

## 2. MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

### 2.1. Literary Traditions of Medieval India

#### 2.1.1. Development of Persian Literature

**Persian literature** in India evolved from **administrative use** to a significant medium of **cultural exchange** and **artistic expression**.

##### Early Beginnings (11th-13th Century)

- **Ghaznavids Dynasty:** **Persian** became prominent for **literature** and **administration**, with **Lahore** as a key center, attracting poets like **Firdausi**.
- **Ghurids Dynasty:** Produced **Persian prose** (genealogies, histories) after establishing Delhi in 1192.
- **Delhi Sultanate:** **Persian** solidified as the language of **governance** and saw an influx of **Persian scholars**.

##### Expansion (14th-16th Century)

- **Timurids:** **Persian** absorbed local influences, adapting to regional styles.
- **Regional Courts:** **Persian literature** thrived in **Kashmir**, **Gujarat**, and **Malwa**.
- **Translations:** **Sanskrit** texts, including epics, were translated into **Persian** by figures like **Zia Nakkshabi**.

Important Persian Translations			
Name of Book	Sirr-i-Akbar	Majma-ul-Bahrain	Bhagavad Gita
Core Content	52 Upanishads	Hindu and Islamic philosophies	Bhagavad Gita
Key Focus	Interfaith philosophical dialogue	Interfaith dialogue and unity	Cultural and philosophical exchange

##### Mughal Era (16th-18th Century)

- **Akbar's Patronage:** **Persian** became the official language, boosting its cultural status.
- **Literary Growth:** Works like **Jahangir's Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri** flourished.
- **Sanskrit Translations:** **Dara Shikoh** translated major **Sanskrit** texts into **Persian**, merging **Hindu** and **Islamic** traditions.

#### Evolution of Urdu Language and Literature

- **Emergence:** Urdu developed in the **Delhi region** around the **12th century**, evolving from local dialects and the languages of Muslim conquerors, primarily **Persian**, **Arabic**, and **Turkish**. Initially called "**Hindavi**" or "**Rekhta**", it served as a **lingua franca** for communication.
- **Linguistic Roots:** Urdu shares a similar **grammatical structure** with **Hindi** but differs in **vocabulary**, with Urdu incorporating more **Persian** and **Arabic** terms, while Hindi includes more **Sanskrit** words.

#### Literary Evolution of Urdu

- **Sufi Influence:** **Sufi saints** like **Nizamuddin Auliya** and poets such as **Amir Khusrau** used a blend of languages in their poetry, promoting Urdu as a language of **spiritual expression**.
- **Early Works:** In the **14th** and **15th centuries**, poets like **Amir Khusrau** and **Mulla Wajhi** focused on themes of **mysticism** and **love**, helping establish Urdu's literary presence.
- **Mughal Court Patronage:** Under the **Mughals**, **Urdu** flourished with poets like **Ghalib**, **Mir Taqi Mir**, and **Zauq**, who thrived under royal patronage.
- **Golden Age:** The **18th** and **19th centuries** marked the **golden age** of **Urdu poetry**, with poets like **Ghalib** and prose writers like **Premchand** making significant contributions.

## 2.2. Bhakti and Sufi Movements

### 2.2.1. Bhakti Movement

The **Bhakti movement**, originating in South India between the **7th and 10th centuries**, was a significant **socio-religious development**. It emphasized direct and emotional **personal devotion** to a chosen deity, moving away from rigid rituals and caste distinctions.

This movement saw its **most substantial growth** during the **early medieval period**.

#### 2.2.1.1. Key Features of Bhakti Movement

##### Rise and Spread of the Bhakti Movement

##### Emergence in South India

The movement began in Tamil-speaking regions between the 7th and 10th centuries.

##### Early Proponents

Alvars and Nayanars were early devotees of Vishnu and Shiva.

##### Spread to Karnataka

The movement expanded to Karnataka by the 12th and 13th centuries.

##### Spread to Maharashtra

The movement also reached Maharashtra during the same period.

##### Spread to North India

By the 15th century, the movement had spread to North India.




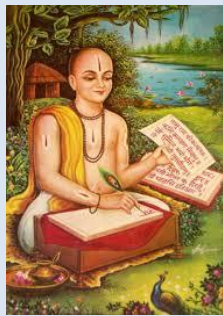
##### Contributions of Saints

Saints like Ramananda, Kabir, and Guru Nanak promoted personal devotion.

