LESSON 5
ARCHITECTURAL FORMS IN INDIAN CULTURE
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Introduction

Culture comprises a plurality of discourses. Architectural forms are the most visible discourses of past civilizations. Indian civilization presents a very rich and diversified architectural tradition.

Architecture: Meaning, Form and Context

In common parlance, architecture is a study of forms: about plans, designs, motifs and how they have evolved over time. But built spaces are a medium to study societies as well. Architectural spaces, both sacred and secular have a functional aspect, in the sense that they fulfil the need for what they were created. A temple or a mosque is a house of worship and a king’s tomb or a palace has royal connotations, a commemorative edifice proclaims what it is meant to, and houses are built to protect people and communities. Through these physical types, we get to know the technical knowhow of the times, the processes of their creation, patterns of patronage, and a given society’s metaphysical system as the architectural forms draw upon contemporary cultural and philosophical discourses. Power and authority are as much reflected in these built spaces as are notions of aestheticism that are otherwise embodied in contemporary literature.

Architecture is also a medium to study society because built spaces delineate communities, give them a sense of belonging and a cultural identity. Architectural forms become spaces where various identities and groups are formed, in which some are included, while ‘others’ are not. Often these spaces become sites of contestations, conflicts, state formation, assimilation and exclusion - generating multiple meanings. They are lived spaces with firm social moorings. At the same time, monuments, even religious structures have multilayered histories and not belong to one monolithic community or compact power structures. They are always shared spaces where different individuals and communities come together to create it. They have multiple affiliations. Architectural forms therefore, are not just a study of forms, the pure exotica, but they are a part of a larger social cultural history.

Religion, in all time and space has always been a major propeller of architectural creations as of other artistic activity. In the Indian context, from the Buddhist stupa and chaitya to the Hindu temple, and then to the Muslim mosque or the Christian church, religion has stimulated all art. However, this is not to mean that the Buddhist chaitya gave way to the Hindu temple to be replaced by the Muslim mosque and so on. There is no takeover of one style from another, nor is there any ‘high’ point or ‘low’ ebb. Present scholarship rejects the notion of a Gupta ‘classical age’ and post-Gupta centuries to be one of decadence. As a matter of fact, some of the finest temples were constructed in the post-Gupta period, as testimonies to India’s fine architectural tradition. Both sacred and secular architecture instead, manifests a continuous process of adaptation and transformation across different regions and communities.
and is as much inclusive of local forms as of forms that came from beyond the borders. Overlap and interaction is the key to understand Indian architecture.

And since there is no linear development in Indian architecture, the discipline being a multiple discourse, we need to move away from the primacy of one region, period, dynasty or patronage. This would then also mean that we need to move away from the factor of ‘influence’ and instead lay stress on the processes behind the architectural endeavours, which are multilayered, with multiple meanings and paradigm shifts. No architectural type is a self contained category with a monolithic identity. Monuments need to be analysed in relation to their own historical and ideological contexts. And finally, this would also mean, that architecture is not just a study of forms – of icons or decorative motifs, of spatial and scientific-technical production or of even the pure functional - but is a part of a larger history of culture, society and politics.

Perception of India’s Architectural Tradition: Historiography

The history of Indian architecture, as a systematic study, was first taken up in British India. Several influential writers, from 1874 - 1927, set the future trends of scholarship. Most viewpoints that were current till recently, were influenced by the writings that appeared from mid 19th century onwards. From Henry Cole’s publication of the catalogue of the Indian collection at the then, South Kensington Museum (1874) to Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy’s classic, History of Indian and Indonesian art (1927), several issues regarding Indian art and architecture were debated and frameworks, largely derived from western methodologies, were put forward. Partha Mitter divides these writings and their approaches into two broad groups: archaeological and transcendental.

To the first group, classical European art was the exemplar of perfect taste against which all Indian art and architecture was to be judged. This is easily discerned in the writings of its major protagonists: Henry Cole, R. Orme, H. Colebrooke, James Ferguson, Vincent Smith and George Birdwood. This approach did much to further formulate the orientalist canon, seen in James Mill’s History of British India, written in 9 volumes (1817-20), where the principal orientalist vision received its first classic articulation. Rediscovery of India’s cultural past in these colonial writings was founded on the premise that to control the present better, you need to know the past of the ruled better. Primacy of religion and race were crucial in understanding Indian architecture for this approach. Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam were the markers of Indian cultural identity. In this paradigm, Vedic and Buddhist periods were periods of pristine purity, while medieval Hinduism coincided with decay as evidenced from overtly decorative temples. The debate concerning Aryan versus Dravidian centred on Buddhist art being alone worthy of appreciation as it was Aryan and influenced by Graeco-Bactrian antiquity. In some writings, Islamic art too was superior and rational because it came from outside and Islam did not have the constraints of the Hindu caste system. Central to this construct is the foreign origin of Gandhara, as it was influenced by Greek art.

The second group was concerned with characterizing Indian art as transcendental and can be called nationalist in its approach. The writings of these art historians, led by Ernest Binfield Havell and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy centred on Indian art embodying an idea, an inner world of beauty that has an intrinsic meaning. Based on classical norms of Neoplatonist doctrines, this approach read all Indian art as spiritual. The spirituality of Indian art was
underlined when Coomaraswamy informed that nature was transcendental and existed on a metaphysical plane in the artist’s mind, which was then externalized and represented in material art form in his work. The vehicle through which this happened was a special technique of vision, the practice of yoga, known to the traditional Indian artists. Even the architectural form of the dome, to Coomaraswamy, was a work of imagination and not one of technicality. However, Coomaraswamy too, like the other writers, took refuge in western thought and knowledge of Platonism to explain Indian art. Again, although, Coomaraswamy was right in assessing the role of religion in Indian art, but when it came to explaining the precise relation between art and religion or the nature of Indian art, he took recourse to collective metaphysical generalizations. The problem with this approach is that it does not show how the meaning is derived, or how to read meaning in a form by virtue of its intrinsic properties. Much of writing today explains the exact nature of this relationship in more concrete and individual ways, rather than in generalized collective notions. Indian art and architecture has to be studied in specific religious, cultural, political and social contexts. Different endeavours and forms have to be assessed from their own specific contemporary positions.

With this backdrop of what ‘architecture’ should mean and by drawing from recent writings, we shall try to unveil some architectural forms and their meanings from India’s cultural past.

(I)

THE TEMPLE

Buddhism was the earliest Indian religion to require large communal spaces for worship. This led to three types of architectural forms: the stupa, the vihara and the chaitya. Many religious Buddhist shrines came up between the 1st century BCE - 1st century CE. Stupa, originally the focus of a popular cult of the dead, is a large burial mound containing a relic of the Buddha. It celebrates the Buddha’s parinirvana (end of cycle of suffering), symbolizes his eternal body, and is an object of worship. Not many stupas have survived from these early times but the Great Stupa at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh with its majestic four gateways (1st century BCE/CE) has survived intact. There is evidence of community patronage of landowners, merchants, officials, monks, nuns and artisans associated with these Buddhist projects.

Along with stupa architecture, a novel cave architecture or rock-cut architecture too developed in most parts. Most of Hinayana Buddhist rock-cut prayer halls/chapels (chaitya) and monasteries (viharas) came up in the Deccan region (120 BCE – 400 CE), along ancient trade routes that had excellent quality of rock. The best known are Karle (50 - 70 CE) and Ajanta (cave 9 and 10 in the c.2nd century BCE). Again after a gap of some 250 years, innumerable shrines and monasteries were cut into hills and rocks where Buddhist, Jain and Hindu monks could live and pray. Archaeological data suggests that both the Buddhist chaitya and the Hindu rock-cut temple were contemporaneous in the 3rd - 1st century BCE. Some of the finest examples can be seen in western Deccan from the 5th century CE to almost for over 300 years. To this latter phase belongs the Kailashnath temple at Ellora caves (760 CE), built under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas (753 - 982 CE), to be followed by the rock-cut temples of Elephanta (c.500 – 760 CE). Rock-cut shrines were emerging elsewhere south of the Deccan as well.
Meanwhile free-standing shrines or structural temples started to develop as well. The earliest were small structures of brick and wood as the one that exists at Bairat, near Jaipur (c.250 BCE). Early structural temples of stone are found in the hilly tracts of Madhya Pradesh, on the southern fringes of the Gupta Empire (350 – 500 CE). They belong to the late Gupta period (c.400 CE). The area is rich in stone, unlike northern Madhya Pradesh, where most temples would have been of brick and hence have perished. But even among the stone shrines, less than a score remain, and none has an intact superstructure. These early Gupta temples are flat roofed small structures with ornate pillars. Like the elegant flat roofed Sanchi temple with a pillared porch and a walled sanctum, resembling a Greek shrine, is one of the earliest. But the Gupta Vishnu temple at Deogarh (c.500 CE) near Jhansi has a small tower on the sanctum. The Bhitargaon temple near Kanpur, the sole survivor among many brick temples too, has a definite curvilinear spire.

These simple structures, in the early medieval period, from the 6th-13th century CE, began to expand, horizontally and vertically. This period in Indian history is marked by great temple building activity. The shrines, dedicated to various deities from the Hindu/Jain pantheon were a product of Bhakti or devotional Hinduism, the characteristic ideology of the early medieval centuries. Down the years, these temples became more institutionalized. Like around the 7th century CE, there was a significant change in the nature of the temple in peninsular India, as its organization became more complex. Rich donations of land, cash and other riches were made to these shrines that became the hub of social and economic activities. They were great craft and cultural centres and fostered many traditional performing arts. Many of them, as tirthas (pilgrimage centres) were located on trade routes, which in turn led to urbanization in early Medieval South India. Each region experimented and responded in its own local way and the temple forms with what we are familiar today emerged more definitive. Three distinctive styles, often overlapping, can be discerned, confirming that there was no all India uniform style.

The Hindu temple is the enshrined deity’s house (devalaya), and his or her palace (prasada), where the priests cater to his or her daily needs. The temple is a holy site (tirtha) where the devotees come to perform the circumambulation (pradakshina) to earn religious merit. The heart of the temple is the garbhagriha (literally, the ‘embryo chamber’), the sanctum sanctorum, where one is meant to feel the presence of the deity. The installation rituals of Hindu deities go back to the late Gupta text, the Brihatsamhita. The development of the Agamas, ritual texts, and especially the Pancharatra (tantric) system in the 5th century CE, led to elaborate temple rituals with metaphysical interpretations. These worship ritual texts, went hand in hand with the rise of Tantricism, a major movement that challenged Bhakti. Gradually, more functional buildings were added to the basic structure. These were the pillared halls (mandapa), the added portico (ardhmandapa), a connecting vestibule (antaral) to the sanctum sanctorum, and surmounting the garbhagriha, the spire (shikhara).

Regional variations led to Hindu temples being broadly classified into the northern type (Nagara), belonging to the area between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas and the southern type (Dravida), falling in the region between river Krishna to Kanyakumari. A third one, taking the features of both these types is the Vesara, located between the Vindhyas and the Krishna. However, these are at times only arbitrary classifications as Nagar temples are found in Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh and Dravida can be seen at Ellora in the Deccan. The distinction rests on the shape of the tower, the ground plan and the elevation. The Nagara tower (shikhara) has a curvilinear slope with a fluted disc (amalaka) at the pinnacle. The Dravida tower (vimana) is
pyramidal, follows a dome and cornice pattern with diminishing stories (tala), and is crowned by a square, polygonal or a round dome. The Nagara elevation consists of a series of projections (rathas) and recesses, whereas the walls of the Dravidian type are relieved by enshrined images in recesses at regular intervals. In south India, temples are enclosed within enclosure walls having gate towers (gopuras), marking the entrances. The Vesara or the Chalukyan (also called the Karnataka - Dravida tradition) is the mixed type, located in the Deccan region. The Chalukyan, actually speaking has the same source of inspiration as the Dravidian, the earliest examples being at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal in the Bijapur district in Karnataka. Aihole alone has as many as 70 temples. Temples in the regions of Bengal, Kashmir and Kerala evolved their own local variation, while subscribing to either of the styles.

The most striking feature of the Hindu temple is the profuse use of ornamentation on its surface. This ranges from narrative stone reliefs to depiction of figural, floral, animal, geometrical and other foliated designs. In the northern variation, the repetitive motif of the gavaksa (arch shaped window), derived from the Buddhist chaitya, is transmuted into intricate honeycomb patterns, creating a rich lace like surface texture. The South used variation on the gavaksa known as kuta, nasi, panjara or the sala (barrel-vaulted chaitya). The north was ingenious in the use of shikhara and the amalaka. These repetitive motifs follow clear geometrical rules and are conceived three dimensionally.

The vast technical-canonical literature on architecture, the Vastushastras describe the temple as a standing primeval man, the purusha. Each component of the temple matches the human body, such as the head, neck, shoulders, trunk, arms, thighs and feet. The centre stands for the nucleus of energy from where the cardinal directions emerge. At the centre of every temple is a vastupurusha, who presides over the temple site and protects it. The square ground plan is a perfect shape for the Hindu temple, according to canonical literature. The Brihatsamhita, one of the earliest works, selects two ideal ground plans (vastupurusha mandala), based on the grid system of 64 and 81 squares. The work mentions rare cases of circular and octagonal temples.

The symbolism behind the Hindu temple has been explained by Coomaraswamy. He interprets the temple not only as a building providing shelter to the image and the worshipper, but also as the image of the cosmos. The temple in this metaphysics is the house of God and his body, representing in its parts, the drama of disintegration and reintegration, which is an essential theme of Indian thought. Stella Kramrisch, in her mammoth work, The Hindu Temple (1946), further fine-tuned this concept that every element of the temple, its structure, sculpture, design and motifs are all imbued with intrinsic meaning. She argues that the temple is the cosmos, embodying the universe in its entire form. The statue enshrined is the manifestation of the deity from which divine energy radiates in different directions from the garbhagriha. The fragmentation and proliferation of motifs on the surface may be seen as the external expression of this emanation. Kramrisch also sees movement in the temple structure, which is both upward and downward, experienced by the spectator in the unfolding of the architectural forms as he moves towards mystical union. To the spectator, both the temple and the statue are a means to attain moksha (release from suffering).

Moving away from the symbolism of the temple, what has been the point of much debate in recent times is the issue of regionalization of art and architecture, as seen in the various temple types at this time in Indian history. The issue is wound up with the larger debate of the
interpretation of early medieval Indian centuries. Devangana Desai in her writings treats the regionalization of art and architecture at this time against the backdrop of the feudalism hypothesis. According to her, numerous local centres of art emerged as religious donations increased with the proliferation of local rulers and feudatories. In the closed economy and localism of the feudal structure, art was increasingly conditioned by regionalism and canonization. Folk elements and tantric iconography in temples is seen against the background of a deprived urban milieu and patronage coming mainly from a rural aristocracy. The chief function of art was to glorify the status of opulent patrons, thereby failing to convey higher qualities, though apparently it was in the service of religion.

An alternative approach to comprehend the regionalization of culture is suggested by B.D. Chattopadhyaya, who views this change in terms of the historical processes of local state formation against the backdrop of political, social and cultural dimensions of early medieval India. Chattopadhyaya emphasizes on the factor of legitimization of temporal authority as the most significant ideological dimension of the period. The need to link one’s royal origins to religious and divine forces led to extraordinary temple building in this period. His writings further explore the spatial contexts and social linkages of the sacred spaces. He discusses the fluctuating patterns of regional powers, their relationship to their spiritual mentors, and their need for legitimation of their newly acquired power in the form of temple building.

We shall now move on to describe some select examples.

(i) Pallava Rock-Cut Temples of Mamallapuram

The first shrines in the Tamil country in South India were cave shrines, derived from the Buddhist tradition. These came up during the rule of the Pallavas (600 - 900), under whom the foundations of the Dravidian style were laid. The Pallavas belonged to Andhradesh but their centre of activity was the lower reach of the Palar river and their chief architectural remains are mainly found in the country around Kanchipuram, their seat of power and in the seaport of Mamallapuram, built by them in the present day state of Tamil Nadu. The port had been a centre of trade from Roman times and Kanchipuram, 40 miles away, a major cultural centre. The Pallava rulers sent expeditions to Sri Lanka and traded with China and South East Asia. They were great patrons of art and architecture, which was driven by a systematic ideology. They used architecture to legitimize their rule by richly endowing the shrines and by naming the edifices after their kings. As a result, a complex relationship began to grow between the temple, community and the king.

Temple architecture under the Pallavas resolves into two phases: The first phase (610 - 90), the Mahendra and Mamalla Group, is wholly rock-cut while the second (690 - 900), the Rajasimha and Nandivarman Group is entirely structural. In the first phase, the rock-cut structures took two forms: the mandapas (610 - 40), and the rathas and mandapas (640 - 90). A mandapa is an excavation, an open pavilion excavated in the rock. It takes the shape of a simple pillared hall with one or more cellas in the back wall. A ratha is a monolith, in the shape of a chariot or a car that is used to take the deity out but here it means a series of monolithic shrines in granite resembling certain wooden prototypes. A mandapa in all probability had other structurally attached buildings, but these have perished because of their impermanent material.
The Mahendra group (roughly 14 in number, 610 - 40), named after the chief patron, scattered all over Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, three being at Mamallapuram, represents the early beginnings. However, recent scholarship attributes most of these mandapas and the later rathas to the later patronage of Rajasimha. Each pillar of the rock-cut mandapa is about 7 feet in height with a diameter of 2 feet. Shafts are square in section except for the middle third which is chamfered into an octagon. Heavy brackets provide the capitals with no cornices above the pillars. Later examples become more ornate, when the pillars start becoming 4 storied, rising to a height of 50 feet. These changes can be seen at Bhairavkonda (Nellore district), where a distinctive Pallava order makes its appearance. This is seen in the sophisticated fusion of two forms of the capital and the shaft of the pillar. Another element, a typical Pallava feature of a lion, combined with the lower portion of the shaft and another introduced into the capital as well makes its appearance. This is the beginning of a pillar design that transformed into an elegant Pallava type with the heraldic lion beast standing for dynastic connotations as a symbol of the dynasty’s lion ancestry (simhavishnu).

The Mamalla group of temples (640 - 90), contrary to the group above, are found in one place, Mamallapuram. They were mainly executed during the reign of Narasimhavarman I (640 - 68), who took the title of ‘Mahamalla’. The site lies towards the mouth of the river Palar, 32 miles south of Chennai. The place served as the harbour for the capital Kanchipuram. The coastline is well suited for these rock-cut structures to come up. There is a large rocky hill of granite rising out of sand near the seashore, aligned north to south, measuring half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide with a height of over a hundred feet. Detached from this, towards the south is another smaller outcrop consisting originally of a whale-backed mound of granite, about 250 feet long and 50 feet high. It was out of these rock formations that Mamallapuram was excavated and sculpted. The site also exhibits foundations of structural secular buildings like citadels, palaces and residences.

The mandapas on the main hill are ten in number. None of these are large as they have shallow halls or porticos. In most instances, they are of the same general character and proportions as the earlier group, but there are differences. These cave shrines are more ‘elaborated’ in design and execution. Their columns, except for the corbels, are relatively more slender, but with so many facets that they appear fluted and even round. These pillars forecast the elements of true Dravidian pillars and pilasters with their balanced proportions and further decoration. The shaft carries the malasthana, a low relief band of pearl festoons, and then flares out gently to where a deep throat or indentation separates it from a cushion like element called the kumbha (pot or a jar) or the ‘melon’ capital. Above the kumbha, a lotus element, the padma or idaie, flares out to the broad thin abacus (palagai). Sometimes, as in the Varaha Mandapa, the notched flaring idaie, surmounted by the thinnest of palagais is indistinguishable from the later fine early Chola examples. The only element still missing, and which will come up later, is the Chola notch in the shaft before it flares, with a slight swelling above it, to become the most delicate of vases (kalash). The bases of these pillars have the sedant yalis or lions, a feature, which, as noted, has already made its appearance.

More elaborate decoration can also be seen in the treatment of the facades of these halls, where a roll cornice decorated with Buddhist chaitya arch motif (kudu) runs with a parapet above. The parapet is formed of alternating long and short miniature shrines in most of these examples. But ground plans differ for various pavilions. The Varah Mandapa has a basement with a provision for a receptacle for water. This feature corroborates with the particularly well
designed water system of the site, evidenced by the canals and tanks that are strewn all over the port. However, this elaborate water system was not solely for public use. It was also needed for ritualistic purposes or for water worship, as many temples stand testimony to this, in which cisterns, in addition to conduits appear. As regard the other mandapas, the Trimurti has no hall and the three cells open directly to the exterior. The three part Mahisamardini Mandapa has a two pillar portico in front of the central hall.

