



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF MUGHAL GARDENS OF KASHMIR

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Ishfaq Khurshid Dar

Department of History Glocal University Uttar-pradesh

ABSTRACT

Kashmir as a part of mighty Mughal Empire enjoyed a high place in the hearts of nature loving Mughal emperors. The Valley experienced the rule of some great Mughal rulers of the dynasty like Akbar, Jahangir, Shah-i-jahan and Aurangzeb. Mughals build many gardens in Kashmir, in these gardens large number of constructional works were done by Mughals, such as pavillions. These gardens served as the place of beauty and enjoyment for the emperor and nobles. These gardens were used for marriage ceremonies, drink parties etc.

INTRODUCTION;

The Gardning tradition in Kashmir was started by Akbar after he conquered Kashmir in October 6 1586 from local Chak dynasty ruler Yousaf Shah Chak. Mughal Gardens are built on the model of Timurid Gardens. These Timurid gardens are the Char-bagh gardens, and the Mughals introduced the Char-bagh style in Kashmir. Mughals laid the Gardens in a systematic way. As the Char-bagh style was originated from Persia, Char-means four and Bagh means Gardens, means a Garden is divided into four parts by water canals. Char-bagh is actually a representation of Quranic Paradise. These Charbagh gardens are also called as Quranic Gardens.

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS;

Akbar after conquering Kashmir from a local ruler, started the work of Building a fort and a garden inside it. After him, Jahangir laid many gardens in Kashmir like the Famous Garden of Verinag, His son, Shah-jahan also built many gardens in Kashmir, it was during Shah-jahan's time that Char-bagh style touched its zenith in Kashmir. However the Kashmiri Char-bagh gardens are not made in a rigid Char-bagh style, so many modern scholars questioning the use of Char-bagh for these Gardens.

Mughals always chose the beautiful locations for Building Gardens. Sometimes the gardens were built in the middle of cities so that the people will settle near the garden, this led to urbanization. In Kashmir, Mughals mostly selected mountain slopes for Gardens, where it's easy to make a downwards water canal, the best example being *SHALIMAR* garden and *NISHAT* garden in Kashmir. In most of Gardens of Kashmir the main source of water was natural springs, The first example of the gardens irrigated by natural springs in Mughal India comes from Kashmir. Natural springs always provide a sufficient water for the Gardens, that is why Kashmir has witnessed Garden culture from Early times. After the Advent of Mughals Kashmir became a place of Gardens (Gulistan).

The functional aspects of Mughal Gardens are still shrouded in mystery. The Modern scholars are studying history of gardens, but most of these ignored the functional aspects of the Gardens.

The Mughal Gardens created a cultural-zone for the scholars and poets by providing a peaceful and environment full of nature. These Gardens are also used for the various cultural and functional programs, like these gardens are used for the purpose of Marriage parties, wine parties, music parties etc.

These Mughal Gardens became a centre of social and cultural activities and many times they are used for the feast parties, wine parties, Marriage ceremonies, Music parties. In Tuzk-i-Jahangiri, it is mentioned that Jahangir arranged his special Thursday wine and entertainment parties, known as Jashn-i-Mubarakshamba in many Mughal gardens of his Empire. In his

15th regnal year, he organized a *Bazm-i Pyala* (wine party) with his *bandaha-i-khas* (private attendants) at the spring garden of Vernag, in Kashmir. Mughals are always found of parties and entertainment. In the summer evening luxurious feasts were given in the Shalimar garden of Kashmir, where lamps were hung in the branches of Chinars and guests were entertained by dance and music. Mughal noble organized a wine party in the Nishat Bagh of Kashmir, where the garden was bloomed with Jasmine and rose flowers. Jahangir in his *Tuzuk* records that besides the nobles and courtiers, sometimes the wine parties were attended by the ladies of the *harem* also.

Mughal Gardens play an important role in the Development of socio-economic conditions and in the urbanization of Kashmir. Mughal Gardens acted as an agent in the development of urban areas or in other words we can say that Mughal nobles and kings laid out gardens and these gardens provide a way for the urbanization of the cities around the gardens.

In medieval Kashmir the Muslim rulers stressed much on urbanization which showed their love towards urbanization. In medieval Kashmir Zain-ul-Abdeen is credited with building many bridges, tanks, gardens, sarais etc. Mughals started a new age of urbanization which is more stable and is more prosperous in environmental nature.

Many scholars and historians have now focused on the Urbanization by Gardens, Stephen Blake (author of *Shahjahanabad*) is one of those historians, who focused on urbanization and cultural character of Mughal Empire. Another historian, James Wescoat writes that Mughal urbanization changed during the course of time, and the cultural factors effected it a lot. James Wescoat also mentioned that the caretakers of Gardens in Lahore usually settled in communities near the Shalimar Garden of Lahore. In simple terminology Gardens transformed the development of cities near the Gardens. Simply we can say that these people who take care of Gardens used to settle near the gardens, in this way these gardens moved towards urbanization. The basic features for the foundation of a new city and laid-out a garden are usually same. Like most of the Mughal Gardens in Kashmir are situated near the ponds or lakes with the purpose of easy access of water to gardens and the people living around these Gardens.