Aspect	Details
<b>Personal Devotion and Salvation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bhakti movement introduced a <b>transformative approach to spirituality</b>, focusing on the personal and direct relationship between the devotee and God.</li> <li>This connection <b>transcended social and caste barriers</b>, promoting an inclusive and egalitarian spiritual practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Relationship with God</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This principle was a <b>radical departure from traditional Hindu practices</b>, which often restricted spiritual knowledge and practices to the varna based system.</li> <li>Bhakti saints like Kabir, Guru Nanak, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu preached that God is accessible to all who seek with genuine devotion, thus <b>democratizing spiritual practice</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Rejection of Ritualism and Priestly Intermediaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central to the Bhakti movement was the <b>rejection of elaborate rituals and the mediation of priests</b>.</li> <li>Bhakti saints believed that <b>true devotion and personal devotion</b> as the <b>true path to divine connection</b>.</li> <li>This rejection of ritualism helped make <b>spiritual practices more accessible to common people</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Emphasis on Love and Devotion as Paths to Salvation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bhakti movement placed a strong emphasis on <b>love (prema) and devotion (bhakti)</b> as the primary means to attain salvation through personal prayer, singing hymns, and engaging in community worship.</li> <li>The movement's <b>literature is replete with poetic expressions</b> of love for the Divine, reflecting this core tenet.</li> </ul>

#### 2.2.1.2. Bhakti Literature

**Bhakti literature**, a key feature of the Bhakti movement, was primarily written in **vernacular languages**. This characteristic greatly facilitated its widespread adoption and impact. Some important regional literature that emerged from this movement includes:


Region	Authors/ Saints	Description	Image
Tamil	Alvars and Nayanars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Alvars</b>, devotees of Vishnu, composed a vast collection of hymns. These were compiled into the "<b>Nalayira Divya Prabandham</b>," which served as a foundational text for Vaishnavism in the region.</li> <li>The <b>Nayanars</b>, passionate devotees of Shiva, created their own corpus of hymns known as the "<b>Tevaram</b>". This collection became central to the Shaivite devotional tradition.</li> <li>Crucially, both the Alvars and Nayanars utilized <b>everyday Tamil language and relatable imagery</b> in their compositions.</li> <li>This deliberate choice of language <b>democratized spiritual knowledge</b>, making <b>complex theological concepts accessible to a broader population</b>.</li> </ul>	 <p>Alvar Saint</p>  <p>Nayanar Saints</p>
Marathi	Sant Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dnyaneshwar's "Dnyaneshwari"</b> provided a profound Marathi commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, making its complex philosophical and spiritual teachings accessible to a wider regional audience beyond Sanskrit scholars.</li> <li><b>Namdev's Abhangas</b> in Marathi served as a powerful medium for expressing deep personal devotion to <b>Vithoba</b>, significantly contributing to the popularization of the <b>Varkari</b> tradition and fostering a vibrant devotional culture among the common people.</li> <li><b>Tukaram's Abhangas</b>, characterized by their use of simple Marathi, emphasized pure, unadulterated devotion and love for God..</li> </ul>	 <p>Sant Namdev</p>
Hindi	Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas, Ravidas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Kabir's dohas</b> analytically blended Hindu and Islamic ideas, often employing a direct, enigmatic language including "<b>Ulat Bansi</b>" (upside-down sayings), to challenge religious orthodoxy and promote a syncretic path.</li> <li><b>Tulsidas's "Ramacharitamanasa"</b> served as a monumental retelling of the Ramayana in the accessible</li> </ul>	 <p>Tulsidas</p>




		<p><b>Awadhi dialect</b>, democratizing the epic narrative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Surdas's "Sursagar"</b> provided a rich devotional exploration of Krishna's life, using vernacular poetry to articulate profound spiritual experiences.</li> <li>• <b>Ravidas's hymns</b> critically engaged with social issues, focusing on radical social equality alongside intense personal devotion.</li> </ul>	
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### 2.2.1.3. Impact and Influence of Bhakti