But perhaps the most extraordinary of all rock architecture at Mamallapuram are the rathas, the monolithic shrines carved out of whale-backed mound of granite, standing near the beach. Sometimes called the Seven Pagodas, they are unique replicas of earlier wooden structures. It is not clear if these monoliths preceded the first stone structural buildings but both evolved from the earlier wooden prototypes. Their purpose remains still unknown as these ‘riddle of the sands’ are mostly unfinished from the inside. They are of no great size, the largest being only 42 feet long, the widest is only 35 feet and the tallest too is only 40 feet high. The typical Pallava pillar is used here in these rathas, with all its parts and elements, as described above. The rathas are eight in all, and with one exception, all are derived from the two Buddhist structures of the vihara (monastery) and the chaitya (prayer hall or chapel). The exception, Draupadi’s Ratha (dedicated to Durga) is also the only one, not characteristically in the pure Dravidian style. This ratha, the smallest and the simplest in the series, however, is the most complete. It is mainly a one roomed cell or a pansala with a large boulder cut lion besides it. It has female door-guardians and inside is a relief of Korravai (the Goddess of victory with a deer). The structure has four sided steep pitched curvilinear roof, found later in South India but resemblances are more to the Bengal region. Its base is supported by figures of lion and elephant alternating, suggesting a portable character to its wooden prototype.

Of the typical Dravidian rathas, 5 follow the old rule of vihara construction in which a central square is surrounded by cells initially to be covered by a pillar supported flat roof in later examples. More stories were added to this basic vihara model, as the number of monks increased and the structure came to be eventually finished off by a domical roof. In these compositions at Mamallapuram, however, some modifications in this original pattern can be seen. In the Dharamraja Ratha, one of the best examples, the cells from the old pattern have lost their original character and intention and instead have become modified into ornamental turrets. In this ratha of lion pillared portico, the elevation is in two parts: a square portion with pillared verandahs below, and the pyramidal shikhara formed of converted cells above.

The remaining three examples, Bhim, Sahdev and Ganesh rathas are based on the chaitya type. They are all oblong and rise to two or more stories, while each has a keel or barrel roof, with a chaitya gable end (triangular part of the roof). The later gateways (gopuras) in Dravidian architecture are based on this keel roof with pinnacles and gable ends. These shrines are of Shaivite attribution, evidenced from the images of a lion, elephant and a bull that are carved on rock in the close proximity, symbolising Durga, Indra and Shiva. It is interesting that while being derived from traditional Buddhist architecture, they are Hindu shrines - implying that monolithic religious categories should not be associated with architectural forms.

A remarkable feature of this assemblage is the fine quality of figure sculpture which adorns these mandapas and the rathas. Large mythological relief panels are carved in these shrine walls. One distinctive panel has the figure of Durga as Korravai. The reliefs of Pallava sculpture are shallower than in the Deccan because of the hardness of the stone that is found
here. The human figures are slender and delicately built. In one of the caves, the Adivaraha, there are two portraits of a Pallava king and his son, each accompanied by their queens. These are the earliest portrait sculptures after the Kushana figures from Mathura. Other reliefs are the figures in plain shallow niches on each storey of the Dharmaraja and the Arjuna ratha, being the finest in Early Pallava style.

Last but not the least, the precincts of Mamallapuram has a large sculptured panel, variously described as the Descent of the Ganges, Arjuna’s penance and Kiratarjuniya (Shiva disguised as Kirata, with Arjuna). The panel is cut on the vertical face of two huge boulders. A narrow cleft dividing these boulders from top to bottom provides the focal point for a vast congress of life sized figures and animals, all facing the cleft or hastening towards it. The figures are of Gods, demi-Gods, sages, kiratas or wild hunters and kinnars, half birds and half humans. The panel has other mythological vignettes as well.

After Narasimha Mamalla, the rock method seems to have lost its eminence, and a more permanent inflexible carving of the granite, the art of structural building, was taken up. This would have provided a greater freedom to the workman and the patron, who would be now freer to introduce any form, while not being constrained by the limitation of the rock sites. Henceforth in the reign of Rajasimha, patronage extended to structural temples when the first free-standing temple, the Shore temple was partly erected under him (first quarter 8th century CE).
(ii) Chola Structural Temples: The Brihadisvara at Thanjavur

Temple architecture in South India reached its pinnacles under the rule of imperial Cholas (850 - 1250). Early Chola temples however, are not as large as the ambitiously planned Pallava Kailashnatha or the Vaikunthaperumal temples at Kanchipuram. Development in early Chola architecture consists, instead, in perfecting the unique elements of the Dravidian style and combining them harmoniously with new forms in astonishingly diverse ways.

A typical new Chola feature, that is different from the Pallava, is the famed ornamentation of temple walls. This consists in the use of real deep niches with entablatures. These niches, the *Devakushtas* (niches to house deities), flanked by demi pilasters, appear on wall surfaces of Chola temples. The decoration, in most finished examples, alternates between the various niche devices of *koshtapanjars* and *Kumbhapanjars*. Space is narrow in these forms but the decoration is more rounded. The pilasters of these niches are crowned by a curved roof moulding adorned by two *kudus* with crowning lion heads. The bases of these decorative devices have *makara* (motif based on the mythical sea monster) and warrior heads.

Other Chola distinction is seen in the abandonment of the Pallava *yali* or the lion at the bases of pillars and pilasters. The pillars too, are more enriched and defined. As earlier noted, the final element in the Dravidian pillar of the notch in the shaft before it flares, with a slight swelling above it, gets transformed now under the Cholas to become the most delicate of vases (*kalash*). Another elegant feature of the pillar is the decorative device of the *kudu*, put as a roll-moulding on top of the pillars.

The gateways, which are dwarfed in the Pallava, are in late Chola prominent. The *dwarpalas* (gatekeepers) in Chola temples are fierce men with tridents, bearing tusks protruding from mouths, rolled eyes and hands always in threatening gestures. These contrast with the benign natural looking single paired arm *dwarpalas* of the past. All these features climax in two temples, the Brihadisvara (Rajarajesvvara) at Thanjavur, the capital of the Cholas and the Gangaikondacholapuram, near Kumbakonam. These come at a time of greatest extent of Chola power.

Cholas had become the greatest power in South India by 10th century CE. They had reached the borders of the Rashtrakuta kingdom in the north. Rows of temples were built on both the banks of the river Kaveri to mark their growing power. Cholas greatly made use of art to proclaim their power, used temples to make unequivocal statements about their political hegemony. Rajaraja I, crowned in 985, carved out an overseas empire by establishing a second capital at Pollonaruva in Sri Lanka. The Brihadisvara (995 - 1010), built by him at his capital Thanjavur, though he did not live to see it completed is a product of this success. The temple inscriptions make clear the triumphal nature of the edifice. Donations to the shrine came from far and wide. The numbers of architects, accountants, guards, functionaries, temple dancers, revenue records of landgrants etc are engraved on the temple walls, thus establishing the importance of the temple as an institution of prime importance in Chola times.

The Brihadisvara is some 210 feet High, the largest and the tallest in India. It is laid out as a Dravida *padmagarbhamandala* of 16 into 16 squares. It was consecrated in 1009 - 10. The site is not associated with any Puranic story or any ancient legend, the Rajarajesvvara appears to have been an entirely new foundation, a royal monument of power. Within the large enclosure
wall are shrines of the *parivardevatas* (family deities) and the *dikpalas* (deities of cardinal directions). The eight *dikpalas* are housed separately against the wall. The two large *gopuras* in line are first introduced here in Dravidian architecture. The *vimana* is *dvitala* (double storied). The vertical base (a square of 82 feet with a height of 50 feet) forms the first storey and the 13 slightly receding tiers form the upper portion. The diminishing tiers taper till the last at the apex to become one third of the base. On top of this rests the crowning dome, which comprises a massive granite block of 25 and a half feet square and estimated to weigh eighty tons. The cupola with its inward curve of its neck is a pleasing break from the outward rigid lines of the composition that has a soaring character.
An internal circumambulatory passage, two stories high, consisting of a series of chambers with sills but no doors, runs inside the precinct. On its walls, in 1930, Nayaka period paintings were discovered to overlay the Chola murals that included Rajaraja I with three of his queens worshipping Nataraja (dancing Shiva), the patron deity of Cholas. The temple is entered by side doorways approached by large ornamental stairs leading to an antechamber (ardhmandapa), with a platform for bathing the deities. To it is attached a huge mandapa of 36 pillars (mahamandapa), entered by a front mandapa with a central entrance (mukhamandapa). In all there are 18 door guardians flanking the various entrances and sills.

In the decorative treatment, the lower vertical base is of two stories divided by a massive overhanging cornice, reminiscent of the Pallava rock-cut. Except for this powerful horizontal member in the structure, the emphasis is on verticality, the two ranges of vertical pilasters above and below adding to the verticality. Combined with these pilasters are deep niches with motifs of ‘tree of knowledge’ and other decorative devices. Occupying the middle of each compartment, are ingeniously carved figures. The kumbhapanjara decorative device is introduced here. The surfaces of the tapering part of the vimana are patterned by the horizontal lines of the diminishing tiers intersecting the vertical disposition of the ornamental shrines, thus producing a very rich architectural texture. Finally, there is the contrast of the cupola at the summit, its winged niches on all four sides relieving the severity of the outline, just where it is most required.

Every section and every decoration at the Brihadisvara is designed for maximum effect. It is the finest example of Dravidian architecture with all its elements reaching their zenith.

(iii) Chandella Structural Temples: The Khajuraho Group

From the eighth century CE, Nagara styles in the north began evolving in parallel to the Dravidian in the south. Orissa on the east coast and the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west and central India represent two distinctive Nagara type of temple architecture. The crowning achievement of the western and central style is a group of temples at Khajuraho in Bundelkhand in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Of the 85 temples, built (950 - 1050) by the Chandella Rajput rulers, only about 20 remain in good state of preservation. The first major royal edifice, the Lakshmana temple (954) was built by Yasovarman Chandella to celebrate his independence from his Gurjara-Pratihara (710 - 1027) overlords of north-central India. These Gurjara-Pratiharas (known for their open pavilion temples) were key players along with the Rashtrakutas (753 - 982) of the Deccan and Palas of Bengal (750 - 1174) in the struggle for power and hegemony.

Khajuraho, the Chandella capital was a flourishing cultural centre where poets, musicians, grammarians and playwrights all resided with affluent Jain merchants and court officials. Extensive religious establishments, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, exercised considerable social power, encouraging lavish spending on temples and shrines. The Chandellas are also known for patronizing public works like reservoirs and their temples represent different belief systems. The Hindu, Jain and Buddhist temples of Khajuraho have negligible architectural differences of sectarian origins. Indeed they collectively represent the apogee of the central variant of the Nagara style.
The Kandariya Mahadeo, the Lakshmana and the Visvanatha are the most fully developed at Khajuraho, and along with other temples have some common features. They are oriented towards the east, and instead of the customary enclosure walls, they stand on high and solid masonry terraces. A compact architectural synthesis is achieved in the structures by the high flight of steps, leading to the terraces. The ground plan of most of the Khajuraho group is like a Latin cross, with the long axis from east to west, and the entrance being on the east. This shape is divided into the usual three main compartments: the cella or the garbhagriha, an assembly hall or the mandapa and the entrance portico or the ardhamandapa. In addition to these are the antarala or the vestibule to the cella, and in the more developed examples, the transcepts or mahamandapa together with the processional passage around the cella are as well integrated.

The mass or volume of this temple type at Khajuraho, like the Brihadisvara, too moves clearly towards an upward direction, its trend is towards height. The elevation of these temples resolves into three main parts: the lofty terrace or the high basement, the second part comprising the walls and openings of the interior compartments and the final section of a grouping of roofs, culminating in the graceful shikhara. The soaring impulse is further accentuated by a number of vertical projections, leading the eye upwards.

The architectural treatment of these three sections, are ingeniously treated as well. A series of mouldings lighten the plinth, the spreading base of which seems to grip the pavement of the terrace, like the roots of a tree. The central section of the walls and openings of the interiors are treated by the use of solids of walls as well as voids of horizontal range of window openings, thus bringing in light and air. This feature at the same time throws a band of light and shadow on the surface, enhancing the structure’s beauty. This is best exemplified in the balconied windows of Kandariya Mahadeo. This central zone of the exterior has another outstanding feature, a decorative motif of two or three parallel friezes, filling in the wall spaces between the openings. They follow the alternate projections and recesses of the walls and are carried around the building. Human figures, both ideal and mundane are depicted in these friezes, the entire surface being covered, often in erotic postures. Kandariya Mahadeo alone has some 650 figures, moulded in high relief on its outer walls, the iconography conforming to the Shaiva Suddhanta Tantric sect.

In the final section, there are, in these temples, separate roofs for each compartment. Each roof of the structures follows a pattern. The smallest and the lowest is on top of the portico, next in height is on the central hall, the two sweeping up in line with the mass to the tall shape of the shikhara, surmounting the whole. The Khajuraho roofs are domical, unlike the Orissan pyramidal, but their surface texture in horizontal strata is much the same. All this grouping of roofs gives the appearance of a centripetal movement towards the spire, the high pinnacle. The spires of Khajuraho are most refined and elegant. They have a decisive incline as they mount up. The grace is further enhanced by the balanced distribution of the miniature turrets or urusringas that are superimposed on the sides to break the mass, thus lending a more melodic outline to the volume.
KHAJURAO TEMPLE
The interiors of Khajuraho, unlike the Orissan temples, are profusely ornamented with sculpture. The ceiling treatment of the mandapas is especially to be noted. The average size of mandapas at Khajuraho is only 25 square feet but to support the mass of masonry above, four pillars, one in each corner, with four beams in the shape of a square framework were put as a support under the ceiling. The system is simple but structurally sound. These surfaces in turn are overlaid with ornament and sculpture. The capital of pillars, the architraves above the capitals and the ceiling in particular is teeming with figures of grotesques, dwarfs and humans. The ceiling designs are geometrical circles and semicircles, deeply carved in a swirling pattern.

A notable characteristic of Khajuraho temples, like in Orissa, is the use of erotic sculpture. The strategically placed erotic sculptures have been interpreted differently. One view relates them to Tantric practices, as Khajuraho was a centre of various Tantric sects and the erotic motif stands for a fertility symbol, an auspicious alamkara (ornamentation). They have also been interpreted as ‘symbolical-magical diagrams, or yantras’ designed to appease malevolent spirits. However, some scholars disagree with this viewpoint as a good number of motifs cannot be identified solely as tantric.

The 12 Vaishnava and Shaiva temples to the northwest of the site form the most important of the group at Khajuraho. Among these, the Kandariya Mahadeo is the largest and the most representative of the lot. Its shikhara reaches a height of 102 feet above the platform and has seven projections (panchratha). The much smaller in size are the Lakshmana temple and the Shiva temple of Visvanatha and the Vishnu temple of Chaturbuj. The temple of Devi Jagadamba, dedicated to Goddess Kali, was originally a Vishnu shrine. Temples dedicated to the Sun god, to the boar incarnation of Vishnu (varaha), the Matangeswara and Parvati temples are other notable examples.

Similar to these Brahmanical temples are the 6 Jain temples to the southeast of Khajuraho. There is a complete absence of window openings here, though parallel friezes of statues occur. The Parsvanatha is the largest in this group. The sanctum contains an ornamental throne and a sculptured bull, the emblem of Adinatha, the first of the Jain Tirthankaras. The Ghantai with its cluster of 12 pillars is another unique example. At this site are some Brahmanical temples as well. The Duladeo, the Chaturbhuj and the Kunwar Math are some fine examples that fall into this group.

(II)

THE COMING OF ISLAM AND NEW ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

The Arab conquest of Sind in the year 712 CE changed the power equations in the Indian sub-continent. Thereafter from the 10th century onwards many raids and sieges were undertaken by newly emerging powerful Turkish rulers of areas in present day Afghanistan and Central Asia. The campaigns of Sultan Mahmud Ghazna from late 10th-11th century, culminated in the Turkish conquest of north India in late 12th century under Sultan Muiz ud-Din Mohammad Ghur and his commanders.

Political conquest, however, did not introduce new architectural forms, associated with the new religion of Islam. Mosques had already been built in Sind in the 8th century and Muslim traders had managed to build their places of worship and funerary structures of tombs in the port
of Bhadreswar in Gujarat (c.1160). These structures, instead of being arcuate, and hence ‘Muslim’, are low ‘Hindu’ trabeate constructions, using Indic column orders with iconographical details of half-lotus and bead-and-reel bands, derived from local traditions. The label ‘Muslim’ and ‘Islamic’, therefore, needs to be questioned as a distinctive category, right from the start. For, when the forms of arch and dome are used in Hindu/Buddhist/Jain temples or when the beam, lintel or pillars are used in mosques, tombs and palaces of Muslim rulers, these architectural forms are never single monolithic cultural categories and do not belong to one religious community. We have seen this earlier as well. This is because architectural forms are socially rooted at all times and go through a process of adaptation and transformation.

The Delhi Sultans, after the establishment of the Sultanate in 1206, were prolific builders who first introduced the architectural forms of masjids (mosques) and maqbaras (tombs), madrasas (centres of learning), tanks, waterworks and caravanserais (inns) on a large scale under royal patronage. Secular architecture of palaces, citadels underwent modification, while new treatment of spaces was introduced. All this was possible because the Turks introduced the use of lime mortar. Built landscape started changing and turrets of mosques could be seen with temple spires. New forms of ornamentation of calligraphy, geometrical and arabesque patterns came to adorn their buildings of the times. Provincial Sultanates from 14th century in different regions as well came up with ingeniously mosques and tombs, drawing immensely from local regional traditions. The Mughals, coming to power in 1526 in the subcontinent, further added to the rich architectural heritage and introduced their own innovations in design and ornamentation, in techniques and building types. The introduction of the Persian garden architecture is associated with them.

The initial process of adaption of the new forms with the local tradition is best exemplified in the mosques at Delhi (Quwwat ul-Islam, 12th-13th century) and Ajmer (Adhai Din ka Jhonna, 12th-13th century). The arches here are corbelled and not ‘true’, domes are low and conical and the decoration is derived from the temple architecture of the vicinity. The mosques visually represent the ‘symbolic appropriation of land’ by the invaders. However, the structures, at the same time, appropriate and use the past tradition and its visual forms. This is against the backdrop of the historical processes of conquest and interaction of politically antagonistic cultures. Material used in these mosques is both old and new. Hindu artisans under their Muslim patrons seem to have even created new forms and patterns, as evidenced from the visual forms. These mosques actually, represent the beginning of a movement towards unity and fusion of two different architectural traditions of the conqueror and the conquered. What in the end crystallized into a distinctive Indo-Islamic architectural style, the harmonious balance of Islamic traditions of purity of line and form and the indigenous sculptural quality of architecture, is seen in its formative stages in these structures.

**Secular Architecture: Forts**

Military fortification is a key element in all civilizations. Among secular buildings, fortresses, as parts of defence strategy, are of prime importance. With constant threat from rivals and invasions, defence was a high priority for pre-modern societies. India too has had an impressive record of this built heritage right from the Harappa times. Most of these forts have been built on top of ridges, are often surrounded by moats and almost always combine with other structures like residences, palaces, ceremonial and religious architecture. However, most early palaces and forts have undergone many stages of construction, where many original structures
have been lost or perished. Deciphering the original form and design of military architecture, therefore, is not easy.

(i) The Fort of Chittor

The Rajputs, a warrior clan, came into prominence in early medieval period. Commitment to warfare is central to Rajput kshatriya culture. Their art and architecture is a product of a society that is dominated by ‘feudal’ clans, linked by ties of blood. It is a society dominated by military aristocracy. The Rajput strongholds, the great forts and palaces, located in the deserts of Rajasthan and in the state of Madhya Pradesh bear witness to the turbulent history of the area. Chittor, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bundi, Kota, Gwalior and later Amber are some of the surviving examples and among them, Chittor is the oldest.

Most Rajput forts are fort-palaces (garh-palaces). Almost invariably the defence features are contiguous with those of the palace, so that the fort and palace combine to form a single structure. Sometimes the fortified palace is contained within a further fortress. The Rajput garh-palaces also had a symbolic function which rivalled their function as dwellings and military retreats. They served as expressions of power and consolidation in the processes of state formation and became symbols of political rivalry.

The fort of Chittor is located in the state of Rajasthan. Chittor or Chittaurgarh was the capital of Mewar under the Guhilas, later called the Sisodia Rajputs (7th-16th century). The rock of Chittor rises about 500 feet above the surrounding plains and is over 3 miles long and half a mile wide. It was taken by the Guhilas in the early 8th century and turned into a stronghold. Chittor annals record three sacks that the fortress suffered: the first in 1303 by the armies of Sultan Ala ud-Din Khalji of Delhi (1296 - 1316), the second by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1535, and the third which finally broke the kingdom in 1567 by the Mughal emperor, Akbar. It came back into Rajput hands but henceforth Chittor ceased to be the capital, being replaced by Udaipur.