Kashmir during the Mughal times was a place of Gardens, The author of *TARIKH-I-HASSAN* remarked that there are 61 gardens in Kashmir during Mughal period, He also mentioned that there are various Gardens mentioned in *Masnavis* of Kashmir poets such as Zaffar Khan, Bahissta, Qudsi etc. According to him there are many other gardens build by nobles besides the Shalimar and Verinag gardens. Another traveller Bernier mentioned that almost every house on the

bank of river jehlum has a unique and a well maintained garden in Kashmir. Making of Gardens in kashmir were very common in every period of kashmir as in kashmir the basic needs for building gardens are easily available in large or in simple words we can say that Kashmir as a land of ponds and lakes provides all basic needs for building gardens⁶. Mughal gardens paved a way for the foreigners to settle down in kashmir.

Mughal garden demanded a high level of expenditure on both laying out and maintainance. Its not know that how much Mughals earn from these Gardens and what is the expenditure on it. Only Irfan habbib rightly points out that one can assume the expenditure on these gardens by collecting certain data about animals used and the number of wells dug and the number of staff present on site. Mughal emperor Jahangir once visisted the Nurmanzil Garden (Agra U.P.) He saw there 32 pairs of oxen were employed to draw water⁷. However Bayan-i-khushbui written in 1642 A.D, gives us information about 200 sanctioned but only 62 pair of oxen used for watering⁸. Same is the case with Gardens in kashmir where large number of Animals and humans were used for the laying out of garden. Baaz-i-khushbui gives us information about the maintainance of gardens by the Gardner (Baagbaan). According to him there was a standard ratio, The one gardner or bhagbaan was employed to take care of one *bigha* land to *half bigha* garden⁹. According to him there was a disparity between actual and sanctioned workers. This was because expanditure on gardens was very high that's why its not possible to maintain same workers everywere. Mughal emperor Akbar dupted his noble Mumtaz Khan to constract the garden of fort of nagar nagar or Hari parbat fort on the slopes of Hari parbat hill in srinagar, which he named Bagh-i-noorafza¹⁰. His son Jahangir appointed Khawaja waisi and ordered him to remove all old trees and plant new ones in nagar nagar. Jahangir also directed Khawaja waisi to cleaning of Urraqbandi (footpath by roger the first translator of tuzuk)¹¹ and repairing of old buildings. according to the author of Waqat-i-kashmir provides information that shahjahan spend few months in the year 1639-40 in cleaning and repairing of mughal gardens in Kashmir espically the Shalimar garden¹². According to Salih kambuh in Shahjahan's two and half years the expenditure on the cleaning and repairing of old buildings momuments gardens mosques etc is two hundred and fifty crore. The last great mughal emperor however was not intrested in building Gardens but he still maintained these gardens very well. His brother Dara Shikoh was interested in laying out gardens, he built a garden, padshah-bagh at Anantnag.

Mughal farmans, documents, bainama, chaknama, gives us information about the allotement of land and money to layout the gardens. This money was given to either official or to religious persons. As far as the allotement of money for laying out gardens, Abdul hamid lahari mentioned that six lakh rupees were spend for laying out garden in lahore. In Kashmir Harvan canal was laid out during the reign of Jahangir at the cost of 30000 to water the Nur-afzal Garden in srinagar¹³. The author of Dasturul-amal writed that Shah jahan in a single year spent eight lakh rupees on gardens and buildings. Many other writers gives us information about the money spend on building gardens during Mughal period. Not only the construction expenditures are high but maintenance expenditures are also too high. Mughal emperors also issued orders for the maintenance of old ones. panishment laws were also made for careless gardning persons. The chief of gardens in mughal period was Mir-i-saman, he appointed all the caretakers of gardens and the lowest post was of baagbaan. Provisional Diwan as a financial minister was responsible for the maintainance of gardens. private amusement Gardens were also built by mughals. Nishat Bagh in Kashmir had always remained a private garden since its foundation. Emperor Aurangzeb issued a order that the entry

of common people should b restricted in Garden, thereby reserving them for private use¹⁴. Bhimsen clarifies that uptill this order, the doors of the gardens were always open to all, but now entertainment rights for public were restricted. Later on, this restriction gave birth to bribery. The interested civilians confirm their entry after giving some money to the care takers (*muhafiz*)¹⁵. Private gardens could also be sold and bought by the emperor. *farman* of Aurangzeb (1660 AD) confirms that that the emperor sold the private garden of Bawalidas Ratogi at Delhi for Rs. 5114 AD to Raja Jai Singh since it came under imperial ownership¹⁶. Thus, Bernier's strong belief that all land of India was owned by the king is undoubtedly fits here. However, in course of time, the purchaser could also sell out the gardens as per his wish¹⁷.

CONCLUSION;

The Garden culture in Kashmir started after Akbar conquered Kashmir from a local ruler. After Him, his son Jahangir laid many gardens like the Famous garden of verinag, His son, Shah-jahan also built Many gardens in Kashmir, it was during Shah-jahan's time that Char-bagh style touched it's zenith in Kashmir. Mughals build many gardens in kashmir. Mughal gardens are famous for their natural beauty and mounuments present in them. There are many two types of gardens in Mughal empire, the private gardens(those gardens which are used by the King and some nobles) and other is public gardens (used by general public). Mughal Gardens are used for various purposes, for Marriage ceremonies, for wine, music, dance parties.

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