- **Equality Before God:** Bhakti saints emphasized that in the eyes of God, all human beings are equal. This fundamental tenet of the Bhakti movement directly challenged the hierarchical structure of the caste system. For instance:
  - **Kabir:** A prominent Bhakti poet, Kabir **vocally opposed caste discrimination**. He proclaimed that **true devotion to God does not recognize caste distinctions**.
  - **Ravidas:** Born into a lower caste, Ravidas used his devotional songs to **advocate for social equality and criticize caste-based discrimination**. His poetry often highlighted the idea that spiritual purity and devotion are far more important than one's caste.
- **Rejection of Rituals and Priestly Intermediaries:** The Bhakti movement's rejection of elaborate rituals and the mediation of priests was a significant step towards social equality.
  - **Guru Nanak:** The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak emphasized the oneness of God and the brotherhood of mankind. He preached against the caste system and ritualistic practices, promoting a direct and personal relationship with the Divine.
- **Inclusive Community Practices:** Bhakti **gatherings and practices were inherently inclusive**, bringing together people from different castes and backgrounds to participate in communal worship and singing of devotional hymns.
  - **Ramananda:** A Bhakti saint who was **instrumental in bridging the gap between the North and South Indian Bhakti traditions**. He accepted disciples from all castes, including the lower castes, thus promoting an **inclusive spiritual community**.
- **Promotion of Vernacular Languages:** The use of vernacular languages in Bhakti literature made spiritual **teachings accessible to a broader audience**, including those who were not literate in Sanskrit, the language of the elite.
- **Legacy and Impact:** The **egalitarian principles** of the Bhakti movement influenced later social and religious reforms. The movement's emphasis on equality and direct devotion contributed to the formation of new religious traditions like Sikhism, which continued to challenge caste-based discrimination.

### 2.2.1.4. Prominent Bhakti Saints in News

Saint	Birth and Early Life	Teachings and Contributions	Legacy and Relevance Today
<b>Ramanuja</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Born around <b>1017</b> in <b>Sriperumbudur</b>, Tamil Nadu.</li> <li>• Displayed early signs of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established the <b>Vishishtadvaita</b> (qualified non-dualism) school of Vedanta.</li> <li>• Major works include the <b>Vedartha-</b></li> </ul>	<b>Ramanuja</b> championed Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), emphasizing a direct, inclusive path to

	<p>theological acumen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Studied under Advaita Vedanta but developed his own philosophical system.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Samgraha, Shri Bhashya, and Bhagavad Gita Bhashya.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoted bhakti as a means to <b>attain moksha</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>spiritual liberation through devotion (bhakti) for all castes. His teachings continue to inspire <b>social justice, religious harmony, and egalitarian movements</b> in modern India.</p>
<p><b>Shankaracharya</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born around <b>788 CE in Kalady, Kerala.</b></li> <li>Mastered the Vedas at a fairly young age.</li> <li>Renounced worldly life early and studied under Govinda Bhagavatpada.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Consolidated</b> the doctrine of <b>Advaita Vedanta</b> (non-dualism).</li> <li>Key works include <b>commentaries</b> on the <b>Upanishads</b>, the <b>Brahma Sutras</b>, and the <b>Bhagavad Gita</b>.</li> <li>Emphasized the unity of <b>Atman and Brahman</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>His philosophy <b>fosters spiritual harmony, guides self-inquiry</b>, and remains a timeless framework for <b>addressing modern existential dilemmas</b> amidst materialism.</p>
<p><b>Eknath</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born in <b>1533 in Paithan, Maharashtra.</b></li> <li>A prominent Marathi saint, scholar, and poet known for his deep devotion and contributions to Marathi literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known for the <b>Bhavarth Ramayana</b>, a Marathi commentary on the Ramayana.</li> <li>Composed numerous <b>Abhangas</b> emphasizing devotion to <b>Vithoba</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>He promoted <b>heartfelt devotion, championed social inclusivity</b>, and enriched Marathi literature. His message of love and equality continues to inspire social harmony and spiritual upliftment today.</p>
<p><b>Tulsidas</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born in 1511 in Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>Known as the author of the Ramcharitmanas, a retelling of the Ramayana in Awadhi.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tulsidas's works <b>integrate</b> various aspects of Hindu philosophy, including devotion (<b>bhakti</b>), duty (<b>dharma</b>), and righteousness (<b>karmayoga</b>).</li> <li>Other than Ramcharitmanas he composed famous works like <b>Hanuman</b></li> </ul>	<p>His emphasis on devotion to Lord Rama, <b>moral living, and the transformative power of faith</b>, have profoundly shaped popular Hindu practices and offer ethical guidance in contemporary India.</p>