Rana Kumbha’s Palace

Rana Kumbha’s (1433 - 68) Palace is the earliest surviving palace in the complex. The palaces attributed to Bhim and Padmini, victims of Ala ud-Din’s siege are 19th century recreations. However, Rani Padmini’s island retreat shows that there already existed at this early date (c.1300) the idea of a pleasure palace in the middle of a lake. This concept foreshadows the lake-palace of Udaipur, developed to great heights in the architectural tradition of Rajasthan. Rana Kumbha’s palace is situated on the west side of the fort. A mile long from the northern end, it is entered by two gateways to the east. The first gate is the huge Badi Pol and the second is called the Tripolia, a three bayed deep structure. From the gates you enter into a large open space to the south of the palace and to the Darikhana or Sabha, which is a low hypostyle hall (a hall with pillars). This most accessible part of the palace was the public part, serving in all probability as a parade ground and a council chamber. The Sabha hides the main entrance behind in the south facade that leads to the more private areas of the palace.

The northern end structures in the palace are better preserved than the southern. This end is marked by profusion and arrangement of balconies. Each richly carved projecting balcony is a rectangle surmounted by a canopy, which is supported on short columns. The balconies are
arranged one above the other, in vertical groups, forming continuous projections from the facade. The top of the wall of this north front represents another Chittor characteristic. This is the rise and fall in short steps of the top, which is not a straight line and appears stepped and uneven. The effect of this stepping is to give the front a varied skyline. This in turn has the effect of looking unsubstantial, as the uneven line cannot have been met by a single roof which would provide it with volume and mass. But this is where the beauty of Chittor architecture lies.

All the structures are made of dressed stone, covered with stucco. The other exterior surface decoration includes broad sculpted bands serving as string courses, and large flower head projections (knobs).

The interior of the palace is generally irregular except for the northwest corner which is regular and self contained. Here a rectangular block is flanked by two towers of three stories each. The stories, comprising single square chambers have since collapsed. The central block consists of two rectangular chambers, one above the other, and a roof terrace on top. In front of the whole apartment is a small chowk (courtyard), from where a short flight of steps enters the apartment. Kanwar Pade ka Mahal or the palace of the heir apparent to the southwest echoes this arrangement as well.

In each of these two palaces, the jali screens (pierced stone latticed screens) on their outer surfaces indicate women’s quarters, which are also marked by a nearby structure that looks like a sentry box. The women were guarded within the palace and the jali screens protected them from the outside, although their quarters were closely integrated with the rest of the palace. Another feature of Rana Kumbha’s palace is a long street, uncovered, running along east-west axis, making it look more like an assemblage of structures rather than a single compact place. The Surya Gokhra at the east end, built of green stone is another edifice, but that was probably built later.

For a greater protection to the palace, and to provide it with larger storage, the whole structure is raised on a vaulted substructure. However, despite the knowledge of arcuate system, the entire edifice is predominantly trabeate in construction with small temple columns. The Hindu/Jain architectural forms that are seen in the use of balconies, the jalis, flower head knobs and temple columns, include other local features like the richly carved brackets and corbels (supports of the balconies) and the eaves (chajjas) as well. In the temples in the adjoining areas, these forms are extensively used. Eclecticism can be seen in the vaulted substructure, in the use of domes, and in the use of small ogee arches in the central kiosk. These seem to have been borrowed from contemporary Provincial Sultanate architectural style at Malwa.

Rana Rattan Singh’s Palace

Next in importance is Rana Rattan Singh’s (1528 - 31) Palace near the north end of the fort, on the west side of the small Ratneshwar Lake. It is same as Kumbha’s but more regular in overall plan. Originally it was a perfect rectangle, enclosed by a single continuous high wall, punctuated by massive towers, one at each corner and in the centre of the longer sides. This regular form is less evident now, because the palace is much ruined and altered. The slightly tapering towers are octagonal in base with string courses and are topped by squat round domes. The interior of the palace was never planned symmetrically, much like Rana Kumbha’s, which is a maze of small apartments. The southern side is the zenana (women’s quarters). The ogee
pointed arch introduced in Rana Kumbha’s palace is seen in the gateway at the south of this palace. The palace like Kumbha’s is of rough hewn stone and was at one time covered with stucco.

The last structures to be built at Chittor before the Mughal capitulation are the palaces of Jaimal and Patta, the two heroes of Akbar’s siege (1567). They stand together on the western side of the fort, half a mile to the south of Kumbha’s palace. Inspite of this close proximity they represent different treatment and planning. Patta’s palace is much like Kumbha’s in the plan of the zenana. Like Kanwar Pade Ka Mahal, it has a small flight of steps before the entrance, and follows the same arrangement of rooms. Decoration too is similar, although far richer. Also the north wall is stepped at the top, with an uneven skyline but with a new feature of a staircase that leads from the roof terrace to a high balcony, lending it with a certain charm.

Jaimal’s palace is much more different in conception. It is a rectangular solid block on the exterior. The blank walls have no openings except for a centrally placed door, and are relieved by simple string courses suggesting three stories. The central portion of the main east front is somewhat recessed and the walls have a slight batter, but otherwise there is no deviation from a cuboid form. Lower storey is a large central chamber flanked by four small ones, two on each side. The upper storey is reached by an enclosed staircase on the front of the building. The roof terrace is flanked by two chambers that have vaulted ceilings. Entirely without decoration, though with a coat of plaster like in others, perfect symmetry of plan does not seem to be the norm here either. However, though Jaimal’s palace is the most different of all, it still uses familiar forms. Other structures in the fort include the house of Bhama Shah (c.1560), a quarter of a mile to the north of Kumbha’s.

From the above account, it seems there is a tremendous uniformity of style in the Chittor palaces despite the fact that some of them are separated by almost a century, like the time span between Rana Kumbha’s and Patta’s palace. No significant development seems to have taken place in the intervening years. A deliberate resistance to change can be the only explanation because elsewhere in the contiguous regions there are lively innovations. Later this conservatism is seen at Udaipur as well.

The Chittor style is echoed in nearby palaces at Gwalior and Chanderi with certain modifications. The sources for this early Rajput style at Chittor are not easily decipherable. One obvious precedent is the Indo-Islamic architecture that was practised in the adjoining areas of Rajput ascendancy. The Sultanate of Malwa, with its capital at Mandu (15th and early 16th centuries) definitely influenced Chittor. This can be discerned in the domes and the ogee shaped arches, which are used in the Jami Masjid (1440) and the Jahaz Mahal (c.1460) at Mandu. The vaulted substructure too could have come from the Indo-Islamic tradition. But the projecting balconies of both the Chittor palaces and the Mandu Hindola Mahal (c.1425) take their forms from the Hindu temple architecture.

But Chittor ultimately is different to Mandu or Delhi. Indo-Islamic architecture is far more plain, emphasis being on the purity of forms while the decorative urge at Chittor is more paramount. Since not many pre-Chittor structures exist, prior to the medieval period, it is difficult to decipher the antecedents of Chittor. At best we can look at contemporary religious architecture or find correspondences with the descriptions of buildings in contemporary literature or as shown in pictorial records.
(ii) The Fort of Daulatabad

The region of the Deccan (14th - 18th century, the period of Muslim Sultanates), like Rajasthan, is marked by an unending cycle of raids, sieges and invasions. Defensive architecture was important here as well. Fortified cities and strongholds were occupied successively by different armies, thereby like the forts elsewhere, Deccan forts too experienced many phases of construction and changes, once again rendering a reconstruction on original lines extremely difficult.

The fort of Daulatabad is one of the most impregnable forts in India. It stands on a great conical hill of some 200 metres height. The hill is detached from the neighbouring spurs of the Sahyadri ranges, making it isolated. The isolation is further enhanced by the artificial scarping of the hill, which results in the entire rock presenting a vertical face, a formidable 50 metres - 65 metres high. On their arrival in the Deccan, the Delhi Sultanate armies encountered a long standing tradition of military architecture. This chiselling of the sides of this basalt hill, for example had already been completed under the Yadavas of Devagiri (as Daulatabad was then named). So too, the ramparts at Daulatabad, as elsewhere in the pre-Sultanate fortifications of Warangal and Raichur, had walls with quadrangular bastions, constructed of long stone slabs and laid without any mortar. Before the armies of Ala ud-Din Khalji reached Devagiri, the fort’s gateways were already bent entrances and passageways were roofed with horizontal beams for maximum defence.

Sultan Ala ud-Din Khalji’s invasion of the Deccan, beginning at the end of 13th century, succeeded in subjugating and extracting tribute from the Yadava ruler of Devagiri, as also from rulers of other principalities. The stylistic and technical features of the Indo-Muslim architecture were introduced in the Deccan at this time. This however, is not very apparent under the Khaljis, as only few of their monuments exist, the two hastily constructed mosques at Bijapur and Daulatabad, but under the Tughluqs when Sultan Mohammad Bin Tughluq (1325 - 51) made Devagiri his second capital, the situation changed. The occupation of the former Yadava stronghold, now renamed Daulatabad (City of prosperity), was accompanied by extensive building works. The Tughluqs introduced the architectural elements of their fortified cities in the north. The citadel at Tughluqabad with its features of sloping walls, rounded bastions, massive blocks of ashlar masonry, flattish domes, pointed vaults, stone arches bridging gates and portals were some of the forms that they had already devised at Delhi. These in turn can be seen at Daulatabad.

DAULATABAD FORT
The Tughluq commanders exploited to advantage the rock citadel of the Yadavas, which they termed Balakot. To this they added an intermediate circular fort known as Kataka on its northern and eastern flanks. They then built Ambarkot, the fort which fans out in an irregular eclipse, almost 2 kilometres from north to south. Both Kataka and Ambarkot have an outer double circuit of massive ramparts, set at a marked angle and lined with slit holes and battlements. Kataka has its own two lines of wall defences that employ polygonal and round bastions, the inner line being higher. Additional protection is provided by broad moats.

The Delhi gate in the northern walls of Ambarkot has an arched opening decorated with sculpted lions in the spandrels. While the entrance on the east side of Kataka presents a sequence of arched gates and intermediate courts, shielded by massive outworks, projecting almost 80 metres away from the main line of fortification. The walls of Balakot have a similar gate, which opens out into a street that runs westwards. This gate has an arched entrance that is sandwiched between two tapering circular buttresses.

The Jami mosque (congregational mosque) of Kataka was erected in 1318 under the Khaljis, as evidenced by the inscription. It is 80 metres by 60 metres, fairly large and entered on three sides through domed chambers with unadorned sloping walls. A columned facade with four arched portals forms the facade of the prayer hall, reminiscent of the screens of the Qutb mosque at Delhi. The 106 pillars of the prayer hall behind form 25 aisles, each 5 bays deep and support a flat roof, with four external pillars, helping to support a corbelled dome over the principal mihrab, the prayer niche in the qibla (direction of prayer) wall. Many of these columns though have stylized indigenous floral and figural designs, but they were not all removed from temples, some were carved expressively for this structure.

Building activity continued at Daulatabad under the Bahmanis (1347 - 1538), who took over the area in the reign of Mohammad Bin Tughluq. Their ruined residence within Balakot is contained by high walls and entered on the north side through an arched gate. An internal court inside has three chambers with arched doorways. The details here include carved wooden beams and brackets set into the walls, incised plaster work with geometric and arabesque motifs in bands and medallions, and perforated windows with geometric designs in plaster covered brickwork. All these later evolved into the mature Bahmani style.

A short distance, north of the mosque is the brick built Chand Minar (early 14th century and later). Its 30 metres high cylindrical shaft is divided into four stages by three diminishing circular balconies. These are supported on sculpted brackets with pendent lotuses. The base of the Minar is attributed to the Tughluqs but the central section was added by Bahmanis in 1347 to commemorate the occupation of Daulatabad. Its fluted profile, once again recalls the Qutb Minar at Delhi. The summit however, here is marked by a bulbous dome and its base is concealed by a structure with a small mosque that was added in 1445.

The Ahmadnagar Sultans, the Nizam Shahis (1496 - 1636), after taking over the northern territories of the splintered Bahmani kingdom improved some structures at the citadel of Daulatabad, but they concentrated more on the other new forts like the one in Ahmadnagar, their capital. After the temporary Mughal takeover of Ahmadnagar in 1601, when Daulatabad once again became the seat of power, that the Nizam Shahi’s added some structures here. The Chini Mahal, so called because of traces of blue and white tiles set in its facade, was constructed within the precincts of Balakot. The pavilion is in ruins but one can discern the superimposed arched
openings between tapering buttresses. The eaves and gallery running atop have mostly fallen. The interior is a double height hall, spanned by transverse stacked arches, a Timurid central Asian feature.

Daulatabad again fell into Mughal hands in 1633, thereafter serving as their main headquarter, until the move to Aurangabad. Shahjahan’s palace, situated beneath the northern flank of Balakot is in a dilapidated condition. The structure has two courts, the inner one is conceived as a four square garden with raised walkways surrounded by pavilions with cusped arches, a typical Shahjahani architectural form. The second court on the west has three interconnecting octagonal chambers, roofed with flat vaults, while its back arcaded verandah overlooks the rocky trench that surrounds the rock on which is situated the fort. Two brick built *hammams* (bath houses) with perforated domes are as well a part of this Mughal complex. There is another Mughal pavilion with part-octagonal balcony just beneath the summit of Balakot. And yet another *hammam* is outside the fortified eastern entrance to Kataka that has square and octagonal chambers roofed with flattish domes. Smaller cells in the corners are provided with baths.

Outlying structures in Daulatabad include a tomb with *jali* screens to the east of the outer fortification of the fort and an unnamed funerary garden on a hill slope, in the east of Daulatabad.

**The Palace-Dargah of Fatehpur Sikri**

Fatehpur Sikri (1570 - 85), the new capital city of Mughal emperor Akbar (1556 - 1605), was founded around the hospice of Shaikh Salim Chishti, the Sufi saint of Sikri, a small hamlet, some 38 kilometres, west of Agra. According to the contemporary Persian sources, the emperor shifted his capital from Agra to honour the Shaikh, through whose intercession he had been blessed with an heir, the future Jahangir. Just as earlier, his father Humayun’s tomb was placed near Shaikh Nizam ud-Din Auliya’s Chishti *dargah* (a Sufi shaikh’s tomb or shrine) at Delhi, so did Akbar make another Chishti shrine, the site of his new capital. The palace, the public areas, and the religious structures of the Jami mosque and the *khanqah* (the Sufi hospice) were combined together in this enigmatic city. The *khanqah* must have become a *dargah* at the demise of the saint (1572). The city was however, abandoned within 15 years, because of the political exigencies that prompted the Mughal capital to move to Lahore or as some hold, the move came because of lack of water supply.

Built on a rocky ridge, 3 kilometres long and 1 kilometre wide, the city is surrounded by 11 kilometres of wall, except on the south where there was a lake. Structures are made of the locally quarried red sandstone, called the Sikri sandstone. Roughly the plan of the city follows the *naqsha-i manzil*, the layout of the imperial destination/camp, as described by the court historian Abul Fazl, when the emperor was on the move and how his dwelling was laid out in chintz, cloth and props. But the identification and original purpose of most buildings of this camp in stone, remains in question till today. The names the structures bear today were invented for the benefit of 19th century European visitors by the local guides. Also, it is possible, the buildings did have many functions as in traditional pre-modern societies there is little to separate the private spaces from the public, as the buildings were adapted to serve many functions. The palace complex with the religious structures makes up the main city but besides these, the city
had dwellings of nobles, baths, serais, a bazaar, gardens, schools and workshops. It was more than a simple royal residence, was an economic, administrative and an imperial base.

The *khanqah*, situated on the west, is the highest point on the ridge, the focal point of Akbar’s city of victory (Fatehpur). Inside this sacred place, in the courtyard stands the lofty Jami Masjid, entered from three sides. Its southern portal is the enormous gateway, the Buland Darwaza. The courtyard of the mosque contains the tomb of the revered saint. Beneath this courtyard are water reservoirs, connected to the lake on the southern side.

The Buland Darwaza, towering to a height of 54 metres, was built in 1573, to commemorate the victory of Gujarat, when Sikri came to be called Fatehpur Sikri. The Quranic inscriptions on the gate allude to a promise of a paradise to true believers. The purpose of the gate, in this sense befits an entrance to a *khanqah* much more than a victory gate. The Jami Masjid is situated on the west side, the *qibla* (direction of prayer) being the west, to face Mecca, as required. An inscription on the mosque’s east facade states that it was built in 1571 - 72 by the Shaikh himself. Interior inscriptions give the date 1574, probably that of completion. Measuring 89 by 20 metres, the mosque must have been at that time the largest Mughal mosque. The exterior is a high central *pishtaq* (a high arch or a portal), flanked by delicately arched side wings. A row of small *chattris* (free standing canopy turret) lines the eastern edge of the roof. Multiple arched openings, resting on slender pillars are reminiscent of pre-Mughal Mandu and Chanderi mosques. The superstructure too, seems modelled after these mosques, only difference being that here there are small *chattris*, instead of small domes. The facade overall is pre-Mughal but the *pishtaq*, a Timurid feature is a Mughal innovation. In the interior, the main prayer chamber is just behind the high *pishtaq*. It is ornamented with white marble inlaid into red sandstone to form intricate geometric patterns. Painted arabesques and floral motifs with a use of polychrome and gilt suggest the intricacy of Timuri prototype once again. Such embellishment is known from Lodi and Sur times but never with such sophistication. Side wings that flank the central bay are composed of multi-aisled trabeated bays and a double-aisled pillared verandah. The slender pillars here are like the ones at Jahangiri Mahal in Agra fort.

Akbar himself swept the floors of this mosque, read the *khutba* (Friday sermon) himself in 1579, and inspite of the orthodox *ulema* (the religious custodians of Islam), a few months later issued a declaration (*mahzarnama*), assigning himself powers to decide even religious matters. The portals of Fatehpur Sikri became the ground for the emperor to play his imperial vision of consolidating his unfettered authority and establishing a rule based on the still nascent concept of *Sulh-i Kul* (peace with all), the basis of his power, on which rests his lasting legacy.

Shaikh Salim Chishti’s tomb was completed almost a decade later in 1580 - 81, after his demise in 1572. The white marble *dargah*, jewel like, is a single domed building of 15 metres square. A passageway runs around in the interior to facilitate circumambulation. The outer walls of this Gujarat derived structure are composed of intricately carved white marble screens (*jalis*). This feature is earlier seen at Shaikh Ahmad Khattu’s tomb at Sarkhej, Gujarat. Beautifully carved serpentine brackets support the deep eaves (*chajjas*) that encircle the shrine and its projecting south entrance porch. This pre-Mughal tradition was derived from Indo-Islamic architecture of Gujarat, Mandu and Chanderi. The screens and the multi-coloured stone flooring, similar to the one at Sarkhej, were donated by one of Akbar’s nobles, who had served Gujarat. There is a possibility that artisans may have come from Gujarat to build this tomb.
Among the secular structures at Sikri, the palace complex lies to the southeast of the mosque. This part was clearly planned, for the palace is axially and geometrically related to the khanqah. Geometry here serves as a metaphor for Akbar’s control and power. The Hathiya Pol, or Elephant Gate, at the southern end was the main imperial entry point. Here was a drum house (naqqar khana) and a large serai. As one enters inside, there is access to both the mosque side and the palace quarters, including the Daulat Khana-i Khass o Amm (Public Audience Hall), an important administrative building. At the foot of the Hathiya Pol is a minaret, the Hiran Minar, considered to be a hunting tower. Derived from Iranian prototypes, the structure with its protruding stones was probably a mile post (kos minar). The Daulat Khana-i Khass o Amm to its west was entered by a long road, lined with shops. This secular complex faces the other religious end of the Jami Masjid and the dargah, the two focal points of Akbar’s empire. The structure is a simple pillared flat-roofed verandah. In the central west side is a projection for the emperor’s seat. Behind on the west side, between the Jami and the Public Hall are the rest of the private palace structures, most of whose functions are unidentified.

One of these structures is the Anup Talao, a square pool in whose centre is a pavilion, where the emperor may have sat to have religious discussions or the tank was filled with coins, which were distributed by the emperor. Surrounding the tank is Turkish Sultan’s House, almost surely wrongly named so. It is distinguished by a rich tapestry of carvings of intricate geometric patterns, trees, flowers, vines, birds and animals, again reminiscent of Timurid prototypes. The floor level ornamentation indicates that people here sat and not stood like in the Public Audience Hall.

On the south edge of Anup Talao, is a multi-storied building, called the Khwabgah, the imperial sleeping chamber. Traces of figural painting and calligraphy can be seen on its walls. One of the painted verses proclaims: ‘the adorner of the realm of Hindustan’, thus confirming the building’s imperial association. The top storey of the pavilion is a central rectangular block, earlier seen at his fort in Allahabad. Immediately to the south of the Khwabgah is the Daftar Khana, or the Records office. It has an open window that overlooks the terrain below. This was Akbar’s Jharokha (a small projecting window/balcony supported on brackets), in which he showed himself daily to the public at daybreak.

