



Baoarie: A Cultural Heritage during the Mughal in Haryana

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Abstract:- “During the mughal period *Baorie* was one of the cultural and religious heritage. It was not merely a source of water of domestic and agricultural use but also a cool resort. *Baoris* erected along highways served as a resting place of travelling carvans . The concept of construction *baorie* has been thrown into oblivion. However in remote areas such structures are still relevant to public needs.”

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Haryana has always remained a rendezvous for various races, cultures and faith. They met together, fused and crystallized into something Indian. During the mughal period *Baorie* was one of the cultural and religious heritage. A *baorie* is laid longitudinally. It consists of two parts; a circular or Octagonal well from which water can be drawn out by a leather-bag operated manually by camels or yoked oxen. It is a deep well with a broad flight of steps leading down to the water, in the old days it served many functions. It was not merely a source of water of domestic and agricultural use but also a cool resort. Shady platforms and galleries provided ample cool space for repose during the scorching heat of a summer day. *Baoris* erected along highways served as a resting place of travelling carvans . To construct a *baorie* was considered to be an act of religious merit, kings and nobles built *baorie* for their altruistic satisfaction.

Descriptions of *baoris* :

1. **Meham :-** The finest and the best-preserved *baorie* in Haryana is at Mehram in Rohtak district. According to the inscription it bears, it had been erected by Saidu Kalal, a mace-bearer of emperor Shahjahan, in AD 1658. It is a magnificent structure so much so that a British army officer Gen. Mundy, has called it a monument of public utility worthy of munificence of a ‘Roman emperor’. This brick structure descends in three stages each

marked by a platform. Near the well, as testified by the general, there used to be rooms for travelers. It is here that one realized the great achievement of the medieval architects whose skill transformed the furnace heat of India into a cool paradise. To appreciate such a building one is required to have a personal experience of the gratifying coolness of the subterranean galleries.

2. Silana-district Rohtak

The *baorie* is constructed of pucca bricks and lime and was built by one Saidu who was in the service of Mughal Emperor. A large well with steps leading down to the water in the village, age not known type is of ordinary construction.

3. Narnaul-district Mohindergarh

The second best- preserved baori is the one at Narnaul in Mohindergarh district. This has been referred to by Col. Tod in his description of a tour in the Punjab and Rajasthan in 1883 -84. According to him this was built in the time of the Emperor Akbar by a person named Ali Khan. At present there are only two floor of arcades below the ground level. The rest are submerged under the water. This *baorie* is said to have been attached to a small garden, traces of which in the form of a tank and water chutes, are still existing. In its pristine condition, the *baorie* must have been imposing.

4. Hodal–district-Palwal

The ruins of another large *baorie* can still be seen in the main bazaar at Hodal in Palwal district. It is about 2 kilometre from Hodal and about 250 years old, type plain. According to Kanshi Ram Chaudhri of Hodal the well contains a good supply of water and is in good condition; its water is used for bathing and drinking purposes.

5. Farrukhnagar-district Gurgoan

Striking example of how these essentially longitudinal structures were modified by artisans wherever water was not very deep is supplied by the *baorie* at Farrukhnagar in

Gurgaon district. This is situated within the town for about 250 years; type plain, made during the supremacy of Suraj Mal Jat Raja of Bharatpur; the *Baorie* forms one of the towers of the city walls; it is 96 feet in circumference. During the famine of AD 1861. It was cleared out; the distance from bazaar is an obstacle to its general use; the original method of emptying out water has been obliterated, and it would be a matter of difficulty to clean it periodically; the only way would be to raise the water over the walls that enclose the *baorie*. There is another *baorie* by the name Mitter Sain Ki Baoli in town 150 years old, type plain. It was made by Mitter Sain, a Sahukar of the place.

6. Kaithal-district Kaithal

A baori called Sandhas situated outside the town of Kaithal, date not known and plain type this well was built by a Hindu Faqir named Sandhas.

7. Thanesar- district Kurukshetra

A *baorie* called Saraswati-Hanuman Mandir or Parwati mandir in Thanesar town built in about AD 1480, plain type (Plan attached) B.B.asize 14x9x93cm.16x10x3cm, 22x12.5cmx3cm, 15x9,3cm lime mortar used in masonry. One another *Baorie* is situated in the middle of the lake there is an island 560 feet square, which is connected with the north and south banks by two broken bridges 26' feet broad. In the west half of the island there is deep square tank called *Chandra-Kupa* or Chandra's well which is one of the places of pilgrimage although it is not enumerated in the list which I obtained from the Mahatmya . The island is bounded by a brick well and the lake itself is surrounded by a continuous flight of brick steps. Both of these works as well as the two bridges, are attributed to Raja Birbal, the witty companion of Akbar. The whole place is said to have been desecrated in the reign of Aurangzeb, who built a castle on the island called Mogalpura from which soldiers could fire upon any pilgrims who might venture to bathe in the holy lake. But the decline of the Mughal empire and the consequent ascendancy of the Sikh helped many of the old shrines restore and to erect as well new shrines to which the Hindu pilgrims n now flock in thousands. This holy tanks is mentioned by Abu Rihaman who records on the authority of Varaha Mihira that during eclipses of the moon the water of all other tanks visit the tank of Thanesar so that the bather in this tank, at the moments of eclipse obtains

the merit of bathing in all the other tanks. This notice by Varaha Mihira carries us back AD 500, when the hoily tanks of Thanesar was in full repute. But the Pauranic legends attribute it an antiquity long anterior even to the Pandus themselves. On its banks Kuru, the common ancestor of the Kauravas and Pandavas, sat in ascetic abstraction here Parasu-Rama slew the Kshtriyas and here Purura.

8. Badshahpur-district Gurgaon :

A *baorie* at about 2 kilometer is about 150 years old, type plain. It was excavated during the famine of AD 1861 in addition to the original was made later; a fair is held there; supposed to have been originally built during Muhammedan supremacy, it has been covered up with sand, but the walls are sufficiently high to indicate the spot. **Sirsa-district Sirsa :**

A *baorie* with stairs leading to the water situated inside of the town of Sirsa near the Rania Gate of the east on the Rania Bazar street road. Ratnu, a window of one Gurdial constructed this *baorie* by the burnt bricks and plastered with stone lime, type plain. Egyptian style of about 17th century, exact date not known.

9. Bhiwani- district Bhiwani :

A *baorie* in the east direction of the town on circular road. A brick gate constructed near this *baorie* is called baori gate. The purpose of construction of this *baorie* seems to facilitate the general public with water facilities as water level of this area was deep and quality of water was backish . The *baorie* is made of *Lakhauri* bricks and is plastered with lime. The water front was reached by a series of flights of steps and platforms. It may have been constructed during Muqhal period.

10. Charkhi Dadri-district Bhiwani

A *baorie* in west direction of the village and constructed by Tulsi Mohan Dass (Mohan Ram), plain type stone masonry with lime mortar built about 250 years ago. It is in the condition of neglect now with Chhatris. (Fig.3)



11. Dayalgarh district Yamuna Nagar.

This *baorie* is laid longitudinally, situated near Shri Jaityling Shidhpith Leskwar Mahadev Mandir. The *baorie* is built with *Lakhauri* bricks and lime mortar masonry about 300 years old. (Fig. 4)

Conclusion :

These *baoris* were erected during the Mughal period. Unfortunately, neglect has reduced them to mere ruins. Although some *baorie* have been declared protected monuments by the Archaeological Survey of India. Modern development neglected this expertise. Hence the concept of construction *baorie* has been thrown into oblivion. However in remote areas such structures are still relevant to public needs.

Note and References :

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