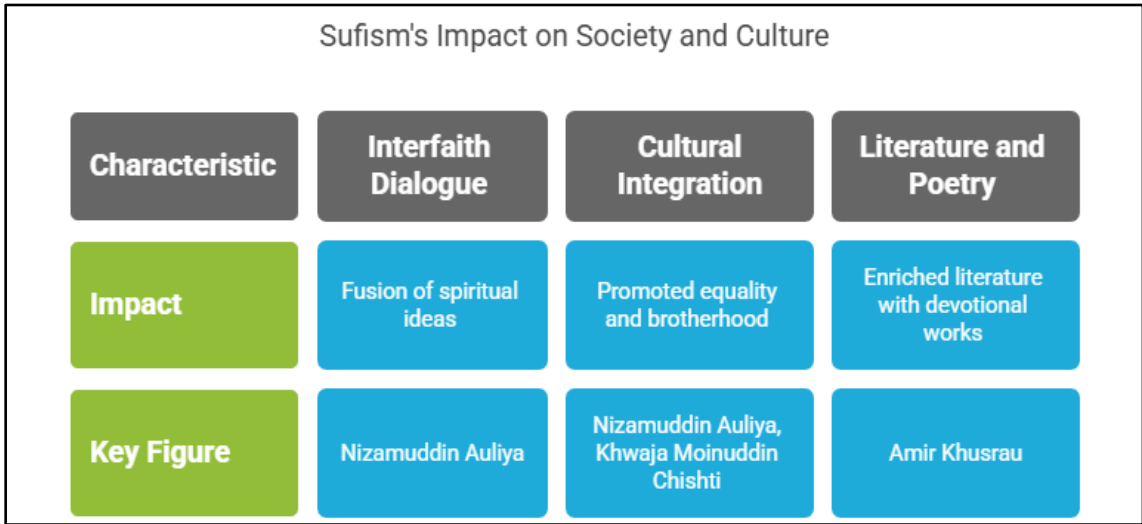
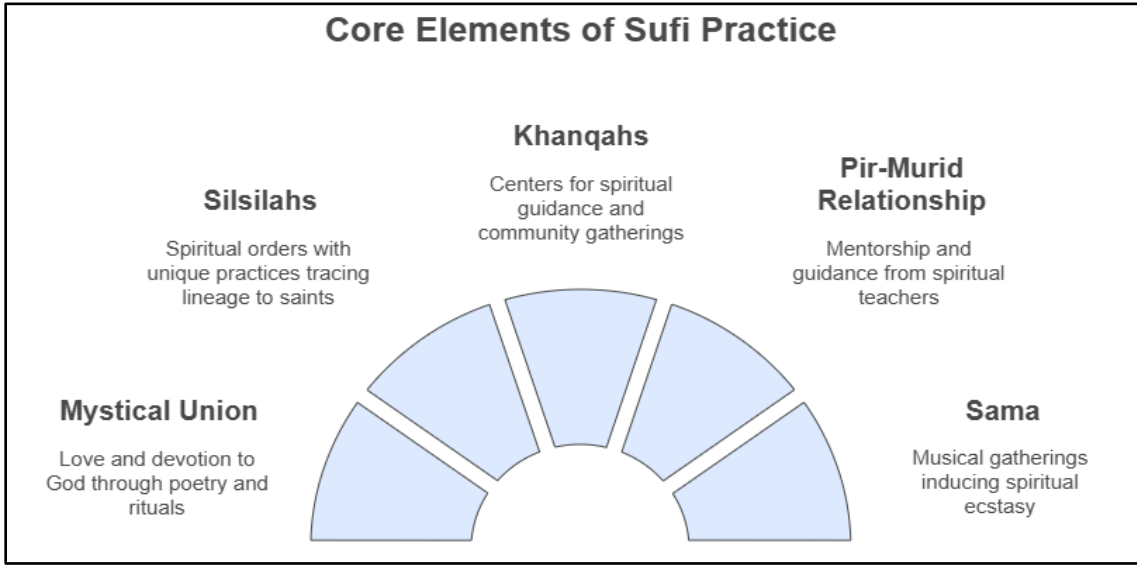
		Chalisa, Gitavali and Kavitavali, etc.	
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Student Notes:

2.2.2. Sufi Movement

The rise of the Sufi movement in medieval India was deeply intertwined with the cultural context of **Islamic expansion** and its **integration** with **local traditions**.