A small square building, with a pillar shaft in its midst, named the Diwan-i Khass (Private Audience Hall) has evoked much speculation among art historians. Its location, just behind the Public Audience Hall, and aligned with the Jharokha, indicates it might have been the Private Audience Hall. The exterior is like the rest of pavilions but the interior with an elaborated carved pillar in the centre is unique. Its capital is composed of similar serpentine brackets, as in the Saint’s dargah. These brackets, fuller at the top than at the bottom, support a circular platform on top, which is connected to each corner of the building by stone slab walkways. A narrow path, running around connects these walkways. Akbar probably sat on this platform. Some believe that here he projected himself as the Hindu/Buddhist chakravartin, the universal ruler, presiding over all and sundry. However, the eclectic mind of the emperor developed later, after much of Fatehpur Sikri was constructed. As a matter of fact, this is the phase when he looked more towards Islam, both orthodox and popular to draw his legitimacy. Most likely the emperor sat on this platform to project himself as the dominant figure of the empire, its axis and pillar.
To the west of this area are small multi-storied trabeated structures. Often they are assumed to be Akbar’s residences for his queens and nobles. Most probably, they housed only princes and women of the household, for all of them are linked to the Khwabgah by covered screened passageways. The tallest of these is the Panch Mahal of five tiers with a large chattri. Pierced stone screen can be seen on its facade, hence would have been meant for imperial women use. The structure looks to be a pleasure pavilion, with its open spaces for cool breezes.

The largest among these trabeated structures is today called Jodha Bai’s Palace. This might have been the first palace to be constructed because it directly leads through a once covered passage to the Hathya Pol, the main imperial entrance. The building encloses a courtyard, entered by an arched gate. The rooms of the interior are trabeated, and covered with Gujarat type ornamentation. The brackets atop recessed niches in the walls are like the temple and mosque niches of Gujarat. Similarly the hanging bell and chain motif carved on many pillars has precedents in the Hindu and Muslim architecture of pre-Mughal Gujarat and Bengal.

The so called House of Birbal, one of Akbar’s courtiers, inscribed with the date 1572, is also in the vicinity. A phrase that follows the date says: ‘royal mansion of initiation’, suggesting that its purpose was not residential, but ceremonial or even administrative. The carved ornamentation here as well goes back to pre-Islamic as well as Sultanate architecture.

The employment of both ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ forms by the emperor in the architecture at Fatehpur Sikri has earned for the complex, the epithet of ‘Sulh-i Kul(peace with all) in stone’ - a ‘Hindu’-‘Muslim’ synthesis in stone, running parallel with his eclectic policy of universal toleration. Art historian, Ram Nath, while searching for the sources of Sikri structures has elaborated on the influence of indigenous motifs, ornamentation, local roofs and pillar types, derived from domestic architecture, on the architecture of Fatehpur Sikri. The ‘Hindu’ forms from Gujarat and Jamuna-Chambal region (Delhi, Agra, Dholpur, Gwalior and Malwa) were harmoniously fused with ‘Islamic’ ones to create the perfectly blended Fatehpur Sikri structures. These influences, argues the author, should be seen against the backdrop of the patron’s own eclectic personality.

However, we have already mentioned that it is difficult to assign monolithic identities to cultural forms. There is no ‘Hindu’ trabeate nor is there a ‘Muslim’ arcuate. Both the types of buildings used both the systems of construction and ornamentation. Also, Akbar’s choice of a style that would appeal to all regardless of sectarian differences may not have been consciously done at this time because his future policy of universal toleration was still in its formative years. Nonetheless, it certainly speaks volumes for the man that he chose the best from all parts of India and put it all together in a consolidated form. The assimilation of regional forms should also be judged against the backdrop of his earlier policies when he abolished many discriminatory laws against the non-believers.

Most historians today look at the shift to Fatehpur Sikri and its architectural forms in a wider context. To Monica Juneja, Fatehpur Sikri was conceived of as a microcosm of the Mughal Empire through reuniting within its spaces a distillation of visual and structural forms that had once belonged to regions brought under the imperial umbrella. She further interprets the complex as flexible, as one open space opens into another, with no central visual control. There is no consummation, no arriving at a point. The functions of the structures are flexible too. It was a manifesto of an empire in the making that had architectural features from all over.
For Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, Akbar and his planners focussed on two structures, the mosque, containing the jewel like tomb of Shaikh Salim and Akbar’s imperial palace. The two were ‘ideologically linked’ and ‘formally related’ through the layout of the city and the design of its principal buildings. Beyond these were laid the rest houses, gardens and villas. Fatehpur Sikri and its environs was a 300 mile long corridor running from Agra to Ajmer in the west. In Ajmer, was located Shaikh Muin ud-Din Chishti’s dargah, to which the emperor made annual pilgrimages. The new capital represented a formal point of connection between the older political and spiritual poles of Agra and Ajmer, and Akbar, in situating and designing the city, clearly stated that the spiritual basis for his rule was Islamic. The authors further argue that the new city was an expression of political stability and military victory. The Hall of Private Audience, sometimes identified as the Ibadatkhana, the House of Worship, symbolized the new order of social harmony that Akbar was trying to promote.

John F. Richards interprets Fatehpur Sikri against his larger discussion of imperial authority under Akbar and Jahangir. In the first two decades Akbar established his infallible spiritual authority, to make his person the metaphor for the empire. Part of this campaign was to reject Delhi as the seat of power. At this time he built the forts of Agra, Allahabad, Lahore, Rohtas and Attock. Fatehpur Sikri too is a part of that, as it represents the final break with Delhi in 1571, while its forms represent the orthodox religious ideology that he relied on for legitimacy. He combined the mosque and the dargah, legal and mystical Islam into his political authority, against the backdrop of the mahzarnama, that gave him unfettered authority. Eventually these forms of Islam were further subordinated to his authority when the sons of the Shaikh were recruited in the imperial service and were not made heirs to the shrine. The Sikri years saw assimilation into his political authority the orthodox and popular Islam, symbolized by the combination of palace and the mosque and the dargah. The abandoning of Sikri led to a change in ideology as well, from religious to more imperial for his legitimacy, as orthodoxy was given up after 1580. Finally, Richards sees Sikri as a secure common post to mobilize forces west towards Rajasthan and Gujarat, and if need be to the east to tackle the Afghans. For Richards, the move to Sikri was to lend an Islamic (in all forms) religious basis to his sovereignty and a political need of a military corridor.

Attilio Petruccioli sees a grid system behind the planning of Fatehpur Sikri, though he observes an incongruity within that grid. To him, the romantic association of Fatehpur Sikri and it foundation with the need to honour the saint needs to be shelved. For Petruccioli, Sikri was a political operation to achieve two aims: an attempt to centralize the court and to uproot the nobility from its stronghold of Agra. Fatehpur Sikri is a residential city, a gilded prison for the court, with a lack of military defences here. This was to keep the nobility firmly under control. Petruccioli further sees the city as representing ‘cultured architecture’ in a vernacular style, where tradition piece by piece was put at a higher level. To him the Sikri ‘new style’ was just this, an expanded scale architecture of an imperial ideal and not quite like the European Renaissance style which was based on intrinsic factors and configurations that coalesced in a movement.
Glenn D. Lowry is concerned with the rigid alignment of the city’s structures that are east to west or north to south, while the ridge itself is aligned southeast to northwest. This means the terrain is better suited for a diagonal layout but the structures are rigidly aligned following the cardinal directions. The seat of the emperor in the Diwan-i Khass o Amm is oriented to the west. From contemporary sources, it seems the Hall was also a site for prayers till 1582, after which public prayer in the court was abolished. This would mean the people, when they faced the qibla to pray, they actually faced the emperor. The emperor here then symbolically became
the *qibla* of the empire and the city became the setting for articulation of the imperial vision of himself as the master of the physical and spiritual worlds. Lowry further argues that the palaces located between the Diwan-i Khass o Amm and the Jamī Masjid are caught between the dual forces of these structures, the two poles of the empire, spiritual and temporal. They are in the middle ground between the formal and spiritual needs of the empire. They are a theatrical setting on a microcosmic level, to enact this vision. The microcosmic is completed by the macrocosmic parallel in Fatehpur Sikri’s position as a royal corridor between the two poles, the temporal Agra and the spiritual Ajmer.
COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

Profound changes took place in the art and architecture of India during the colonial era. European colonists, the Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French and the British brought with them the concepts and forms of European architecture - Neoclassical, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. The initial structures were utilitarian warehouses and walled trading posts, giving way to fortified towns along the coastline. The Portuguese adapted to India the climatically appropriate Iberian galleried patio house and the Baroque churches of Goa. The St. Francis Church at Cochin, built by the Portuguese in 1510, is believed to be the first church built by the Europeans in India.

The Danish influence is evident in Nagapatnam, which was laid out in squares and canals and also in Tranquebar and Serampore. The French gave a distinct urban design to their settlement in Pondicherry by applying the Cartesian grid plans and classical architectural patterns.

However, it was the British who left a lasting impact on India architecture. They saw themselves as the successors to the Mughals, as they settled down to about 200 years of rule, and used architecture as a symbol of power. The British followed various architectural styles – Gothic, Imperial, Christian, English Renaissance and Victorian being the essentials.

The first British buildings under the East India Company were factories but later courts, schools, municipal halls and *dak* bungalows came up. These simple structures were built by their garrison engineers. A far deeper concern with architecture was exhibited in churches and other public buildings, though most of these were adaptations of the buildings designed by leading British architects back home in England.
Under the Company, the old Indian port cities turned into fortified zones. The new English fortifications turned city walls into artillery platforms and angled them mathematically to cover all lines of fire. And since, the guiding principle behind all architectural activity in these ports was security, the fortified port cities of the Company, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, were not centrally planned cities. The Company was suspicious of any central planning that involved unnecessary expense. The streets though, were fairly regularly laid out. Modest churches and hospitals catered to the European population. But the paramount consideration was defence. The governor's residence served as the symbol of authority. The port cities had Black and White towns to segregate the European and native populations.

Changes came after the victory at Plassey (1757), the English now ventured out of the fortified port cities to the countryside for the first time. Interaction between Indian and western cultures produced an architecture of great variety with elegance, especially domestic architecture. Many imposing public buildings were constructed by the East India Company engineers with the help of Indian builders. However, the inspiration was often the European architectural texts and a time lag of around 20 years before the style was introduced into India from Britain. Unlike Europe, these buildings were built mostly of brick and stuccoed with lime *ochunam*, sometimes ‘facades’ incised to look like stones. Some later buildings were built with stones as well. The Neoclassical style was modified to the exigencies of Indian tropical climate and landscape.

This Neoclassical architecture flourished in different parts of India under the British, inspired by the Houses of Parliament in London. Colonel Thomas Cowper built the town hall in Bombay during 1820 to 1835. Governor Sir Bartle Frere tried to give a truly imperial ambience to the city of Bombay. During his reign the old town walls were broken down and the Gateway of India was built in the Gothic style of architecture. The Secretariat, University Library, Rajabai Tower, Telegraph Office and the Victoria Terminus all followed the Victorian Gothic style, similar to buildings in London. Undoubtedly, the Victoria Terminus, designed by the architect Frederick William Stevens modelled on the St.Pancras Station, is the finest example of Gothic architecture with a subtle hint of the Indo-Saracenic motifs, an extravaganza of polychromatic stone, decorated tile marble and stained glass. Stevens also designed other buildings like the Churchgate Terminus and the Municipal Building opposite the Victoria Terminus in Bombay.
V.T. Station, Mumbai

Municipal Building, Mumbai
Rajabhai Tower

Mumbai University
But perhaps the most original contribution of colonial culture was the domestic bungalow, derived from the rustic Bengali hut, a cool low-slung, single storied, high ceilinged residence perfectly adapted to the tropical climate.

The uprising of 1857 led to further changes, but this time, the event led to a renewed sense of insecurity and to another conception of defence. Exclusive settlements inhabited by European civil and military officials, the cantonments, came into being outside the Indian towns. The army barracks were placed behind the parade grounds in these cantonments, to ensure maximum security.

The passing of power from the East India Company to the British Crown, after the uprising, and the rise of Indian nationalism and the introduction of railways were the watersheds in the British Colonial Indian architectural history. New materials like concrete, glass, wrought and cast iron opened up new architectural possibilities. The architecture of the colonial cities was now motivated by the need to project an awe-inspiring image of the Raj, as their confidence had been shaken by the uprising. The British also started assimilating and adopting the native Indian styles in architecture. All these factors led to the development of the Indo- Saracenic architecture towards the end of the 19th century.

In the early 19th century, classical architecture was used to celebrate an empire held to be as enduring as the Roman Empire. But after the uprising, aggressive anglicizing was given up and the Indian Raj turned to the notion of ‘timeless India’. Instead of reform and change, tradition and order became the dominant motto. This was to underline the fact that only the Raj could keep the peace in a land that was divided on religious and cultural lines and lacked cohesion. The British adopted the Indo-Saracenic style. Victorian in essence, the style borrowed heavily from the Indo-Islamic style of Mughals, Afghan and Sultanate rulers. In fact it was a *pot pourri* of architectural styles; a hybrid style that combined in a wonderful manner the diverse architectural elements of pre-Indo-Islamic and Mughal with Gothic arches, domes, spires, traceries and minarets.
The Indo-Saracenic style was Indian on the outside and British inside since the facade was built with an Indian touch while the interior was solely Victorian. The Chepauk Palace in Chennai, the Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata, the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai and the Lakshami Vilas palace in Baroda are some of the outstanding examples. But it was the architecture of New Delhi where the imperial ideology was expressed officially in most graphic ways.
LAKSMI VILAS PALACE, BARODA

Lutyens’ Delhi

The architecture of New Delhi was the crowning glory of the British Raj, but ironically it was also its swansong. Robert Byron described New Delhi as ‘The Rome of Hindostan’. The British built New Delhi as a systematically planned city after it was made the capital in 1911. But the new capital, for all the grandeur of its conception, was to mark the beginning of the end.

The British Viceroy made Sir Edward Lutyens responsible for the overall plan of Delhi. He was specifically directed to design the Viceroy’s House, now called the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Herbert Baker, who had worked on the British buildings in South Africa, was commissioned to design the adjoining buildings of the South and the North Blocks, which flank the Rashtrapati Bhawan, the Secretariats. Another Englishman called Robert Tor Tussell was assigned to do the shopping complex, Connaught Place and the Eastern and Western Courts.

Much debate ensued in deciding the design of the new capital. The question was how the empire was to be most appropriately represented in stone? As there was no consensus, on one side were the partisans of the Indo-Saracenic design, who saw in the relocation of the capital to the Mughal heartland an opportunity for Britain to reclaim India’s great imperial predecessors, above all Akbar, the builder of Fatehpur Sikri, and Shahjahan, whose, Shahjahanabad was the heart of Delhi of 19th century. Yet at the same time there were the partisans who thought only the Edwardian classicism alone could do justice to represent the empire in stone.

In the end, the Indo-Saracenic was decisively repudiated. Yet classicism, as the viceroy, Lord Hardinge, and with him Herbert Baker, sought to ‘orientalize’ its forms, secured but an uncertain victory. The chief designer, Lutyens, committed to neoclassical style, on his part contempitously rejected Indic forms, but at the same time assimilated them into an architecture
that is stamped with his personal genius. But Lutyens work was no lasting legacy, for the building of New Delhi marked the end of the British rule.

Baker on the other hand was fired by the romance of empire as a partnership between the ruler and the ruled. He was more concerned with the political implications of the new capital, which he sought to make it more imperial. He considerably diluted Lutyens’ classicism in the Secretariat buildings that were designed by him. It was because of Baker that besides the Mughal portal entryway, three ‘characteristically Indian’ forms were adopted. These were: the chajja (deep eves, wide projecting cornice), the jali (pierced stone latticed screen) and the chattri (free standing canopy turret). The compelling attraction for Baker to these forms, it seems was not so much because they were Indian forms but that they were best suited for Indian climate. The projecting cornice, protected the walls and windows from the sun and the rain, and thus made room for the open window. The jali admitted air but not the light of the scorching sun. The chattri was adopted for aesthetic purpose of breaking the long horizontal skyline of the flat roofed Secretariats. It was again, largely because of Baker that nationalist artists were commissioned to do the murals in these buildings. Both Baker and Hardinge saw in the blended style of an ‘orientalised’ classicism a ‘happy marriage’ of East and West.

The chosen site for the new city was to the west of the old city. It was a flat plain, but in the centre was a small mount called the Raisina hill, which was to be the seat of the government. In the final product, as the complex stands today, radiating avenues lead to a wide, canal bordered avenue. Two miles away on the slight rise of the Raisina stand the Secretariats and the Viceroy’s House, symbolically joined together on the throne of government. While the dome of the Viceroy’s House slowly disappears behind the slope in the road as we drive down the Rajpath (King’s way), Baker’s Secretariat buildings, built on great retaining walls, right on the edge of the hill, rise up, acting, as Baker suggested, a kind of bastion to the house beyond. It is only after we come to the top of the hill that the Viceroy’s House is visible, or is rather revealed slowly in full splendour. To Lutyens, this conception was absurd at that time. He wanted his building to stand alone on the hill and the Secretariat buildings to be clustered around below. But finally, Baker’s idea prevailed.

Lutyens achievement, nonetheless, was no less great, the Viceroy’s House is magnificent in its form and details. The dome, symbolizing power, is half a simple sphere, supported by a plain drum. Below the drum there runs a series of mouldings which develop into a thin strip of stone, underneath of which is a deep slot of dark shadow, rendering it with a floating feel. Below, the stone changes to a dark red to form a base. Under the dome, the flat horizontal roof line runs. A chajja juts out to throw a deep shadow and a vast recessed portico of the columns below. On either side of the portico are the walls of the main house. These are further broken into loggias, open verandahs and other functional spaces. The private quarters are elegantly simple. A well laid out Mughal garden, with an ingenious use of water, completes the exterior.

The other official buildings of New Delhi use the same combination of features, the open verandahs with columns, and the three characteristic Indic forms. The rest of the new city was characterized by wide avenues with trees in double rows on either side, creating vistas and connecting various points of interest. Almost every major road has a specific focal point closing the vista, so that no avenue is lost in the horizon. Besides the diagonal road pattern, the most prominent feature of the plan is the Central Vista Park, starting from the National Stadium in the east, continuing through to India Gate and the Secretariat buildings, and finally culminating in
the west at the Viceroy’s House. This is the main east-west axis; it divides New Delhi into two parts, with the shopping centre, Connaught Place in the north and extensive government residences, the bungalows, in the south.

New Delhi was expected to be a concrete symbol of Indian aspirations under the British rule, an Imperial vision with Indic forms, achieved through ‘orientalized’ classicism. But in the end, it was ironic, that from the inception of New Delhi in 1911 to its actual completion in 1932, the political situation in India had reached such a crisis point that the new capital remained a hollow seat of an empire that was soon to collapse, the end coming in 1947.
NORTH BLOCK, NEW DELHI

SOUTH BLOCK, NEW DELHI
Conclusion

Architecture is an important medium to study culture, society and polity. The architectural tradition of Indian subcontinent dates back to our ancient past. Buddhism and Hinduism were two important faiths which influenced the development of different architectural forms such as the stupa, the vihara, the chaitya and the temple built during the ancient period. The advent of Islam added to the rich architectural heritage in the form of tombs, mosques, dargah and madrasas. The Mughals contributed to these developments by introducing new features with innovative designs and ornamentations. The forts built by the Rajputs, the muslim Sultans, the Mughals and others present a secular image of the architectural tradition. The colonial era witnessed significant changes in the field of art and architecture. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British introduced the concepts and forms of European architecture. This was applied in building urban settlements, public buildings, forts, churches, memorials etc. The contributions of Edward Lutyens, Herbert Baker and Robert Tor Tussel in planning, designing and building post -1911 Delhi (New Delhi) added a new chapter in the history of Indian architecture.

LONG QUESTIONS

1. Critically examine the various perspectives on Indian art and architecture.
2. Discuss the Pallava architectural forms at Mamallapuram.
3. Discuss the form, meaning and context of Indian temples.
4. Explain the various temple architectural styles, illustrating your answer with case studies of Thanjavur/Khajuraho.
5. What are the characteristic features of fort architecture? Present a case study of Chittor/Daulatabad.
6. Do the architectural forms of Fatehpur Sikri depict Emperor Akbar’s imperial vision? Elucidate.
7. What are the sources for the architectural forms at Fatehpur Sikri?
8. Explain in what ways the colonial architecture of New Delhi represents an ‘Imperial vision with Indic forms’.

