Chapter – V
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MAIN FEATURES OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF SIND

With the coming of the Muslims, the Islamic Architecture developed in Sind. The buildings of the Islamic period were religious as well as secular. The mosques were important of all the religious buildings. It was a duty of the rulers and the elite class to construct and maintain mosques and Madrasas.¹

In Mansura, we find the evidence of Jama Masjid. It was rectangular in shape. Besides Jama Masjid, Henry cousens found the evidence of three mosques. Excavations have also revealed two other buildings at Mansura, which described as the state assembly and Dar-al-Imara.² From the fourteenth century, Thatta was the chief centre of Islamic learning, fine arts and handicrafts, as well as a flourishing centre for trade. Besides the economic prosperity and cultural achievement, Thatta had various monuments, buildings, mosques, madrasas, domes, arches and gateways designed in different architectural styles.³

². PHIC (68th Session), pp. 279-80.
With the coming of the Arghun and the Tarkhan, belonged to Turkish tribes, came from Central, Asia in Sind, they brought the new Timurid style, new methods of building construction and new forms of architecture. The main features of the buildings of Arghun and Tarkhan are as follows:

First, the brick style was the dominant character of the buildings.\(^4\) Second, avoid and domical and arcuate forms, were their ancestral inheritance.\(^5\) Third, was the glittering tiles. It used in adding colours to the buildings. The tiles were blue, white, purple, light green, yellow or floral in multicolours. In tiles flowers and leaf were outline from one colour and backgrounds were filled from other colours.\(^6\) The tiles of Sind were influenced by the Persian, Iranian and Chinese tradition but the Persian tradition was more dominant. Besides the influence of these traditions Sind had its own characteristics. It had geometrical and styled foliage and made of hard backed terracotta.\(^7\)

The bricks were used in the construction of the buildings of Thatta. The dark red bricks, especially used in surface. Besides red bricks, plain and enamel faced bricks were also used in the buildings of Thatta. The

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use of bricks could be seen in the tomb of Diwan Shurfa Khan, Baqi Beg Uzbek and Fateh Khan’s sister.  

Stone buildings were also the dominant feature of Thatta. It was a place where stone was easily available and stone carver’s art was an old tradition in Thatta. Besides these features, the technique of dome construction was also an important feature. It improved and a new style of flat topped grave cenotaphs developed, which had tall headstones. 

For the convenience of the reader Dani divided the stone buildings into many categories but here we will take up few significant buildings. The stone building of Thatta were famous for their carving and it called ‘lace work in stone.’ In stone buildings first, was the tomb of Isa Khan I, the founder of the Tarkhan dynasty. His tomb show a new departure in the stone carver’s art of Thatta. The main attraction of the building was the small square enclosure. Under the enclosure in the middle, having six stone graves. Among them main was of Isa Khan I, two of children and the rest of others. Besides the tomb of Isa Khan I, a number of other tombs came under the category of tomb enclosures such as tomb of Mirza

10. Ibid, pp. 111-12 (He divided the stone building according to their nature like single domes square tomb, tomb enclosures, tomb pavilions and grave (cenotaph).
Saleh, tomb of Baqi Beg Tarkhan etc.\textsuperscript{13} The other important tomb was Mirza Beg's tomb which deserved attention for its elaborate construction.\textsuperscript{14} Besides these tombs, the most prominent and excellent tombs of Thatta were Isa Khan II and Jan Baba. They had significant position in Thatta architecture because the style of both tombs based on Gujarati style and the main feature of Gujarati style was a central nucleus square domed hall, supported on pillars, surrounded by pillared galleries on all the four sides. Second similarity was double pillars, one on the top of the others had been used in the tomb and was more prominent in the central frontage of all the four sides. The third similarity could be seen in the decorated flat stones that roof the galleries. All these things were the prominent features of Gujarati buildings and also developed in the tomb of Isa Khan II and Jan Baba.\textsuperscript{15} The tomb of Isa Khan II was constructed throughout of a buff-coloured sandstones brought from Kathiawad.\textsuperscript{16} In front of the tomb of Isa Khan II, there were the tombs of the ladies. Their graves covered with Quranic verses and Persian writings.\textsuperscript{17}

Except the stone buildings in Thatta, there were also various brick buildings. First was the tomb of Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan. Main feature of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] Idris Siddiqi, op.cit., p. 15.
\item[16] Henry Cousens, op.cit., p. 118.
\item[17] Ibid, pp. 118-19.
\end{footnotes}
the tomb was the use of glazed dark blue and unglazed red bricks which represented a high standard of Sindi craftsmanship.\textsuperscript{18}

Next important tomb was Diwan Shurfa Khan’s tomb. It was one of the most colourful building of Makli hill. It had a square structure, surmounted by a dome in Persian style, covered with light blue and white tiles.\textsuperscript{19}

After the annexation of Thatta in the Mughal empire, thirty-seven Mughal governors were appointed in Thatta. During their stay in Thatta, several tombs and mosques were constructed.

Mir Qasim Namkin received Bhakkar Sarkar in 1595-96 where, he constructed Sufia-i-Safa (platform of purity). He also constructed a mosque in Shukkar and also built ‘Idgah mosques’ in the town of Lohri and Shukkar.\textsuperscript{20} Besides Qasim Namkin, Mohammad Masum Bhakkari built Sitasar at Shukkar. He also constructed his tomb at Shukkar with a high minar. Under his tomb there were the graves of his father, brother and himself. Quranic verses were written on the graves.\textsuperscript{21} Besides these buildings, Jami masjid or Shahjahani mosque was the most prominent mosque. The construction of the mosque started in 1644 AD, by Nawab Abdul Baqa Amir Khan at the order of Shahjahan. The tiles work of the

\textsuperscript{18} Idris Siddiqi, op.cit., pp. 10-11.
\textsuperscript{19} Henry Cousens, op.cit., pp. 117-18.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, pp. 149-50.
tomb attracted the attention of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent. The styled floral patterns were similar to the Kashi work of Iran which existed in seventeenth century in Iran.22

Another distinguished feature of the mosque was that minarets were not found in any corner as they found in other mosques. It had only one main high dome in the prayer chamber while other mosques had three bulbous domes which covered the prayer chamber and presented a monumental feature from the courtyard.23

Next prominent mosque was khizri mosque, built by Nawab Abdul Razzaq Muzaffar Khan in 1613 AD. The main characteristic of the mosque was that it had three airshoots leadings air into windows. Similarly the side bays, which had single mihrab each had single air shoot. Such type of features were commonly found in the building of Sind.24

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