- As Islam spread through trade and interactions from the 7th century onwards, the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century created a stable environment for Sufi saints to thrive.
- Sufism emphasized mysticism and spirituality**, aligning with existing Indian spiritual traditions like Hinduism and Buddhism.



2.2.2.1. Amir Khusrau: Innovator of Persian Literature and Music

Amir **Khusrau** (1253-1325), an Indian-born Turk, is renowned as the "**Tuti-i Hind**" or "**Parrot of India**" for his pioneering role in shaping **Persian literature** within the Indian context. He blended traditional **Persian** themes with **Indian elements**, creating a unique cultural synthesis.

- Poetry Innovation:** Khusrau experimented with literary styles such as **Iham** (double entendre) and **Khayal** (poetic imagination). He used the **masnavi** format to craft historical narratives and developed a new style of **epistolography**, contributing uniquely to Persian literature.

- **Hindavi Poetry:** Khusrau is credited with advancing **Hindavi** poetry, a precursor to **Hindi** and **Urdu**. He wrote in a mixed form of Hindi, which evolved into **Khari Boli** (Hindustani). His **Rekhta** poetry, alternating between **Persian** and **Hindi**, influenced the development of **Urdu**.

Khusrau's major works include:

- **Nuh Sipihr:** Celebrates India's cultural and intellectual heritage.
- **Miftahul Futuh:** Describes the military campaigns of **Jalaluddin Khalji**.
- **Qiran us Sa'dain:** A historical romance.
- **Tughlaqnama:** Chronicles **Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's** victory.

Khusrau also contributed to the development of **Sufi devotional music** such as **Qawwali** and the **Tarana**, blending **Persian** and **Indian** musical styles. His innovations laid the foundation for modern South Asian music.

Khusrau's writings offer valuable insights into the **Delhi Sultanate**, documenting courtly life, political events, and Sufi practices, solidifying his legacy as a key figure in Indian literature and music.

#### The Jahan-e-Khusrau Festival: A Celebration of Sufi Heritage

The **Jahan-e-Khusrau Festival**, marking its 25th edition, celebrated **Sufi music** and its role in India's **pluralistic culture**. Commemorating **Hazrat Amir Khusrau**, the festival highlighted the integration of **Sufi traditions** with India's diverse spiritual and cultural heritage.



- The **Prime Minister of India**, inaugurating the festival, emphasized how **Sufi music** is a **shared heritage** that transcends religious boundaries.
- Quoting renowned Sufi poets like **Khusrau**, **Rumi**, and **Nizamuddin Auliya**, he highlighted their contributions to both **Islamic** and **Hindu** traditions.
- The **PM** also spoke of the **similarities** between **Sufi chants** and **Upanishadic thought**, emphasizing that both promote spiritual love. The festival, through performances like **Nazar-e-Krishna**, showcased the deep fusion of **Indian** and **Sufi musical traditions**.

## 2.3. Sultanate Period Architecture

During the **Sultanate period** in India, from the **13th to the 16th century**, architecture underwent significant changes.

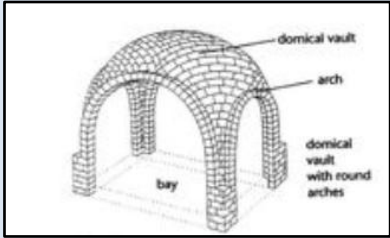
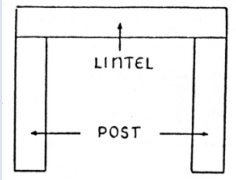
- The **arrival of the Turks** introduced new styles and techniques, such as the **use of arches and domes**.
- They brought a **distinctive decorative style** that **avoided human and animal figures**, instead using **geometric** and **floral designs**.

The architectural innovations of this period set the stage for the later Mughal architecture and have left a lasting impact on India's architectural heritage.


