly, site specific and vernacular architecture. **Vidur Bharadwaj** with his penchant for green and sustainable buildings has carved a many wonders for the country which have attained significance with regards to world architecture too.

**Manit and Sonali Rastogi** can be accredited of having given birth to a new dialect of architecture with their out-of-the-box thinking aptitude. Contemporary architecture forms and a high tech style could be attributed to their camaraderie with technology. Innovation would be solitude without mentioning **Sanjay Puri**. Dominating the commercial and hospitality sectors, his architectural dialect is a mélange of planes, shapes, materials, colours and textures. **Nisha Mathew and Soumitro Ghosh** have carved out an impeccable stature in Indian architecture, representative in the global arena. Their concepts seem to emerge out of rich brain storming sessions which lead to pure functionality dealt with expertise. Their architecture speaks of a certain modernist language equipped with spatial possibilities and fine crafting. **Sandeep Khosla** with his penchant for residential architecture and interiors has sensitized architecture in this area by giving emphasis on the planning and topography of the site adaged by the smaller nuances of a home, rich materials, minimalism worthy of an international style. **Anupama Kundoo** could

well be a synonym of energy efficient, labour efficient and sustainable technologies of construction. Her use of local materials integrated with a global sensibility brings forth a new profound architecture. **Gurjit Singh Matharoo** can be credited with the amelioration of the 'Indian Modernist Architecture'. His approach to architecture reflecting an enthusiastic zeal for a futuristic workplace is as infectious as his penchant for product designing. **Kalhan Mathoo** with his radical thinking has given birth to a firm which believes in a futuristic approach to design. The firm's freshness full of youthfulness brings a sweeping departure in the Indian architectural scene.

The vocation of architecture in India has produced a mélange of illustrious professionals whose holistic approach to the profession has created a revolutionary world. With all their efforts, Indian architecture has conjured up to become an invigorating, communicative field encircling all the ingenuity rampant in the country.

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