

## **Famous Baolis of Haryana: A Study of Medieval Period**

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### **Abstract :**

Baolis or Step well were a necessary structure for human life. It is a unique structure and we found fine Baolis from Haryana. Most of Baolis of Haryana built during Sultanate and Mughal period. But maximum Baolis in Haryana, are in bad condition and unprotected.

**Key Words:** Baolis, Medieval, Haryana, Pinangwan, Luhari, Narnaul, Meham, Kaithal, Tohana, Thanesar, Hansi, Water.

In the early medieval history, Muhammad Ghori conquered this area in the Battle of Tarain. After his death Delhi Sultanate was established that ruled many centuries. The earliest reference of “Haryana” occurs in a Sanskrit Inscription dated 1328 AD kept in Delhi Museum. Firoz Shah established a fort of Hisar and Constructed canals. During Sultanate period Ekta of Hansi was famous. Three famous battles of Panipat are historical important. Thus part of Haryana State were very important for Northern Indian Kingdoms. During Sultanate and Mughal period many central and provincial king built many structure in the part of Haryana as fort, palace, mosque, tomb and Baoli . There are many remains of Baoli from Medieval

period as Baoli of Pinangwan. Boali of Luhari, Baolis of Narnaul, Boali of Meham, Baoli of Khaithal, Boali of Tohana, Baoli of Thenesar, Baoli of Hansi.

Baolis or Step wells were built all over the Northern India much before the advent of the Mughals. These are found wherever the wells are deep and the water for from the surface<sup>1</sup>. Baolis were more popular in Gujarat where these were treated more artistically, than they were any where else.<sup>2</sup> No life can be imagined or conceived of without water.

Baoli is an Unique forms of a structure called Step well built with architectural and aesthetic beauty. The Baoli are constructed to preserve and store water, even during the hottest Summer month.<sup>3</sup> As most of the Baoli have lost their inherent function (water supply and storage) and are either deserted or in a broken down condition due to neglect and lack of interest of the people living. Some Baolis of Haryana is describe bellow.

Baoli of Pinangwan :- It is located in Pinangwan Village of Mewat District. Pinangwan is an old and historical village . In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Qazi Dost Mohommad was the Qazi of Pinangwan. Local peoples tells us many stories about him and his family. Near the Khanzada's tomb,

a Baoli is situated in the fields. It is double storey structure, which is full of wild growth, stone and other dust material. The plaster of this Baoli has been chipped off. There are embellished with two alcoves and six blind niches on each side. The architectural features of the Structure seem to be of Tughlaq period.

Baoli of Luhari :- Luhari is a village in Jhajjar District of Haryana State. Local Nawabs of Jhajjar Built many Structures as Tombs, Mosque etc. Water is a main thing for life, so Local ruler, bult Baoli in Jhajjar . A Baoli in Luhari village. It has rectangular well and at the end it turns in circular shape from which water is drawn up by bullocks or by manually and by flights of steps descending from the water level. It seems three storey structure. Central portion of the Baoli is wider than the platform. It is constructed of stone flocks. According to architectural feature this Baoli belong to Mughal period.

Baoli of Mirza ali Jan (Narnaul):- Narnaul is the district head quarter of Mahendergarh District of Haryana, Narnaul is a heritage and historical city. Narnaul is the only city in Haryana where , we can find more monuments, built during Islamic period than any where else. These monuments are Jal Mahal, Chor Gumbaj, Tomb of Ibrahim Shah Suri and

Baoli. This Baoli or water tank built by Mirza Ali Zan, the Nawab of Narnaul during the reign of Emperor Akbar, is situated to north –west of city. The main structure of the building is in the shape of a huge arched gateway carrying the ‘Takhat’ with a rectangular pillared “Chhatri” on its top. The chhatri has a decorated flap, resting on the eight pillars made of grey stone into rows that open to all sides. Below it, more is a balcony with staircases. The takhat Stand on the main arched entrance of the Baoli. On the South, the main arched opening is attached with the three – storied boali and further a well. The gateway is like two big arches and double storey. First storey is arcade pavilion and second story is pillared Covering an area 6.9 m by 2.5 m and 11 m high structure surmounted with open. The main gate is in the north direction and the octagonal wells is in the South direction.

In the front of the gateway of the Baoli is an octagonal tank of 3m of each side, 1.3 m deep, With a fountain in the centre. Between the gateway and fountain , laying 10 stairs, measuring 3 m by 41 cm and 20 cm. Both side of the stairs waterfall system had adopted . Both Side of the Baoli, there are made a water channel, which had joint to the main channel and western part of the Persian wheel.