### 2.3.1. Key Architectural Elements Introduced by the Turks

Student Notes:

#### Arches and Domes

Features	Summary
Introduction and Widespread Use of Arches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The introduction of <b>true arches and domes</b> was a <b>revolutionary change</b> in Indian architecture due to Turks. It allowed for <b>large, open interiors without numerous columns</b> in the architecture.</li> <li><b>Arches</b> provided flexibility in design, while <b>domes</b> added structural stability and aesthetic appeal.</li> <li>Prior to the Turks, Indian architecture used <b>post-and-lintel</b> construction, limiting structural size and scope.</li> </ul>  
Use of Lime Mortar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Turks introduced <b>lime mortar</b> for constructing arches and domes, providing necessary <b>strength and durability</b> for complex structures.</li> <li>This innovation enabled the <b>creation of larger and more intricate buildings</b>.</li> </ul>

#### Decorative Style

Features	Summary
Avoidance of Human and Animal Figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Islamic art during the Sultanate period <b>avoided depicting sentient beings</b> due to religious beliefs.</li> <li>Instead, artists <b>focused on geometric patterns, floral designs, and calligraphy</b>, allowing for beautiful works without figural representation.</li> </ul>
Use of Arabesque technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floral motifs, or "<b>Arabesque</b>," feature <b>interwoven stems, leaves, and flowers</b>, were used extensively in Sultanate architecture and other art forms.</li> <li><b>Calligraphy</b> was used to adorn architectural elements and objects with <b>Quranic verses</b>.</li> <li><b>Arabic script</b> served as both a <b>religious expression</b> and a <b>decorative element</b>, integrated into geometric and floral compositions</li> <li>They often <b>incorporated Hindu motifs</b> such as the <b>bel, swastika, and lotus</b> showcasing a <b>fusion of Islamic and Hindu traditions</b></li> </ul> 



### Legacy of Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah Suri's reign (1540–1545) left a **profound legacy** on **Indian administration, economy, and infrastructure**.

- **Administrative Reforms:** Introduced a **centralized administration** with a hierarchical structure of **provinces (Sarkars)** and **districts (Parganas)**, which influenced later **Mughal governance**.
- **Revenue System:** Implemented a **fair land revenue system** based on **land measurement** and **fertility**, eliminating intermediaries and ensuring direct contact with **cultivators**. This system influenced **Akbar's revenue reforms**.
- **Currency and Economy:** Standardized **currency** by introducing the **silver Rupiya** and a **tri-metallic coinage system**, stabilizing **trade** and **taxation**.
- **Infrastructure:** Built and improved **roads**, notably the **Grand Trunk Road** from **Bengal to Kabul**, and established **sarais (rest houses)** to promote **trade, travel, and communication**.
- **Justice and Law:** Enforced **impartial justice, strict law and order**, and provided **stipends** for the **poor**, earning a reputation for fairness.
- **Military Organization:** Maintained a strong, centrally controlled **army** and constructed **forts** for **defense**, reducing reliance on **feudal lords**.
- **Peasant Welfare:** Protected **peasants** from **army excesses**, provided **relief** during **famines**, and encouraged **agricultural development**.
- **Legacy:** Sher Shah's **reforms** laid the foundation for **Mughal administration**, especially under **Akbar**, and had a lasting impact on **Indian governance and economy**.

## 2.4. Mughal Architecture (Indo-Islamic Architecture)

Mughal architecture is famous for its **beauty and intricate details**. It combines elements from **Persian, Indian, and Islamic traditions**, creating a unique style. This architectural style began in the **16th century** with the Mughal Empire and introduced new building techniques and designs that emphasized **symmetry and elegance**.

### 2.4.1. Key Architectural Features

Feature	Description
<b>Symmetry and Balance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mughal architecture emphasizes symmetry and balance, often using <b>geometric layouts</b>.</li> <li>• Gardens, palaces, and mausoleums feature carefully <b>proportioned designs</b>, reflecting harmony and order. The Taj Mahal exemplifies this perfect symmetry.</li> </ul>
<b>Charbagh Layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This <b>quadrilateral garden layout</b> is divided by walkways or water channels, <b>symbolizing paradise</b> in Islamic tradition.</li> <li>• It is a <b>hallmark of Mughal gardens</b>, as seen in Humayun's Tomb and the Taj Mahal's surrounding gardens. Mughal gardens and palaces are adorned with <b>elaborate water features, including fountains, reflecting pools, and canals</b>. These elements enhance the beauty of the spaces and <b>provide a cooling effect</b>. Example: <b>The Shalimar Gardens</b></li> </ul>
<b>Use of Marble and Red Sandstone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>White marble and red sandstone</b> create <b>striking visual contrasts</b> in Mughal architecture.</li> </ul>
<b>Decorative Inlay Work (Pietra Dura)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pietra dura involves <b>inlaying precious stones</b> into marble to create intricate floral and geometric designs. The Taj Mahal's decorative inlay work is famous for its beauty and precision.</li> </ul>