SUGGESTED READINGS

LESSON 6A
INDIAN SCULPTURE
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Introduction

The arts in the Indian tradition were considered to be creations of the gods, and therefore none was superior to the other. Just as dance and music was begotten by Shiva, painting and sculpture was begotten by Vishnu and architecture by Rudra Vishwakarman. Cultural creation was believed to be a reflection of the divine and therefore saundarya or aesthetic pleasure was built into its production and consumption. It is no wonder that the majority of ancient and medieval arts came up within a socio-religious context. Art for its own sake was not known or created in either the classical or the folk context. The artist was a sadhaka, a person who meditated upon his creation using a number of prescriptive and ritual texts rather than an individual genius, since art was an offering as well as revealed to him.

India has a long sculptural tradition that may be traced back to the Neolithic cultures, however archaeologically; a continuous trajectory of evolution may be traced from the 3rd century B.C onwards. References to the existence of sacred sculptures antedate the material evidence. Early texts call images -- pratima, sandrshi, prakriti or bimba, which later came to denote arca, or religious objects of worship, the term comes only later.

The earliest reference to the attributes of gods comes from the Vedic period where we have word pictures of various deities such as that of Shri in the Shri Sukta though it is not archeologically proved. Panini, a grammarian belonging to the sixth Century B.C however has referred to the existence as well as rituals surrounding a prakriti or an image. Similarly Saunaka in his digest Brihat devata refers to ten essential elements that help us identify a deity such as form, relationship, emblem, vehicle, name, attribute, symbol etc. the Grhyasutras are unequivocal in the recognition of pratima of icons and the domestic rituals involved in their worship.

However, creation of images comes into prominence only with the popularization of bhakti as a religious doctrine amongst all sects, be it Buddhism, Jainism, Shivaism or Vishnuism. The personal bond between the devotee and the ishtadevata or personal god through the offering of obeisance, puja and archana required a direct and identifiable object of worship as well as place of worship. This led to the creation of anthropomorphic images as well as shrines to house them. Another impetus was the worship of popular spirits such as yakshas, vrikshas (trees) and waters along with funerary remains of Mahapurushas such as Buddha and Mahavira and their principal disciples. The third stream that inspired early sculptures were the word images of deities found in Vedic hymns that were translated into sculptures of various sectarian gods.

1. Shilpasatric Normative Tradition

An entire textual tradition exists, consisting of the Shilpashastras and the Vastushastras that gives rules and regulations along with the description of numerically increasing as well as progressively complex icons. These texts coincide with the creation of the Pauranic tradition which is based on a variety of myths and of familial (such as the families of Shiva or Vishnu) as
well as sectarian relationships of the gods within a pantheon for example the various avatara(s) in Vishnuism or the variety of subsidiary deities such as Nandi, ganas etc. in Shivaism. The creation of icons corresponds to the incorporation of deities and myths into the pantheon of Vishnu, starting from Matsya to Kalki as is seen in sculptures on the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh.

Like the other shastric texts the Shilpashastra(s) lay down the exact prescriptions as well as rituals, in this case for the creation of sculptures and buildings. These regulations range from the “state of being” of the sculptor to the selection of stone or other media, the preparation of the surface to the technique of sculpting and characteristics of the icon itself. The texts also give exact measurements and proportions of each image, which is known as iconometry which along with iconography lays downs rules for making an icon. Iconography literally means the study of icons, and includes within it the identification, description, and the interpretation of the content of images. It can be interpreted as a) Pictorial illustration of a subject b) The collected representations illustrating a subject or c) a set of specified or traditional symbolic forms associated with the subject or theme of a stylized work of art.

The Pratimalakshna of Naganjít was one such text that had a lasting impact on later treatises such as the Brihatmahita of Varahmira and of Utpala. Other texts like the Vishvakarmavatarashastra, the Aprajitaprichha, the Samgrnaustradhara of King Bhoja, Abhilashitarthacintamani of king Somesvaradeva of the Chalukayas, Manasara, Manasollasa, Mayamata and Shilparatna of Shrikumara are some of the specialized texts that fall under the category of the Shilpashastra(s). These were largely written between the sixth to the thirteenth centuries.

The information contained within these is largely taken from religious texts such as the Samhitas, Agamas and Tantras along with Puranas such as Agni Purana and Vayu Purana. The most important of texts on iconography is an upapurana called the Vishnudharmottarapurana that was composed in Kashmir somewhere during the late seventh century. This text gives detailed descriptions of the form, attributes, colour of most of the significant deities of north India. Similar texts belonging to both north and south India continued to be composed during the medieval period and have made an enormous contribution to our study and understanding of traditional Indian art and architecture. However, this is not to suggest that Indian artists were bound only by the formal prescription given in the texts and could not innovate or adapt these to their individual genius or regional practices of which we have countless examples.

2. Classicism –Narrative and Sculptural

Free standing sculptures of local deities such as the Manibhadra Yaksha were commissioned by individual merchants such as Kunika from the third century onwards. These local spirits, called yakshas and yakshis in inscriptions as well as texts, were guardian deities of cities, city gates, orchards, trees and waters. They were associated with fertility and prosperity and the ability to fulfill the earthly aspirations of the devotee. Some of the earliest examples are the Didarganj Yakshi and the Parkham Yaksha though of course other such larger than life size figures are found all over north India during this period. In terms of art, there is a remarkable uniformity of idiom and style in the conception and execution of these huge sculptures from all over India, indicating a kind of pan Indian religious belief system as well as mobility of ideas and of lay people.
Contemporary to the production of these images, the imperial art of the Mauryas also flourished that centered on the production of polished columns and animal capitals. However this was a short lived experiment because post Mauryan art that followed the Mauryan experiment was largely corporate and narrative in character. The period between 2nd century B.C and 3rd century A.D. is marked by the construction of structural stupas at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Kausambi and Sanchi, along with rock cut chaityas and bodhi grihas and viharas at Karle, Kanheri, Bhaja, Bhedsa, Pithalkhora and Ghatokachha caves. Most of these early surviving examples of art are either Buddhist or Jaina. The structures were embellished with bas relief sculptures of sectarian emblems such as the triratna or dharmachakra along with lotuses and other auspicious (mangala) symbols such as couples or mithunas. Alongside narratives from the live of Buddha in previous lives such as the Jataka stories or avadana stories were also presented for the instruction of the pilgrim.

The earliest surviving example of narrative art comes from Bharhut, near Satna in Madhya Pradesh. Only the great railing or the vedika running around the stupa and the gateways or toranas constructed on all four cardinal points survive from this site now. Sanchi is a better preserved monument that showcases early narrative Buddhist art. Built over many centuries, the main structure of the stupa, the vedika and torana may be dated between 50 B.C. to A.D.150. Relief sculptures on the stone gateways not only illustrate episodes from the life and worship of the Buddha along with the inscriptions about the donors, but also provide a glimpse onto the life, beliefs and structures of the period. These inscriptions inform us that traders, householders, craftsmen, guilds, queens, ministers, nuns and monks –ordinary and great men and women contributed to the construction of this monument to Buddhist piety.

The early stupas are first examples of sculpture in hard stone while the earlier tradition was to carve in softer surface of wood and ivory and this was the prototype for stone carving, thus the relief is shallow and rather flat with little three dimensionality. In the narratives the main character of the story is generally placed in the centre of the panel with subsidiary figures on either side. The human figures are placed in a frontal pose, and profile is very rare.

In these early carvings, the Buddha is represented by his symbols be it a throne, a bodhi tree, a stupa or footprints but not in his human form as the art was made by monks and lay people who followed the earlier form of Buddhism or Theravada where Buddha is not worshipped in his human form. A large number of carvings at Sanchi depict episodes from the life Buddha particularly the Birth, the Great Renunciation, Enlightenment, the First Sermon at Sarnath and the Parinirvana or death. One also finds episodes from the Jatakas such the Vessanatara Jataka and Mahakapi Jataka. Other episodes include the miracles performed by the Buddha such as walking on the Nilanjana River and the conversion of the Kashyapa Brahmins. There are number of scenes of worship of Buddha and his symbols.

The art of Sanchi is important for the study of narrative devices, one of the most important being the invention of continuous narrative. Here in a single panel, the same figure is shown three or four times, each showing a moment from the story such as the story of the Buddha leaving his palace on the east gateway. On the left is the gate of city and the palace (which gives us a fair idea of urban architecture) with the horse and umbrella indicating the presence of the divine being. This is repeated four times till we reach the extreme left where a set of footprints suggest that the Buddha has left the horse and the umbrella to proceed towards
meditation under the Bodhi tree. Under this we see a horse without the umbrella being led back to the palace.

At Sanchi nature has been depicted not in a truly realistic manner but to suggest its recognizable aspects. Thus water, especially the river, is depicted through horizontal waves, with aquatic animals emphasizing the water environment. Trees are shown with large leaves and fruit and with short trunks, generally surrounding by a platform.

The developments at Sanchi and elsewhere gave rise to three important schools of art in India that flourished in north and the Deccan from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourth century A.D.: in and around Mathura, north-western region of Gandhara and near the Krishna river at Amaravati. The developments in sculpture in these regions laid the foundation of classicism and iconographic canons in the India.

Intext Questions:
1. What do you understand by iconography?
2. Discuss the importance of the shilpshastric tradition in the development of Indian art.
3. Describe some of the features of early Buddhist art.

2.1. Mathura School of Art
Mathura art reflects the urban and sophisticated tastes of the inhabitants, patrons and sculptors of the region who adapted the older forms of Bharhut-Sanchi and foreign artistic influences of Bactro-Gandharan art to create a widely spread and influential art style.

Mathura and the surrounding region have a long history though continuous political history can be traced from the 6th century B.C. onwards when this became the capital of the Surasena janapada. Later, it came under the control of the Magadhan kingdom under the Nandas and Mauryas from whom it passed on to the Sungas under whom it was a prosperous city as recorded by Patanjali in the 2nd century B.C. It continued to be under the suzerainty of local chiefdoms such as the Mitras and Dattas whose coins have been discovered form the region. It is in the middle of the 1st century B.C. that Mathura came under the rule of Saka-Kshaptrapas whose rulers such as Rajula and his son Sodasha issued the inscriptions of importance. It is under the Kushanas, especially under Kanishka that Mathura became the eastern capital and emerged as a major centre of art activity. The Kushanas ruled this region till about A.D. 250 after which there is a hiatus or gap here till the rise of the Gupta in the 4th century B.C. though art activity continued in the transitional period. This period saw an expanding urbanization and the rise of long-distance trade. This led to an increased contact within larger areas of the Kushana Empire. The art of this period also has a pronounced urbanized sensibility as the tastes and desires of the lay city dwellers transform.

By 2nd Century B.C. Mathura was both an important urban center as well a as a center for various faiths such as Buddhism, Jainsim, Shivaism, Vishnuism and Naga Cults. The Bhagvata cult of Vishnu spread here in 1st-2nd century A.D. (Kushana Period). Thus, during the period art derived from religion flourished here. In the early period large Yaksha and Yakshi images were carved. During the Shunga period worship of gods through symbols such as the Bodhi tree, chakra etc continued Later Jaina and Buddhist stupas were built at Mathura along with the rest of central India.
The art of Mathura is characterized by the use of mottled red Sikri sandstone that is found in the area around it. Majority of sculptures have been recovered from sites in and around the city from various Buddhist, Jaina and other sectarian building. The important Buddhist sites include Katra Keshavadeva, Jamalpur, Chaubara, Bhutesvara, Palikhera, Maholi and Govindgarh, while the most famous Jaina site is at Kanakali Tila. Sonkh has revealed the existence of apsidal structural temples belonging to naga cult along with other antiquities. However, the influence of Mathura art was spread over most of north India with specimens being discovered from Sarnath, Kausambi, Bodhgaya and Rajgir in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, along with Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh and Chandraketugarh in Bengal, Vadnagar in Gujarat and Taxila in Pakistan. From Ahicchatra and Sanghol in UP and Punjab respectively a considerable quantity and variety of sculptures in Mathura style have been discovered that provide proof of the export and popularity of the art beyond the city itself.

The sculptures from the Mathura School have remarkable stylistic unity. The figures have oval or round-ish faces with open eyes, thick lips and sharp nose with a fleshy full bodied figure are shown in a number of postures. Most of the female figures are delineated in a voluptuous manner with heavy round breasts, narrow waist and broad hips. The male figures are shown with slight V-shaped torsos. The figures are generally shown wearing a diaphanous (almost transparent), clinging dhoti, while a scarf like uttariya emerges from behind one shoulder over one forearm. The divine figures are shown with one hand upraised in abhaya mudra and the other is placed on the waist near the knot of waist band, with a canopy like halo atop and behind the head. Plants, leaves, birds and animals were rendered in a realistic manner and much care has been to create details of these on background as well as the reverse of many sculptures at Mathura. The figure of the Buddha wears a samghati that covers only one shoulder, the hair are arranged in small snail like curls or are gathered in a kapardin like top knot. A large halo with scalloped edges representing a flame or light can be seen behind the head. Often attendant deities such as bodhisattvas or Indra and Brahma are shown on both sides of the Buddha.

The discovery of a number of dated donative’s inscriptions from the pedestals of the Buddha and bodhisattva images from Mathura and surrounding areas have contributed greatly to our understanding of the evolution of the Buddha image as well as the Buddhist principles and tenets popular during the time. One of the best preserved specimens is from Ahiccahtra whose inscription reveals that is was a gift of the Bhikshu Virana for the ‘benefit and happiness of all teachers, together with elderly shramanas and disciples.” The inscription is dated in the year thirty two, probably of the Kanishka era, i.e A.D. 152. In another example the sculpture of seated meditating Buddha founded from Katra informs us that it was dedicated by a Buddhist nun named Amoha-asi ‘for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings’. Such inclusive generosity is indicative of Mahayana Buddhism which emphasizes the belief that merit or punya can be transferred from one to another.

The large number of sculptures of bodhisattvas is another indication of the popularity of Mahayana Buddhism in the region. These were generally shown as standing royal personages, lavishly bejeweled with a dhyani Buddha figure in their crown or diadem. The attributes in their hands such as a purse or a lotus identifies them as a particular bodhisattva such as Maiterya or Avalokiteshvara.

This early development of the identification of particular deities based on their posture, attributes, vehicle and form are termed iconographic traits. These iconographic traits are
characteristic of the Mathura school of art and reflect the religious environment of the post Mauryan era based as it was on bhakti and sectarian principles. Shaiva figures were found from the region though their numbers are limited. Ekamukhalinga and Chaturmukhalinga, linga icons with one of four faces of Shiva carved on four sides began to be made during this period though the classic examples come from the subsequent Gupta period. Karttikeya-Skanda is one of the more prolific deities with independent as well as composite images being made of them. Or the latter, he is shown with Shashthi, as well as with Ekanamsa and with Vishakha. The pancharatra cult of Vishnu seems to have taken root here with a number of images being created such as Chaturvyuha Vishnu that shows Vasudeva as the central figure and Samkarsana, Samba and Aniruddha as emanations emerging from this main figure. Icons of Vishnu holding a mace and disc were also found from the region along with Krishna and Balarama-Haladhara both of whom evolved from independent pastoral and agricultural deities into becoming the incarnations or avataars of Vishnu.

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth is associated with Kubera-Panchika, the lord of wealth and prosperity. They are seen not only in the Brahmanical context but also in the Buddhist and local cults because their association with material well being and growth was rooted in common cultural environment rather than in a particular sectarian creed. Kubera is also shown in conjunction with Hariti, a yakshi-goddess who is associated with children and their well being. In fact, small votive plaques of these two are found in plenty from Mathura. Other deities such as the Matrikas or the Mothers, Naigamesha and Skanda are associated with children and had protective-destructive functions were created and donated in large numbers during the post-Mauryan period at Mathura. The Jainas of Mathura produced votive tablets called ayagapattas that contain auspicious marks of worship such as fish couple or matsya yugala, the swatiska, shrivatsa, ratna-bhanda, bhadraoptha, purna kumbha, divyamana, indrayasti and matsya.

The most distinctive feature of Mathura art is the plethora or abundance of female figures in various poses carved on railing pillars and torana uprights engaged in activities such as bathing under a waterfall, playing with swords or a ball and with a child, carrying an offering basket, holding a lamp, tying a waist band, dinking from a cup, etc. they are often shown standing on a dwarf yaksha or on a lotus or an incline. These figures wear very transparent dhoti revealing the form beneath, a heavy waist band or mekhala and other jewelry such as bangles, anklets, bracelets and the like. They sport different coiffures and are generally voluptuous and sensuously delineated. These females derive from the shalabhanjika and yakshi figures found on the early stupas and probably conferred an element of fertility on the stupa and the devotee who visited these. Often scenes from Jataka stories or lotuses are carved on the other side of the pillars such as at Bhuteshvara.

Two sided panels with an offering bowl on top are another distinguishing specimen of sculptural art from Mathura, whose precise function and meaning are still to be ascertained. Perhaps alms and offering or water for ritual ablution were placed in these bowls. These may have a tree carved on one side and a figural panel on the other or a narrative passage on both sides such as the ‘Vasantsena panel’ from Maholi that depicts moments from the play Mrichchhakatika or Kubera and attendants drinking wine from Palikhera. Many scenes from royal life such as drinking and adorning the self seem to have taken the fancy of sculptors and patrons in the area. These include the Sundari and Nanda episode and kamaloka scenes of mithunas or couples in amorous play that are depicted on the torana and railings of structures.
This is not to imply that narrative passages from *Jataka katha* and *avadana katha* relating to the life of Buddha did not adorn the railings and other architectural elements of *stupa* and *vihara* buildings, but only that they became less popular as newer subjects came to the fore that catered to the sensibility of an increasingly urban society.

There was a strong royal cult also flourishing under the Kushanas where the royal family was worshipped in a *devakula* or shrine. One such shrine has been discovered at Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan and the other at Mat just outside the town of Mathura. Here portrait sculptures of the first four kings have been discovered of whom Wima Kadphises seated on a lion throne is very majestic and impressive. There is also the standing headless figure of Kanishka wearing a stiff tunic and boots, holding a sword with a *makara* symbol on the scabbard. A head from the site wearing a conical helmet gives and idea of what a royal figure may have looked like at the time.

The art of Mathura of the Kushana period had a lasting impact on the subsequent art of the Guptas. Many of the sectarian forms crystallized and got elaborated while others such local deities lost popularity as we shall see below.

**Intext Questions:**
1. What was the political and economic backdrop of the Mathura school of art?
2. Discuss the characteristic features of Mathura style.
3. Discuss the material used in and geographical spread of Mathura school of art?
4. What were the new forms introduced during the Kushana period at Mathura?

**2.2 Gandhara School of Art**

Gandhara art represents the art that developed and spread in the north western part of India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 4th Century A.D. The major centers of art activity of this school were in the kingdoms in this region such as Bactria, Kapisha, Swat and Gandhara. The main material used in the Gandhara School is metal such as the gold used in the Kanishka reliquary from Shah ji ki Dheri. Stone wherever used is usually blue or grey schist and slate.

Style has naturalism in body form, drapery, and pictorial scale. The bodies are made in the classical tradition with its emphasis on perfection of the human form. Therefore they are usually shown as youthful and strong. The male figures are shown with musculature and with a squarish torso. The rendering of drapery with sharp flowing folds is similar to those seen on a Roman toga and is a distinctive feature of Gandharan art as are wavy curled hair and sharp features.

Gandharan style was an amalgam of Hellenistic- Roman, Iranian and indigenous art. A number of compositional traits were adapted from Roman mortuary art, while the divine attributes and decorative elements were taken from Hellenistic (Greek) and Iranian roots. This interaction of artistic components was largely due to the geographical position of the region which was at the cross roads of cultural exchange. The area saw the advent of number of foreign powers and political configurations ranging from the Greek, Bactrian to Kushana. It was also at the hub of economic activity based on trade with the west through the great Silk route.

Sculptures of the school are usually found as part of architectural contexts with a deliberate iconographic scheme or pattern. There is a standardization of composition, pose of
Most of the sculptures from this period are Buddhist, though some Hellenistic sculptures also survive. Standing Buddha images are most characteristic feature of the style. These figures have a uniformity of pose, costume, *lakshana* and other characteristics. The Buddha is usually depicted standing frontally with one leg bent. He is shown wearing a heavy robe that covers both shoulders, his left hand hangs down but the right hand is raised in *abhaya* or *varada* mudra. There is an *ushnisha* or a top knot on the head. He is not adorned with any other jewelry, though his elongated ear lobes suggest that as a prince he did wear heavy ornaments. Behind the head a halo with lotus, etc can be seen. Seated Buddha figure is shown in *dharma* or *dhyana* mudra which is the gesture of teaching or in *dhyana* mudra which suggests meditation.