Baoli of Meham:- Meham is a small city in Rohtak District in Haryana. Meham is located at 28.98<sup>0</sup>N 76.3<sup>0</sup>E. During muslim invasions, Meham faced many attack like Mahmud of Ghazni. During Mughal period a Baoli was built. Baoli is the finest and best preserved specimen in this region. The British traveler Peter Mundy apprised it as a monument of Public utility worthy of munificence of a Roman Emperor. <sup>4</sup> According to an inscription on the wall of Baoli , It was built by saidu Kalal, A chobdar to Emperior Shah jahan 1628-1658 AD. The baoli is built of brick and black Kankar, having three long flights of 101 steps. Seperated by landings and leading to the water. At the end of the flight of step in circular wall subsidiary stair case are built with in the thickness of the walls giving access to the landings.<sup>5</sup>

Baoli of Kaithal:- Kaithal is a district in Haryana. It is located at 29.8015<sup>0</sup>N and 76.3996<sup>0</sup>. According to religious history, It was known as “Kapisthal” meaning ‘Abode of Kapi’. Traditionally, it is a said that, it is the birth place of Lord Hanuman. During Medieval period Timur Stopped here in 1398 AD, before attacking Delhi. Under the rule of Delhi Sultanate, the city become a Muslim Cultural Centre In the Akbar reign, It was a pargana under the Sarkar of Sirhind. There is a famous Baoli near

Government hospital, locally known as Bhai Ki Baoli. This is a three storied building in the shape of a Step Well.

The whole area is covered by baoli, which measures 77.2 m by 8.8 m. Arcades of semi-octagonal recesses 1.8m broad and 1.2 m deep relieve the monotony of the side wells<sup>6</sup>, which are supported by two arches thrown across them. In the first archway, 4.1 m. broad four-centered arch forms main opening, which is flanked by 1.2m broad arch<sup>7</sup>. Besides the main flight of stairs, the Baoli has one subsidiary stairway, descending near the second archway, Both stairways communicate with a well of 6 meter diameter set at the end of the structure. The use of cusped profile for the main opening in the second archway built across the side wells indicates the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-58) or later when the cusped arch was in style.

**Baoli of Tohana:-** Tohana is a city in Fatehabad district of Haryana. This city is famous and historical from ancient to Modern times. During medieval period, it was under Sultans and Mughals. There is a Baoli situated outside of the town in ruin condition. It is in utter ruin. None of its stairs leading to the water is extant and it too is filled with garbage. This baoli is similar to the Kaithal Baoli. The semi-octagonal recesses in

the side walls are 1.7 m. broad and 0.8 m deep. The Central opening in the first archway is 3.1 m broad and those on the sides 1m. broad each.<sup>8</sup>. The main arch of the second archway here too has a cusped profile. The additional stairway is also presented here and Situated near the well. The well, measuring 5.3m in diameter, has two large Sockets near the parapet for affixing the rafters of the wheel for water. On the ground level, the well is surrounded with an octagonal platform of 4.6 m. side. At present, the water table is merely 8.6 m below the parapet.<sup>9</sup>

**Baoli of Mandir (Thanesar) :-** Thanesar is a historical town and an Important Hindu pilgrimage centre on the banks of the Ghagger river in the Kurukshetra district in the State of Haryana. The name Thanesar is derived from its name in Sanskrit “Sthanishvara” which means place/ Abode of the Lord. During Medieval period many Authors gave comment about this town as Firishta etc. There are many Monument from Medieval are a famous Baoli, located in temple of Thanesar.. Its Architectural features that, It was constructed in the Mughal period.<sup>10</sup> It is made of Lakhori bricks and plastered on lime mortar. It has two portion, first portion is 4.9 m. length and 2.65 m. broad. Its second portion has 3.63 m. Length and 2.25 m. broad.

Baoli of College (Narnaul) :- Another Baoli is located in complex of the polytechnic college of the city. Its architectural features are very simple. The stepped corridor stands from a raised platform, which is 2' above ground level. Total length of the monument is 93' without well. The construction of the stepped corridor tapers as it goes down wards and also lengthwise. This Baoli has three storey's, two storey are under ground level and one storey is above ground<sup>11</sup>. It has also cusped arches and at last third storey has a well The well has a octagonal in shape.

Baoli of Hansi's Fort:- Hansi is a city in Hissar district of Haryana. It is historical city and witnessed of many dynasties from Ancient to Modern. In this heritage city a baoli is situated in the Fort of Hansi and belonged to Mughal period. The baoli is built of bricks and has a traditional layout with a rectangular tank in the middle of a platform and a well shaft at one end. The platform slopes to drain rain water towards the reservoir , Semi-Circular arches the walls of the tank.

Most of the Baolis is described above were built during the Mughal period. But in every period, water is a necessity for every one. Baoli or Step walls are examples of the many types of storage and irrigation tanks that were developed in Haryana. So every Baoli is special for human



history. Some baolis have been declared protected monument by ASI and some are in bad condition.

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