*Bodhisattva* icons are another important category of sculpture found from Gandhara region. These represent mahasattva bodhisattvas who embody the fulfillment of bodhisattvahood that is that future Buddha hood and form one of the most important elements of Mahayana Buddhism prevalent in this area. These male figures are shown standing or seated and wear a *dhoti* like lower garment, the torso is bare except for the a shawl-like length of cloth over the shoulder, the hairstyle is more elaborate with wavy hair falling over the shoulder. They, like the Buddha images of the region have an *urna* on the forehead and an *ushnisha* on the head with a halo behind. They are shown wearing sandals, and sometimes like the Buddha, may sport a mustache. Distinct *bodhisattvas* are recognized by their attributes, symbols and headdress, an example being *Maiterya*, the personification of love who is depicted holding a vase. The figures are usually depicted as royal figures with a profusion of ornaments and a crown. Influenced as they are by the Graeco Roman tradition they are also shown as muscular with perfect and realistic proportions.

Narrative panels relating to Jataka and Tushita phases of Sakyamuni’s life are also found in Gandhara art. Of these the moment of Enlightenment and after are depicted in great profusion. These narratives are based on the canonical (orthodox) Buddhist literature and also on biographical texts such as the *Buddhacarita* of Asvagosha. The Birth of Buddha by Mayadevi (his mother) under a *sala* tree, the enlightenment of the Buddha, *Mara Vijaya* (victory over Mara) are some of the subjects that are popular in Gandharan art. Naturalistic proportions, scale and poses are sought be depicted and composition is used to emphasize the central and key figure through a hierarchy of scaling; that is the more important figure may have a larger size. One of the distinguishing features of Gandharan art is the depiction of paradise such as Sukhavati which was part of the Paradise cult within Buddhism prevalent in North West India during the Kushana period. The cult centers on the belief that every devotee, through accumulation of merit, seeks to be reborn into paradise where he can reside without further rebirth and transmigration till he reaches *nirvana*.

Attendant deities other than Buddha and Bodhisattva were also created, such as Kubera-Panchika and Hariti. The former is shown as a slightly corpulent royal personage while the latter is shown with children all around her. Bacchanalian scenes showing grape vine and wine drinking individuals are distinctly classical in their rendering.

Besides stone, some sculptures in stucco, especially busts of Greek and Roman deities and princes, are as an essential part of Gandharan art. Interestingly these were painted, with red
colour being used for the lips and black for the eyes and hair. Ivory is another medium used to
carve figures as is attested by large assemblage was found from Begram in Kapisa region. A
number of furniture pieces found in a secular palace complex demonstrate that style was not
limited to production of religious imagery but permeated the cultural matrix of the area. Begram
ivories are also interesting for the amalgamation of classical and indigenous style. The
preponderance of female figures in all kinds of voluptuous poses is very reminiscent of the
yakshi-shalabanjikas found on railing pillars at Mathura.

The interaction between the art styles prevailing in northwest Indian, north and central
India was a dynamic process with many borrowings, assimilations and influences. Gandhara
style continued to influence Indian art upto the early medieval period as is seen in Kashmir and
parts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Intext Questions:**
1. What were the main influences on Gandharan art?
2. Discuss the main features of Gandharan style.
3. Describe the achievements of Buddhist art of Gandhara.

### 2.3. Amaravati School of Art

Buddhist art was not confined to north India alone and a very large religious complex
grew around Amaravati. It represents the evolution of uniquely beautiful regional art style based
on a thriving commercial and imperial system. The rise and fall of the ruling dynasties of the
region influenced the construction of the monument, as did the doctrinal changes in Buddhism
itself.

The Amaravati *stupa* is the largest and the grandest of all *stupas* found in the region
though many other *stupas* have been found in Andhradesha region such as at Jagayyapeta, Goli,
Ghantasala, Bhattiprolu and Nagarjunakonda. The *stupa* of Amaravati was product of a complex
package made up of civilization, polity and economy of the area. An architectural site of this
scale suggests that there was a large Buddhist population in the area who not only undertook the
project of building this but whose spiritual needs were met through this *stupa*. It also
presupposes that there was an adequate supply of raw material as well as the presence of skilled
artisans to work on these in the area. Thirdly and most importantly there existed adequate
resources based on economic surplus that could patronize the building over the large period of its
construction.

These resources must have been provided by the ancient city of Dharanikota which is
about half a kilometer downstream on the mouth of river Krishna. This was a port on the river
that allowed an enormous waterway, that could be easily navigated by large ships, .into the
hinterland of Andhradesha The port and the hinterland had prosperous commercial relations with
distant countries included the west from the beginning of the Christian era. Donative inscriptions
found carved on the *stupa* refer to merchants as well as royal patrons who must have derived
their riches from this trade.

Buddhism was significant in the religious milieu of Andhradesha from the Mauryan
period onwards, and the society was literate, complex and highly organized. At Amaravati one
sees the transition from aniconic representations characteristic of Theravadin Buddhism to representing the Buddha in his anthropomorphic form.

The stupa consisted of a huge, solid dome mounted on a cylindrical, drum like platform and the whole was surrounded by a great railing. Like at Sanchi, this railing is made up of pillars, crossbars and a coping. There is a gateway or torana at each of the cardinal points that lets into the railing into the pradikshanapatha or the circumambulatory processional path that is paved with black flag stones. All these along with the drum and the dome are decorated with sculptures in high relief. There are early engravings dating from the third century to the first century BC and were influenced by the art of Bharhut and Sanchi. However the best known sculptures come from the second and third centuries AD that coincide with the rule of Satavahanas in Andhradesa, and the later the Ikshavakus continued to adorn the stupa here at Amaravati and also at Nagarjuanakonda.

The sculptures at Amaravati have a profound and quiet naturalism in human, animal and floral forms. There is a sense of movement and energy in the sculptures. The human figures are slender and slightly elongated. The faces are oval with sharp and well delineated and expressive features. The animals such as makaras have scaly naturalism and the vegetation environment is lush. There is emphasis on the narrative element with stories from the life of Buddha and bodhisattva dominating such episodes relating to the Birth, the miracles, Enlightenment and the victory over Mara, Sundari and Nanda, Tushita heaven, Angulimala. There are few Jataka scenes such as the Shibi, Nalagiri and Chhadanta Jatakas.

The perfection of form and proportion seen in the middle phase of Amaravati as well as some of the themes continued to influence art at Nagarjuankonda and also later Vakataka and Gupta art styles.

**Intext Questions:**
1. What are the main elements of the stupa at Amaravati?
2. Discuss the importance of location in the construction of Amaravati stupa.
3. Describe some of the features of Amaravati style.

### 3. Classicism: Gupta Art

As seen above, the styles and themes of all three schools of art influenced each other during the early period. The evolution of art in these areas was largely based on narrative bas relief carved on stupa railings and gateways. The forms and images that developed here led to the elaboration of decorative schemes on the temples as well as the evolution of sectarian icons under the Gupta and Vakatakas. This period is also known as the period of classicism in Indian art because the high aesthetic benchmark set by the sculptors and had a lasting impact on subsequent art styles all over India.

The Gupta Empire marks a culmination of various strain of cultural developments from the Maurayan period onwards. Their fruition is seen as a result of the long reign of relative political stability of the Gupta empire. The Gupta period is recognized as the peak of the development of the classical ideal as described in the Visnudharamottara Purana in all forms of art including literature, sculpture painting and drama etc.
The main difference in the Gupta religious sculpture is that its inspiration is a “god” or a deva rather than an enlightened being like the Buddha. Traditional deities such as Vishnu and Shiva and the religious authority of the Vedas find reflection in the works of the Gupta period along with the incorporation of local pastoral or folk traditions. The Gupta Classical form also has a Pan-Indian character and large geographical spread and influence.

One aspect of Gupta art is that the deities are depicted as having a multiplicity of hands and legs as also heads and bodies. This is because the metaphoric nature of the deity, Vishnu or Shiva or any other deity, as indicated in the Vedas, is sought to be depicted. The deity is representative of the “Purusha” or the original man/deity who gets dismembered into creation. The multiplicity also indicates an attempt to fuse the older deities with aspects of the folk deities derived from the new area brought within the empire and brahmanical fold.

The Gupta deity is depicted standing crowned and ornamented like a king. It is shown adorned with thin clinging folds or garments and while the characteristics of the chakravartin find depiction, more stress is given to the spiritual aspect of the figure than the muscular physical that were emphasized in the Gandhara School. The eyes are usually half closed in a meditative or yogic posture. The various hands represent different aspects of the divinity such as the mace in the hands of Vishnu representing force or strength while the abhaya mudra of another hand showing blessing. The numbers of heads apart from depicting either “panchratra” emanations (or the Visvarupa) also depict different aspects of the divinity and often show the merger of more than one cult in one deity. The deities are often depicted with one or more attendants from the sectarian faith of the main deity.

An example of the early Gupta art is the representation of Ganesha in the Udaygiri caves where the iconography is relatively simple and there is no crown or jewelry while the Mahisasamardini and Vishnu figures depict the classical traits. Narrative art of the Gupta period has fluidity and depiction in great detail as can be seen from the amritmanthana on the lintel of a cave temple at Udaigiri. Shiva as Dakshinamurti or facing south the archetypal teacher at Ahhichhatra is another good illustration of early Gupta art which is relatively less complex than a later work such as Gajendramoksha at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh.

The ekamukhalinga is a characteristic icon of the Gupta period. The bust of Shiva with three tiered jatamukuta on which a crescent moon is placed is superimposed on the linga shaft. The face is serene and calm. The carving of Yamuna and Ganga on the doorjambs of temples was a Gupta innovation and is linked to their political rise. Sectarian images such as Varaha enjoyed great popularity in central India around Eran where the cult must have had special significance.

The Gupta style is marked by use of few ornaments and simple apparel. The modeling is based on inner idealized structure rather than on outward musculature. The face is oval with downward looking; eyes are half closed, sharp nose and full smiling lip. The whole has soft flowing contours that are revealed through the relatively simple drapery.

The Gupta style was prevalent in most of the Gangetic valley and central India which was under the Gupta imperial suzerainty. The Gupta artistic production is marked by experimentation in both themes as well as material. Though stone is used prolifically, one has found impressive life sized free standing terracotta sculptures of the river goddesses from Ahicchatra. The same
site has revealed a number of terracotta panels depicting scenes from the Epics and \textit{Puranas}. Sita, Parvati, Shiva, and other subjects such as a laughing boy are also found in terracotta.

A number of regional sub schools within the pan north Indian Gupta style existed, such as the Sarnath School. Buddha and Buddhist imagery were the dominant themes here. The classical figure of the Buddha is characterized by tight curls, introspective downward looking eyes, elongated ears and slightly upward turned full lips. They are marked by serenity and inner calmness.

With the rise of various dynasties by the end of the Gupta and Vakataka empires, such as Chalukyas in Karnataka, the Pallavas in Tamil Nadu, the Vallabhis in Gujarat, the Maitrakas in Rajathan-Gujarat and later the Palas in east, Pratiharas in the centre and Rashtrakutas in the Deccan, the Gupta style flowed into the rise of many regional styles in art and architecture. This was also the period of political fragmentation and religious elaboration marked by the composition of the Agamic and Pauranic tradition, resulting in the rise of local cults and complex pantheons.

\textit{Intext Questions}:

1. Why is Gupta art considered classical?
2. Discuss the main elements of Gupta style.
3. Do you agree with the view that the Gupta style was uniform over India?

\textbf{4. Post Classicism: Pallava-Chola sculptures.}

Though the Pallavas and Cholas were prolific builders of temples and generous patrons of arts, their art is identified with the magnificent bronzes. These great pieces of workmanship were made primarily for processions on festive occasions in temples though some were also made for private worship. Derived from earlier clay images, this form while deemed to be folk art incorporates all aspects of classical art.

These bronzes are cast in the cire perdue or lost wax process. The image is first made in wax; it is then given several coats of fine clay and then dried in the shade. Then two holes are made on the top and the bottom, and next the whole is heated so that the wax melts away leaving a hollow mould into which molten metal is poured. The clay mould is broken off after the metals solidified. Final dressing is done by hand with a chisel and abrasive material.

The rule of the Pallavas and Cholas between the 7\textsuperscript{th} to the 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries saw the high-watermark of bronze sculpture. Pallava art form manifested itself around the 7\textsuperscript{th} century and probably derived inspiration from the Amaravati School. While there was a foreign influence in the form of \textit{Yavana} or Roman influences and the presence of Roman artifacts, the bronzes are believed to be largely an indigenous art form. The patronage for these art objects too comes from Pallava rulers like Mahendravarman and others. These bronzes have a resemblance to the lithic (stone) sculpture of the period. The development of the Pallava bronzes can be divided into four phases viz.
1st Phase (Phase upto the 7th Century A.D) termed Mahendra Phase named after Mahendravarman.

2nd Phase (1st half of 8th Century) termed Rajsimha Phase named after the builder of Mammalapuram and Kanchi (AD 700-730).

3rd Phase (Second half of 8th Century 750-800A.D.) named after Nandivarman II.

4th Phase (Ninth Century 795-845) named after Dantivarman.

The later half of the ninth century marks the transitional toward the Chola type of bronzes. (Rajaraja Chola establishing himself around AD 850). In terms of the bronzes itself the early bold forms gradually change to slender rounded ones that are delicate and more refined with the contours of the figures being softer. The Kalayansundrammurti (depicting the wedding of Shiva and Parvati) from Vadakalattur being a fine example of Chola bronze art. During the Chola period a large number of temples of stone were transformed into grand and complex buildings as can be seen from the temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and the large stately Gopurams of Chidambaram. The Chola period saw elaborate festivals with music dance and processions. The bronze images are intended as manifestations of the main deity enshrined in the garbha-griha when taken out in procession were worshipped with adoration.

Chola bronzes can be divided into four distinct phases:

1st Phase (Phase upto the first half of the 10th Century A.D) named after Aditya Chola

2nd Phase (last quarter of 10th century) named after Sembiyyan Mahadevi.

3rd Phase (11th century AD) named after Rajaraja I

4th Phase (12th century) called Later Chola.

It was during the 10th and 11th centuries that the epitome of artistic excellence was reached by the bronzes where great emphasize placed on graceful depiction, bhavas, flowing lines and supple contours.

It may be noted that dance forms and poses, karnas, influenced the form of the images. The Agamic and Vastu literature were also sources of inspiration for the creation of these images. Some of the more popular icons created by the sculptors are Kalayanasundarmurti of Shiva and Parvati who are also seen in the Somaskanda depiction. Shiva as Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja and Vrishabhavanamurti as well in Sukahasana were popular subjects. Some portrait sculpture of saints such as Manikavachakar and the royal patrons such Rajendra Chola and Sembiyyan Mahadevi also exist. Besides Hindu icons, Buddhist and Jaina images were also cast in bronze during the period. The Chola bronze tradition continued to inspire artists well into the medieval period as is attested by Vijayanagar bronzes.

Intext Questions:

1. Describe the technique used for making Pallava-Chola bronzes.
2. Discuss the evolution of bronze art in South India.

Conclusion

The sculptural tradition of the Indian subcontinent dates back to the Neolithic period. However, its continuous evolution can be observed from the 3rd century B.C. Its development in different regions with its distinct features is reflected in different schools of art, viz. Mathura, Gandhara and Amaravati. The Gupta period witnessed the culmination of these developments.
Several regional styles in art and architecture came into being after the decline of the Gupta Empire. The contributions of the Pallavas and the Cholas (7th-13th centuries A.D.) in the form of bronze sculptures marked a magnificent chapter in the history of Indian art.

**Glossary**

*Abhaya mudra*: a hand gesture with right hand upraised and open palm signifying protection.

*Anthropomorphic*: human form

*Aniconic*: Where divine presence is suggested by symbols.

*Apsidal*: a rectangular chamber with a circular ending.

*Aavadana*: stories relating to the life of Buddha

*Bhagavata cult*: based on the worship of Vishnu Vasudeva

*bodhi grihas*: shrine surrounding a *bodhi* tree

* Bodhisattva*: these represent enlightened beings who refused to enter into the state of *nirvana* or salvation for themselves so that they could transfer the merit onto others.

*Chaitya*: an object that acts as a focus for worship; the term is sometimes used by itself for the hall housing the *chaitya* or for a barrel vaulted window motif based on the hall type.

*Dharmachakra mudra*: a hand gesture signifying the turning of the ‘Wheel of law’ by the Buddha by preaching the first sermon at Sarnath.

*Dharmachakra*: Buddhist ‘Wheel of Law’

*Dhyana mudra*: a yogic posture.

*Lakshana*: characteristic mark

*Mahayana Buddhism*: a branch of Buddhism that came into prominence after the beginning of the Christian era that advocates the transference of merit, *prajanaparamita*.

*Mudra*: A hand gesture

*Naga cult*: based on the worship of local snake deities such as Erapata naga with independent sculptures of many hooded *Naga* and *Nagini* figures.

*Pancharatra*: an esoteric doctrine of the *Vaisnavas* centering on *Vishvarupa* form of Vishnu.

*Shaiva*: affiliated and related to Shiva

*Shalabhanjika*: a sculpture showing a woman with a tree, holding or bending its branch

*Stupa*: is solid funerary mound constructed of brick and masonry and often with sculpted stone panels attached to them. In a tiny chamber at the heart of the mould, contained in a casket are the ashes of the Buddha or a Buddhist dignitary.

*Triratna*: three Jewels representing Buddha, *Dharma* and *Samgha*

*Vaishnava*: affiliated to or relating to Vishnu

*viharas*: a monastic institution

*yakshi*: female local cultic spirits and deities who are sometimes ogresses and at other times fertility goddesses.
SUGGESTED READINGS

Introduction

Of various art forms, painting has always been a very powerful medium of cultural tradition and expression. It is associated with values, beliefs, behaviour of mankind and provides material objects to understand people’s way of life, their thought process and creativity. In simple words, painting has become a bridge to our past, reflecting what people think and want to depict. Painting is also a part of tangible material culture, where human creations are termed as artifacts and helps in understanding the cultural values. It is a human way of transforming elements of world into symbol, where each of it has a distinct meaning and can also be manipulated. Compared to sculpture, painting is easier to execute and that is why Stone Age people chose it as an expression of their beliefs and imaginations. In fact, painting marks an entirely new phase in the human history and is regarded as a giant cultural leap. Painting in contemporary Indian literature is also referred as ‘Alekhya’. In other words, it is a medium of expression of artist’s instinct and emotion reconciled and integrated with his social expression and cultural heritage.

Murals and Frescoes

Murals are painted on thin coat of limestone mixture dried with glue, whereas, Frescoes are painted on wet lime plaster. The colours used in these paintings are derived from natural organic pigments.

Painting in the Pre-Classical period (upto A.D. 350)

The earliest example of painting can be traced to Upper Paleolithic age (which began 35,000 years ago) and specimen of it has been found in the rock shelters, caves of Asia, Europe, and Africa, etc. The early paintings were merely rough outline of non-descriptive nature but over a period of time, it became graceful, descriptive and colourful through use of variety of colours derived from local earth and minerals. In context of India, the earliest evidence of painting is from Nevasa (in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra) and rock shelter caves of Bhimbetka (in Raisena district of Madhya Pradesh). Excavations at Nevasa have yielded two pieces of pottery having painted figures of a dog and a deer with a pair of wavy horns. Though these are linear representation, yet it gives a sense of volume and feeling for life. It can aptly be referred as the earliest specimen of creative painting in India.

The first evidence of cave painting from Bhimbetka is essentially murals, directly executed on the walls of cave. The technique of painting deep inside the cave was a difficult task, requiring considerable skill but the authors of cave painting perfected it. Like other rock shelters of the world, elaborate drawing and painting has been done on the walls of Bhimbetka caves. Executed mainly in red and white and occasional use of green and yellow—the basic themes of paintings has been taken from everyday life such as hunting, dancing etc. Animals like bison, tigers, lions, wild boars etc have been abundantly depicted. In some caves religious and rituals symbols occur frequently. Human figures appear in stick like forms and hunting scenes are drawn in sharp line and angles—representing movement and life. An interesting aspect of these paintings is that there is neither inflation of particular human figures which might reflect
class distinction within society nor there is any suggestion of agricultural or pastoral activities. Super imposition of paintings at Bhimbetka suggests that same canvas was used by different people at different times. The oldest paintings are believed to be 12,000 years old but some of the geometric figures date to as recently as medieval period. Scholars have speculated about underlying motive of this art. At one end of the debate is the concept of ‘art for arts’ sake’, i.e. just for aesthetic pleasure and at the other end are those, who have read so much meaning into it. Cave paintings should not be dismissed as primitive art of primitive people. In fact these paintings not only show artistic sophistication but also their highly evolved thinking process and keen observation. In the words of Henri Breuil, “Upper Paleolithic paintings were magical in nature – with an aim to exert control over some objects or natural phenomenon.” It also marks the beginning of religious belief – a particular way of looking at the world.

The murals on the walls of rock shelters of a relatively later age have also been found in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. We have no record of paintings from protohistoric Indus Valley to the historical period. However, the earliest evidence of painting in the historical period is from the middle of 1st century B.C, found in vaulted ceilings of Yogimara Caves in Ramgarh hill. There are few irregular row of human figures and large aquatic animals painted in yellow and ochre. Certain faint traces of early paintings have also been found in cave number IX and X of Ajanta and on the walls of Caitya cave at Bedsa.

**Painting in the Classical period**

During the classical period (350-700 AD), the art of painting had achieved high aesthetic and technical standard. In the Classical text like the *Kamasutra* of Vatsayana, it is referred as one of the sixty four arts. The popularity of painting is also evident in the Brahmical and Buddhist literature, where there are frequent references of ‘Citragaras’ (picture galleries) and techniques like ‘lepya citras’ (representation in line and colour on textiles), ‘lekhya citras’ (Sketches) and ‘dhuli citras’ (alpanas). The ‘Brhatshamhita’ (circa 6th century A.D.) and the ‘Vishnudharmottara Purana’ (circa 7th century A.D.) introduce technical details such as – method of preparation of ground for painting (Vajralepa), application of colour, rules of perspective etc. Works of Bhasa, Kalidasa, Vishakhadatta, Bana also contributed to that intellectual ferment of the Classical period – especially the theory and the technique of painting.

One of the best examples of the Classical paintings is from the Ajanta Caves, painted between circa 200 B.C and A.D. 600. Ajanta has thirty one Caves, built in two phases – first one was around 2nd century B.C and second was between 4th and 6th centuries A.D. In both phases, the art was patronized by the Hindu rulers – the Satvahanas (in the early period) and the Vakatakas (in the later period). The cave paintings of Ajanta are often referred to as frescoes, but A.L. Basham disagrees with it. A true fresco is painted while the lime plaster is still damp, whereas the murals of Ajanta were made after it had set. The famous Ajanta caves can be considered as ancient art galleries. The earliest paintings are sharply outlined whereas the latter are more carefully modeled. The principal colours like red ochre, yellow ochre, indigo blue, lapis lazuli blue, chalk white, lamp black, geru and green have been widely used. The Indian art has been inspired by spiritualism and mystical relationship between the God and man. The earliest recorded art was inspired by religious Hindu background and it was later replaced by the popular Buddhist art. The philosophy of aesthetics was closely related to thoughts in the *Upanishads* and thus art played a very important role in the Indian religious life. Inward vision, sense of great peace and tranquility – are the hall marks of Indian art. The early caves of Ajanta are of the *Hinayana* order, where the monks worshipped symbols such as stupa, wheel etc. Oldest surviving paintings are of cave number X. Large bodies of surviving paintings are
associated with the *Mahayana* Buddhism belonging to 5\(^{\text{th}}\) and 6\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries A.D. and here Buddha is represented in human form and worshipped as God. The paintings of 5\(^{\text{th}}\) and 6\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries A.D. also depict the *Jataka* tales i.e., stories of Buddha in his previous life.

The paintings of Ajanta caves are, although based on the Buddhist themes, yet they bear a secular message than the religious. The depiction of Princes in their palace, ladies in their harems, flowers, fruits, animals, ascetics, mystical creatures – presents the whole image of time. Qualities of virtuous life, journey of soul into cycle of rebirths, illusion of material world, cheerful scenes of everyday life, humanity, compassion, grief – is very well portrayed in the paintings like ‘the Padmapani, the bearer of lotus’, ‘the dying Prince’ etc. One of the most striking aspect of Ajanta painting is the sympathetic, humane treatment of animals and emphasis to create a work out of the artist’s own vision. According to Lawrence Binyon: ‘in the art of Asia, Ajanta occupies supreme and central position’.

The tradition of Ajanta continued between 6\(^{\text{th}}\) century and 10\(^{\text{th}}\) century A.D. at Bagh, Ellora, Sittannavasal, Kanheri, Pitalkhora and Keonjhar. Though the themes are religious but in their inner meaning and spirit, they are secular and their appeal is worldly and aesthetic. A panorama of contemporary life, endowed with richness of expression of refined emotions, sensibilities of highly cultured society is rendered with skill. Attached to it, is high spiritual level – showing detachment and mystical experiences.

**Painting in the post – classical period**

While studying painting tradition of India, the contribution made by the south Indian kingdoms of the Cholas, Vijaynagara and Nayakas cannot be ignored. In the Chola temples there are many fresco paintings seen at Vijayala Colesvara temple at Nartamalai (A.D. 1100), Brihadesvara temple at Tanjavur (A.D. 1100), Sangita – Mandapa at Tiruparuttikunram in Kanchipuram (A.D. 1387-88 ) and Vcayapa Matha at Angundi (about the same date). The Chola frescoes were first discovered in A.D. 1931 within the circumambulatory passage of Brihadeshvara temple. Researchers have discovered the technique used in these frescoes. A smooth batter of lime stone mixture was applied on the stone and over it , large paintings were painted in natural organic pigments. The Chola frescoes have ardent spirit of *Saivism* expressed in them. In all paintings, Chola physiognomical and stylistic forms are apparent. The Classical values of full roundedness of volume, subtle plasticity are also retained. But at the same time, there is also strongly perceptible lessening of the consistency of colour modelling and hence a flattening of surface is there, despite ample curves and colour. During the Nayaka period, the Chola paintings were painted over. The latter paintings belonging to the Vijaynagara period (the *Lepakshi* wall painting), show general decline in the art style. Outline became sharper and dedicate modelling of earlier period is absent. The human figures appear as phantoms, devoid of expression and there is greater emphasis on the display of iconographic forms and mythological stories.

**Medieval Indian Painting**

The advent of Islam and the spread of Islamic influence, initiated a new period in Indian history ---the medieval period. It also had a direct impact on the realm of painting. The pattern of large scale paintings, which had dominated the scene, were replaced by the miniature painting during the 11\(^{\text{th}}\) and 12\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries A.D.

The miniature paintings are small paintings. They were often part of manuscripts written at the time and illustrated the subjects of the manuscript. Thus, a new kind of illustration was set during the period under review.
Painting during the Sultanate Period

There are very few illustration, which can be ascribed to the Sultanate period (13th century -15th century A.D.), e.g., the Bustan manuscript, the illustrated manuscript Nimat Nama painted at Mandu during the reign of Nasir Shah Khalji. *Nimat Nama* represents early synthesis of indigenous and Persian style, though it was latter which dominated in the paintings. Another type of painting known as *Lodi Khuladar*, flourished in the Sultanate domain of North India, extended from Delhi to Jaunpur.

Mughal Painting

Medieval painting is, largely represented by the Mughal School, which developed during the period of the Mughal empire (16th -19th centuries A.D.). Renowned for their brilliant colours, accuracy in line drawing, detailed realism, intricacy and variety of themes – the Mughal paintings were a class by themselves. It was distinct from all other styles and techniques of Pre-Mughal and Contemporary art. Contrary to Delhi sultanate, the Mughal paintings were more popular and widespread. There were several factors responsible for it – urbanization, better administrative system, exclusive patronage by the rulers and nobility, synthesis of cultural values and tradition of Central Asia, integration of Mughal economy with world economy, etc. In fact painting became a widespread source of livelihood during the rule of Mughals.

The Mughal paintings reflect two types of cultural tradition – ‘high culture’ and ‘popular culture’. The notion of ‘high culture’ is equated with the sophisticated elite class with an exclusive taste and high culture products are not shared by the ordinary people as they are expensive, artistic and intellectual creations. The ‘popular culture’ is usually equated with the common people and products of ‘popular culture’ are common, cheap and easy to understand. In the context of Mughal empire, the ‘high culture’ was exclusive domain of Mughal emperors, their nobles who gave exclusive patronage to the artists, whereas, the ‘popular culture’ was associated with aspirations, norms, customs of the general Mughal society and in spite of lack of patronage, it continued to survive, for example, the bazaar paintings.

The Mughal painting did not develop in vacuum. It had clear influence of different tradition of contemporary world, namely, Persian, Timurid, Mongolid, Chinese and European. The diffusion of these styles with the indigenous style created a new living tradition of painting, popularly known as Indo-Sino-Persian art. Initially, the Mughal style of painting had dominant Mongolid characteristics but gradually the Mongolid elements diminished and the Indian characteristics came to the forefront. Thus diffusion of various styles led to creation of a new cultural element. The Mughals used paintings as a tool of display of political power, imperial ideology, authority, status and economic prosperity. The Mughal paintings were very rich in variety- in terms of themes and colours. Some of the themes were- illustration of battles, scenes from court life, wild life, hunting, portraits, etc. Rich use of colours obtained from precious stones, metals like gold and silver-were also hallmark of the Mughal paintings.

Development of the Mughal Painting-Babur to Aurangzeb

Although, no works of art can be associated with Babur (A.D. 1526-30), the founder of Mughal dynasty in India, still his ideas which were reflected in his lively autobiography (*Waqiat – i – Baburi*) was responsible for setting the mood for future Mughal art.

The first documented patron of the Mughal painting was Humayu (AD 1530-1556). His visit to Safavi court in A.D. 1544 was crucial to the history of art, as to the empire. It was here that he admired brilliant paintings of Shah Tahmasp’s artists. He invited Safavi artists, Mir Sayyid Ali (a pupil of Bihazad, popularly known as Raphael of the East) and Abd Us – Samad to
join his court in Kabul in A.D. 1549. Of the two, Mir Sayyid Ali, a brilliant designer of arabesque was the sharpest but it was with flexible and adaptable Abd Us-Samad that a relatively longer, productive phase of the Mughal art began. In other words, it was he who adjusted his Safavi style to fulfill the growing desire of the Mughal ruler for accurate portraiture and anecdotal reportage. One of the most famous Mughal painting, ‘The House of Timor’ is considered as a work of Abd Us-Samad. This picture on cotton is a major monument of early Mughal art and its grandness, magnificent colours reflect Humayun’s royal taste. It was brought up-to-date by the later Mughals, with addition of portraits of three generations of Humayun’s heirs. The element of naturalism is apparent in this work.

The ruler with whom development of Indo-Sino-Persian art should actually be associated is Akbar (A.D.1556-1605). Without Akbar, the Mughal art would have been known only to the specialists. Akbar’s project made Mughal painting amazingly Indian in character-reflecting his personal regard towards the culture of India. He was the first monarch to establish in India, an atelier under the supervision of two Persian masters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd Us-Samad. There were about two hundred and twenty five artists in Akbar’s atelier, majority amongst whom were Hindus. The system of working, initially, was collaborative but later artists also began to work at individual level. Akbar’s inclination towards painting is reflected in Abul Fazal’s Ain-i-Akbari, which has a separate section on the art of painting. A large number of artists thronged his court, such as, Mir Sayyid Ali, Abd Us-Samad, Farukh Beg, Khusrau Quli, Jamshed, etc. Akbar had special admiration for Hindu artists, particularly, for Basawan, Lal, Kesu, Mukund, Daswanth and Haribans. Although illiterate, he had strong passion for books, particularly the illustrated ones. Tutinama or Tales of Parrots (a Persian book of fables) shows formative period of Akbar’s studios in about A.D. 1560, when the newly hired apprentices were being trained under Tabriz masters. Among its two hundred and fifteen miniatures, many show Persian and indigenous influence from various parts of India like Rajasthan, Deccan, etc. There was a clear synthesis of linear style of Persian painting with a dynamic, vibrant palette of indigenous painting. The most distinguished artistic project from Akbar’s reign is the Hamzanama, series of giant pictures on cotton, describing the fabulous adventure of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet. An important category of Akbar’s paintings is formed by illustrations to the volume of literary classics and historical manuscripts. The earliest surviving illustrated historical manuscript is a dispersed the Baburnama of about A.D. 1589. Another noteworthy manuscript of this sort is Akbar’s own copy of the Akbarnama. It contains details of contemporary history in its most illustrious form and the illustration of different event fully matches textual description. While Mughal manuscript painting is acclaimed as the work of art, it has much value also as a documentary evidence for the medieval period. Depiction of courtly and ordinary life, portrayal of men of different strata, illustrations of festivals, etc. bear testimony to social and cultural practices during the medieval period. The Akbarnama’s intricate compositions also show the European influence especially in treatment of space, light and shade. Apart from these illustrated manuscripts, there were also many independent compositions like landscapes, portraits, animals and other specific subjects in the form of Muraqqa (album) paintings. Akbar’s painters preferred highly polished, hard, creamy paper and were expert in making pigments from earth, animal matters, metals, minerals. For example, Basawan was admired for his use of golden pigment and Indian colours like Peacock blue, red, etc. Thus, replacement of flat effect of Persian style by roundedness of Indian brush and European principle of foreshortening in proper perspective changed the nature of the Mughal painting.

The Mughal painting reached its zenith, during the reign of Jahangir (A.D. 1605-1627). Soon after his accession, Jahangir greatly reduced the staff of royal studio and concentrated his
attention on a small number of favourite artists. This step spread the Mughal style far and wide. Jahangir’s artists developed their own style, which was quite distinct from the artists of the early Mughal period. Akbar’s outgoing objectives; purposeful encouragement of painting was replaced by a more powerful vision. Use of harmonious designs, softer colours, and fine brushwork became important part of the style. A shift was seen, not only in techniques but also in themes. The school of Jahangir was noted for its love of nature. A number of subjects from animal and bird life were painted during this period. The emphasis was on naturalism but there was also a keen desire to reveal the innate beauty. He particularly encouraged paintings depicting events of his own life, individual portraits. Every illustration showed Jahangir as a serene and untroubled ruler, enjoying full control over the empire. Divine nature of kingship was a popular theme, during Jahangir’s period and was projected through symbolic representation in which European motifs like globe and hourglass played an important role. Manuscript illustrations were almost given up but there are few exception like the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. The painting ‘Chain of Justice’ not only has a physical, political dimension but also a psychological dimension. It portrays Jahangir as a ‘just ruler’ having a firm belief in the secular tradition. In many of the paintings of Jahangir era, the ruler is seen sitting near a Jharokha. This is an example of adaptation of local Rajput practice. Muhammad Nadir, Muhammad Murad, Abul Hasan, Mansur, Bishandas, Manohar, Govardhan were some of the important artists of Jahangir’s age. Govardhan was noted for portrait of saints, musicians where as Mansur was famous for painting birds and animals. Jahangir’s passionate and connoisscurly interest in painting, however, was not pursued by the later Mughal rulers.

Tradition continued under Shah Jahan (1628-58 AD) but on a limited scale as he was more inclined towards architecture. Harmonious blend of colours, aesthetic sense, realism which were traits of Jahangir’s style was replaced by the decorative style. Special attention was given to the art of border making and lavish use of golden and other rich pigments.

Although, Mughal painting continued to develop technically, it however became static, cold and stereotyped. Painting lost its liveliness and was confined to the durbar (court). Themes like musical parties, lovers on the terrace and garden, etc. abound in the Mughal paintings of this period. Even in the illustrated copy of the Padshahnama, preference was given to the durbar scenes, while in a few outdoor scenes the expressions were weak and dull. Bichitr, Balchand, Payag, Muhammad Nadir, etc. were some of the important artists at the court of Shah Jahan.

The decline of painting, which began in the period of Shah Jahan, became distinct in the reign of Aurangzeb (A.D. 1658-1707). Painting was essentially a court art-loss of royal patronage, closing of the royal ateliers did contribute further to its decline but at the same time it did not stop altogether. It became confined to the studios of nobles, princes of royal blood and was less naturalistic in comparison to the court paintings. Being closely based on the Mughal style, these are often termed as sub-imperial paintings or bazaar paintings. This form of painting was inexpensive, less time consuming and meant largely for common man who used it for decorative purpose. However, the technical qualities of the Mughal style were sustained. Aurangzeb’s portrait with Shaista khan and a hunting scene are among the finest Mughal paintings of this period.

Later Mughals did not possess the spirit of Jahangir. A brief revival was noticed during the reign of Mohammad Shah (A.D. 1719-48). By the time of Shah Alam (A.D. 1759-1806 ), the art of Mughal painting had lost its glory.
Successor Schools of Miniature painting

As the Mughal structure crumbled, strong nobles created their own domains in Bengal, Oudh and other parts of India. It was at these places that new schools of painting based on imperial traditions flourished. The schools of painting that developed in Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bundi were collectively came to be known as the Rajput school of painting. It was greatly influenced by the Mughal style. It had paintings on themes like seasons (barahmasa), melodies (ragas), mythology (depicting Radha and Krishna) in addition to prevalent themes. The Kangara School of painting and it’s off-shoot Tehri-Garhwal, however, developed independently. The Deccan paintings which were far removed from realism, represented delicate rhythms of Persia,
lush sensuality of south and exotic elements of Europe and Turkey. The theme of Deccan paintings were based on love, music, poetry rather than the realities of life. The glint of the Mughal art did not disappear completely even in the last phase of Mughal rule. Artists continued to paint but on a limited scale and this can be proved with an example of existing Mughal portrait of the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah II.

Modern Indian Painting

The decline of the Mughal Empire was accompanied by the control of English East India Company in A.D. 1757 over north-eastern region, thus laying the foundation of British Raj. The colonial era, not only had profound impact on the contemporary politics, society, economy but also on culture. In the realm of art, Indian art gave into new fashion brought by the English. The art was no longer confined to court but began to be taught and patronized by art schools, art societies, etc. With the introduction of academic art, there was more emphasis on Victorian illusionistic art, oil portraits, naturalistic landscapes, etc. In place of courtly patronage, artistic individualism was encouraged. The new breed of colonial artists enjoyed high social status and were in contrast to humble court artists of the Mughal period.

The Company School

As the English East India Company expanded its purview during the late 1700’s, large number of its employees moved from England to India in search of new opportunities. The new landscape, unusual flora and fauna, stunning monuments, exotic new people caught the attention of English travellers, Company Sahibs and Mem Sahibs. They began to hire Indian painters in 18th and 19th centuries A.D. to capture the quaint oriental images. Thus in the cities ruled by the English East India company, the Company School of painting emerged under western influence. It introduced the idea of India to Europe on one hand and European Academy style of painting in India, on the other. The Company paintings were characterized in medium by the use of water colours and in technique by the appearance of linear perspective, shading, etc. Aesthetically, they were descendents of the picturesque scenes of India created by the artists like Thomas Daniel and William Daniel. The English East India Company not only engaged artists for economic surveys and documentation of natural history but also to produce ethnographic subjects like, castes, professions, etc. The hub of Company paintings were centres like Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Varanasi and Patna, where either the English had a factory or commercial interest. Calcutta was among the early major centre of Company paintings. The patrons like Lord Impy and M.Wellesley hired the artists to paint birds, animals, plants, etc. Sheikh Mohammad Amir of Karraya was in great demand for his elegant renderings of themes related to the British life in Calcutta. In comparison to Calcutta, the development of Company painting was late in Delhi. Its painting market expanded after British occupation of city in A.D.1803. The magnificent Mughal monuments of Delhi were the most popular subject. Among the famous artists of Delhi, Ghulam Ali Khan was known for his scenes of village life and portraiture. Delhi’s artists were unique in using ivory as a base for painting. At Patna, Sewak Ram was known for his large scale paintings of festivals and ceremonies.

The Company styles of painting of different cities were distinguishable by style, which grew out of and heavily influenced by earlier local tradition. In the early phase of the Company School of painting i.e., the 18th century, the artists depended on few key patrons but by the beginning of 19th century, the enterprising artists had begun to create paintings for bazaar on subjects like festival, costumes, castes, etc. However, the Company style of painting did not develop throughout the country. Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Punjab continued to patronize traditional art form but on a limited scale. With the introduction of photography in early 1840’s, the School
lost it momentum but at the same time created an environment in which Art Schools and societies were used as an instrument for disseminating academic art by the English East India Company. It was also an attempt to improve Indian taste as a part of its moral amelioration.

The reaction to the Company School in the mid 19th century was two-fold. On one hand Raja Ravi Varma adapted a distinct method to evolve a new style of painting of Indian subjects where as on the other hand the ‘Nationalist school’ represented by the nationalist painter preferred to look at Indian themes and manifested it in the works of the famous ‘Bengal School’.

Raja Ravi Varma (A.D. 1848-1906)

Raja Ravi Varma of royal family of Travancore received formal training in painting, before entering the ‘low’ profession of paintings against his family’s objections. His paintings were inspired by the Victorian art but were more akin to art form of the royal court. Raja Ravi Varma achieved recognition for his depiction of the scenes from the epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and thus rose to be a remarkable portrait painter, prized by both, the Raj and the Indian elite. He attained widespread acclaim after he won an award for an exhibition of his paintings at Vienna in A.D. 1873. His fusion of Indian tradition with the technique of European Academic art, created a new cannon of beauty in which characters like Shakuntala, Damyanti, etc. were portrayed shapely and gracefully. The Indian nationalists initially hailed his depiction of past, in spite of being unfamiliar with his philosophical outlook, but during the second half of the 19th century, his works began to be criticized as hybrid, undignified, unspiritual expressions. According to the critiques, “The mythical characters of glorious past were reduced to the level of ordinary human”. He was also criticized for the fact, that his paintings overshadowed traditional art form because of their widespread reproduction as Oleographs flooding Indian culture with his version of Indian myths, portrayed with static realism. In spite of the criticism that he was too showy, sentimental in his style, his paintings appealed all segments of the society and remains very popular even today.

The Bengal School

The belief in India’s glorious past and spirituality was responsible for upsurge of a new kind of nationalist sentiment, which questioned the academic art style promoted by Indian artists like Raja Ravi Varma and the British Art School. The ‘Bengal School of Art’, the first art movement in India was associated with Indian Nationalism promoted by people like Ernest Benfield, Havell, and Abindranath Tagore, etc. The Bengal School emphasized on the depiction of art that would be Indian in soul and content. In other words, the emphasis was on indigenous and nationalist ideology of art.

The English Art teacher E.B. Havell, in A.D. 1896 made Indian art students aware of their heritage, culture and encouraged them to imitate the Mughal miniatures. Havell, like the nationalists criticized Raja Ravi Varma’s paintings for its academic naturalism and believed that India’s spirituality was reflected in its art. He was against Renaissance naturalism as well as materialist conception of art. For the students at Art School in Calcutta, he introduced Indian way of training. However, Havell’s attempt was not welcomed by the nationalists, as they considered his way to be retrogressive. It was also seen as an attempt to deprive the Bengalis of western art education, which had become part of contemporary Bengali culture.

The torchbearers of ‘Cultural Nationalism’ in Bengal were the Tagores - an important representative of the Bengal School, Abindranath Tagore (A.D. 1871-1951) belonged to this family. He created his own indigenous style, expressing India’s distinct spiritual qualities. Though trained in Academic Art, his works were also influenced by the Mughal art, especially
‘The Last moments of Shah Jahan’. Abindranath’s association with Japanese artist Kakuzo Okakura Tenshin, around A.D. 1900 in Calcutta, made him aware of the spirit of Far Eastern Art. He adopted wash technique, light brush stroke and delicate lines of Japanese art. Tenshin regarded India as a source of Buddhist art of Japan. With an aim to challenge western values, Tenshin developed a link with Abindranath Tagore to construct Pan-Asianists model of art, assimilating different Asian Cultural tradition. This cultural movement on one hand represented differences between the Asian spirituality and European materialism and on the other hand Asian resistance to European Colonialism. One of the best paintings associated with the Bengal School is Abindranath’s ‘Bharat Mata’. Painted in the background of A.D. 1905 nationalist unrest, the portrait of Mother India is depicted as a young woman, holding objects symbolic of Indian nationalist aspiration in the manner of Hindu deities. The Bengal School influence declined with the spread of modernist ideas in the 1920s. However, in spite of strong attack on the academic art, on pretext of being opposed to Indian Cultural tradition, the Western influence continued.

In the post-Bengal School period especially between A.D.1920-47, significant contributions were made by Rabindranath Tagore (A.D. 1861-1941), Jamini Roy (A.D. 1887-1974) and Amrita Sher-Gil (A.D. 1913-41). They responded to the different issue of Modernism in their own way. In the first phase of the Bengal School of art, nationalism had identified the nation with past but in the post-Bengal School phase; it began to be identified with soil. Depiction of the Santhals, represented timeless purity of the primitives. Rabindranath Tagore made primitivism, a means of his artistic expression. Jamini Roy also revitalized primitivism by consciously drawing inspirations from the folk art. This quest for the tribal art was also a form of resistance to colonialism.

Amrita Sher-Gil (A.D. 1913-41)

One of the most important figures in Indian modernism was Amrita Sher-Gil. She was many year ahead of her time in mid-1930s. Her training in art at Paris and Italy made her technically accomplished. Her early paintings display western influence but after her return to India, there was complete transformation in her work. She rediscovered originality, freshness of ancient Ajanta, Ellora and the value of Indian miniature. Her main mission was to express the naive life of Indian people. She gave her subject’s large, doleful eyes, vacant stares and expression of submission. Her paintings, the ‘Bride’s Toilet’, the ‘Brahmachari’, and ‘The South Indian Village’ reveal her passion for India. Sher-Gil has been criticized for not identifying with the national struggle, which was in its final phase during her last years. In spite of criticism, one can not ignore this fact that, her paintings also became her voice against domination of the British in India.

The Progressive Artists Group

On the eve of independence in A.D. 1947, the Progressive Artists Group was established with an aim to express post colonial India in a new way. The founders were six eminent artists – K. H. Aria, S. K. Bakra, H. A. Gate, M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza and F. N. Souza. This was also a period of widening of social horizon of artists as they joined modernist artistic milieu. The progressive Artists Group was in favour of social justice and equality. They rejected artistic nationalism. They also had link with the Marxist intellectuals in changing idiom of Indian art. F. M. Souza’s visions were based on Hindu erotic sculpture and Christian iconography whereas S. H. Raza was inspired was mysterious Indian forests and tantric cult. M. F. Husain used bold colours, outlines and fragmentary images in order to make political and cultural statements. Almost all India’s major artist in 1950s like Bal Chabda, V. S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, Tayeb Mehta, etc. were associated with the Progressive Artists Group. Though the group was dissolved
in A.D. 1956 still they enriched art culture of India by moving towards greater social commitment. They were in fact self-confessed modernists pitted against the ‘dead tradition’.

Conclusion

To conclude, the paintings of Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods of Indian history were intense essence of their culture. Its grandeur left strong visual impacts on the viewers. The Cave paintings expressed the aesthetic sense of the cave dwellers where as the mural and frescoes of ancient and early medieval period depicted the aspects related to religion, day-to-day life and imperial authority. The Mughals reflected high cultural tradition, synthesizing Chinese, Turkish, European and Indian features in it. The Mughal paintings were not simple works of art but valuable documentary evidence for cultural life of Medieval India---courty as well as ordinary life. The Modern Indian painting schools, like the Bengal School reflected nationalist fervours in the paintings and resistance to British rule in their own way. Thus, the nature of Indian painting changed with the times and represented the age significantly and elegantly.

LONG QUESTIONS

1. Write a brief essay on the Indian Painting.
2. Assess the significance of the Ajanta and Ellora frescoes in the Ancient India.
3. Trace the origin and development of the Mughal Painting during the 16th and 17th centuries.
4. Write short notes on any two of the following:
   a. The Company School
   b. Raja Ravi Varma
   c. Amrita Sher-Gil
   d. The Progressive Artists Group

SUGGESTED READINGS

4. -------------- *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
Introduction

In this unit of the study material, the student will learn about the concept and meaning of popular culture and its various aspects in the context of Indian subcontinent, especially India. The student would also know about the sanctified places or pilgrimage centers (tirthas) and the traditions of pilgrimage (tirtha-yatras) associated with those destinations. The content would further enable the reader to get acquainted with the nature and importance of different kinds of festivals, fairs, arts, crafts, dress patterns and food behaviour in our cultures. This would help the student to understand the meaning of the cultural practices popular in different parts of the Indian subcontinent.

(I)

1. Popular Culture

1.1 The Concept – What is Popular Culture?

Popular culture may be defined as the culture of the masses. This refers to a shared set of customary practices, beliefs, social forms and material traits of the racial, religious or social groups, which have gained popular acceptance. In other words, popular culture is commonly practiced or approved by social groups of succeeding generations. In popular culture, the culture and knowledge is passed on through folklores, mass media, magazines, television, radio, internet, etc.

Popular culture has been defined differently in different contexts by various scholars. Some scholars equate the “popular culture”, with “Pop culture”, and “Mass Culture”. In this context, this concept relates to the culture-patterns of human activity and symbolic structures, that give such activities significance and importance – which are popular or common. This is often defined or determined by the mass media. Popular culture is also suggested to be the widespread cultural elements in any given society that are perpetuated through the vernacular language or lingua franca of that society. It comprises the daily interactions, needs and desires, that make up the everyday life of the masses. This prevailing vernacular culture in any given society may include any number of practices related to the activities such as cooking, clothing, consumption, mass media and the many facets of the entertainment like the sports, music, fashion, photography, literature, etc. Thus, the pop culture or the mass culture is seen as a commercial culture, which is produced for mass consumption.

In yet another perspective, John Storey distinguishes “popular” culture from the “high” culture. According to him, the popular culture or the “pop culture” can also be defined as the culture, that is “left over” when we have decided what “high culture” is. This is to say that the popular culture is contrary to the more exclusive and even elitist “high culture”, that is, the culture of the ruling social group or sometimes the intellectual class. In other words, the popular culture is the opposite of the high cultural art forms such as the opera, historic art, classical
music, traditional theatre or literature, etc. It includes many forms of cultural communication including newspapers, television, advertising, comics, pop music, radio, cheap novels, movies, jazz, etc.

The earliest use of the word “popular” in English was during the 15th century in law and politics, meaning “low”, “base”, “vulgar”, and “of the common people”. These meanings were carried till the late 18th century by when it began to mean “widespread” and gained in positive connotation. The world of pop culture cast a particular influence on art from the early 1960s onwards, through Pop Art. When the modern pop culture began during the early 1950s, it made it harder for adults to participate. Today, most adults, their children and succeeding generations participate in pop culture directly or indirectly.

1.2 Folklore
What is meant by “Folklore”?

The term ‘Folklore’ has been derived from the German term ‘Volklehre’ meaning ‘people’s customs’. It has been used differently in different countries and in different times. In anthropological usage the term ‘Folklore’ has come to mean myths, legends, folktales, folksongs, chants, formula, speeches, prayers, puns, proverbs, riddles and a variety of forms of artistic expression whose medium is the spoken word. In other words, folklore includes all types of verbal art.

By folklore we mean the art of the lower social strata of all people, irrespective of the stage of their strata of all people, irrespective of the stage of their development. In the case of the phase before the formation of classes it is their entire art taken together. In a classless society, under socialism, folklore would disappear as it is a class phenomenon. However, literature is also a class phenomenon, but it does not disappear. Under socialism, folklore loses its specific features as a product of the lower strata, since in a socialist society there are neither upper nor lower strata, just the people. Folklore indeed becomes national property. In other words, what is not in harmony with the people dies out and what remains is subjected to profound qualitative changes and comes closer to literature. Thus, folklore under capitalism and under socialism are perceived differently.

The problems of folklores have assumed great importance in modern times. None of the humanities, be it ethnography, history, linguistics, or the history of literature, can do without folklore. Folklore is the product of a special form of verbal art. Literature is also a verbal art and therefore the closest connection exists between folklore and literature. Folklore is an ideological discipline with hidden solutions to many diverse phenomena of spiritual culture. Its methods and aims are determined by and reflect the outlook of the age. In its beginnings folklore can be an integral part of ritual. With the degeneration or decline of a ritual, folklore becomes detached from it and continues to live an independent life.

Folklore as an independent discipline has yet to establish its status. In India till recently folklore was recognised as a part of Indology. The term ‘Folklore’ was introduced and systematically used by W.J. Thomas in 1846. Though sporadic publications of folksongs and folktales, as an example of the ancient and oral literature, found place to the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal established by Sir William Jones in 1784, the output was very meagre.
1.2a Folktales and Folksongs

Now, let us discuss the important folklore tradition of the subcontinent in the ancient past. The Rigveda is considered to be the oldest treatise of the world in which we find the specimens of the earliest folksongs and ballads. Folktales can be traced back to the Vedic akhyayanas (stories). The Atharvaveda is the storehouse of charms, superstitions, rites, and rituals practised by the people. In the Grihyasutras, we come across many folksongs sung on auspicious occasions like marriage, child-birth and other ceremonies.

It is to be noted that right from the Vedic age, side by side with the highest doctrines of religion and philosophy, abundant sources are available in the form of myths, fables and legends of various kinds, meant for amusement and instruction. The Panchatantra ("Five Treatises") is the oldest book on fables. However, the traits of Indian folktales appear in the Vedic literature, well before the origin of the Panchatantra. Many akhyayanas in the Rigveda may be regarded as the precursors of the Panchatantra. The Upanishad also records the story of Nachiketa and Yama, the philosophic discussion between Yagnavalkya with his learned wife Maitreyi and other interesting tales. The Jatakas include the legends or stories of various incarnations of Lord Buddha before he attained enlightenment. These instructive stories have various beasts and birds as characters, teaching a moral which has much ethical value. Nevertheless, these legends are important sources which help us to reconstruct the social, economic, political and religious conditions of our ancient past.

The two great epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are inexhaustible sources of folktales and legends. These contain the skillful narration of the stories of many legendary kinds and heroes who were famous for their achievements.

The Puranas, which are 18 in number, may rightly be regarded as the storehouse of Indian mythology, legend, popular religion, belief and superstition. According to Pargiter, the Puranas are the “Encyclopaedia of Indian religion and mythology”.

The classical Sanskrit literature is the storehouse of folktales, fables and legends. The Hitopadesa ("Salutary Instruction") composed by Narayan Pandit of Bengal in the 14th century is the most popular of these. The author explains that this book was meant to instruct the royal princes in the art of politics, morality and worldly wisdom.

The Brihatkatha ("Great Story") of Gunadhya is a great contribution to the folktales and fables in Indian tradition. Unfortunately, the originally composed Brihatkatha is now lost altogether, but fortunately, we have three Sanskrit translations of this great work. These are Brihatkatha-slokasangraha of Buddaswami, Brihatkathamanjari of Kshemendra and Kathasaritasagar ("Ocean of Story") of Somadev. Of these, the Kathasaritasagar is the most important, which was composed by a Kashmiri Brahmin between 1063 and 1081 A.D. in order to divert the troubled mind of Suryamati, the princess of Jalandar and wife of Ananta.

The Vetal Panchavimshatika was written by Shyamlal Das. It has a collection of 25 folktales, which are related to King Vikramaditya, the legendary king credited with starting of the Vikram Era (58 B.C.). The title ‘Vikramaditya’ was later adopted by Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty. Shuka-Saptati is another book of folktales, which has a collection of 70 folktales told by a parrot. Its translation into Persian is called Tutinama. Singhasan-Dwatinshika is another popular book on Indian oral tales. It has been translated into Hindi as Singhasan-Battisi and in other regional languages with different titles.
The folksongs or folk ballads and folktales has been moving side by side since our ancient past. The origin of folksongs can be traced back to the hymns of the *Rigveda*. The *gathas* (ballads) mentioned in the Vedic literature may be regarded as the oldest representative of folk ballads. Many hymns of the *Rigveda* refer to a singer as *gathin*. In other words, the *gathas* were the laudatory hymns sung in the praise of a particular king or hero in ancient India. In the *Aitreya Brahmana*, the *gathas* have been termed as *Yajnagatha* (sacrificial hymns). Sometimes these *gathas* are also mentioned as *slokas* (verses). In the *Aitreya Brahmana*, a number of verses were sung in praise of Bharat, the son of Dushyant.

In the *Grihyasutras*, there are many folksongs meant for the auspicious occasions such as the marriage ceremony. Some *Grihyasutras* mention the *gathas* sung in the praise of divinities. A notable example can be that of a *gatha* sung in the praise of Soma in the *Ashvalayana Grihyastra*.

The *Jatakas* also include many *gathas*, which may be regarded as the ancient folksongs. Many plays and other literary works of ancient period also record the heroic *gathas* or songs. For example, the *Raghuvamsham* of Kalidasa mentions the singing of the glorious deeds of Raghu by the maidens, who were guarding the rice-fields sitting under the shadow of sugarcanes. The historical tradition of these *gathas* may be traced upto the *Mahabharata*. However, these *gathas* can be differentiated from *narashansi*. The *gathas* were regarded as human where as the other forms were divine.

The tradition of folktales and folksongs continued in the later periods of our history. These were written in various regional languages in different parts of the subcontinent. However, the history of folkloristic study in India is still young. The establishment of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta in 1784 by Sir William Jones was a landmark in this direction. This institution, besides many other subjects of Indology, undertook the publication of folklore and encouraged the study of folklore. With the dawn of the 20th century, there arose a new inspiration to collect, preserve and publish the valuable folkloristic treasure of our past. The efforts of the scholars resulted in the compilation and translation of the folklores and folktales of different regions. Many folktales and folksongs were composed during the National Movement, which helped in awakening the masses. It is interesting to observe that now-a-days during the general elections, various political parties adopt folklore as medium of their party propaganda. A number of folksongs are composed by different parties to attract the voters. Thus, folklore plays a significant role in the political sphere too. In this respect, folklore can be used as the best medium for emotional and national integration. Nevertheless, this continuing tradition would help in the preservation of the oral literature of any region.

**Intext Questions:**

1. Define 'Popular Culture'.
2. The specimens of the earliest folksongs are found in________.
3. Which category of texts are regarded as the storehouse of Indian mythology, legend, belief and superstition?
4. Name the authors of the following texts.
   (a) *Kathasaritasagar*  (b) *Vetal Panchavimshatika*  (c) *Raghuvamsham*
5. Name the institution established in the 18th century, which initiated the publication of folklore and encouraged the study of folklore?
2. **The concept of Tirtha (Pilgrimage centre) and Tirtha-yatra (Pilgrimage)**

The origin of the institution of pilgrimage can be traced back to the early phase of our cultural traditions. The Brahmanical and Buddhist literature of ancient period refer to the *tirthas* (centres of pilgrimage). The *Nadi-stuti* in the *Vedas* describe the *mahatma* (religious importance) of the rivers. Similarly, the *smritis* mention about the sanctity of the rivers, particularly the Ganges, the Jamuna (Yamuna) and the Saraswati. These rivers have been endowed with special merit and are regarded as the *tirthas*. The term *tirtha-yatra* (pilgrimage) has been associated with the sacred visits to these spots to get rid of the sins committed in one’s life. For example, the *Visnu-Smriti* refers to a number of *tirthas* spread over whole of ancient India. It also recommends *tirtha-yatra* and equates it with the *Asvamedha-yajna* (the horse-sacrifice). The *Manu-Smriti* also gives great importance to pilgrimage to the river Ganges and the site Kurukshetra.

In Mauryan period also the pilgrims in large number used to visit the holy places as mentioned by the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya. In the *Mahabharata*, a section of the *Vanapravar* entitled *Tirtha-yatra-Parva* is specially devoted to pilgrimage. The *Puranas* also provide significant information about pilgrimage. The *Tirtha-sthali* (places of pilgrimage) and the *Kshetra-mahatma* (importance of the pilgrimage centres) are the important parts of the *Puranas*. These also deal about the merits of pilgrimage and the righteous way of life a pilgrim is required to lead during *tirtha-yatra*.

Besides the epics and the *Puranas*, the *Nibandhas* (digests and commentaries) also emphasize on the types, nature and importance of the *tirtha-yatra*. These *Nibandhas* mention about the Hindu pilgrimage of medieval India. The notable among these are the *Tirtha-Kalpataru* of Lakshmish, *Tirtha-Slisetu* of Narayan Bhatt, *Chatur-varna-chintamani* of Hemadri, *Tirtha-Prakash* of Mitra Mishra, etc.

The accounts of the foreign visitors during the ancient period also record the various places of pilgrimage. For example, the *Indica* of Megasthenese (3rd century B.C.), the *Fu-Kuo-ki* of Fa-Hsien (5th century A.D.), the *Si-yu-ki* of Hiuen-Tsang (7th century A.D.) and others have also mentioned many pilgrimage centres in different regions.

### 2.1 Some important tirthas or pilgrimage centers of different faiths

According to the Hindu traditions, there are 35 millions of *tirthas*, which exist in three worlds viz. *Prithvi* (earth), *Patal* (underground world) and *Antariksha* (sky and space). However, some *Puranas* categorically mention the number of Hindu *tirthas*. The various *Puranas* and epics provide a list of 264 paurnic *tirthas*.

The *Brahma-purana* classifies the ancient *tirthas* on the basis of their origin. These are – the *Daiva* (gods), *Asura* (demons), *Rishi* (ascetics) and *Manushya* (man). The *daiva* *tirthas* are those which are revealed by the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and are endowed with high degree of sanctity. These include *tirthas* such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Kashi, Dwarka, Pushkar, etc. The *asura tirthas* are associated with the demons. For example, Gaya in Bihar belongs to this category because the demon Gayasur was killed by god Vishnu at this place and so this place became sacred. The *rishi tirthas* derived their origin from the ancient sages. This category of the *tirthas* include the sites of the *ashramas* founded by the Vedic *rishis* (ascetics/sages). In course of time, these became important pilgrim centres. For example, Vyas
gupha (cave) near Badrinath, the Kanava ashrama and the Narad ashrama near Rudra Prayag on the bank of river Alaknanda, the Atri ashrama and the Bhardwaj ashrama in Central India, the Ahilya-sthan and Kapileshwar-sthan of North Bihar, the Vishwamitra-kup and the Yagnavalkya-kup in the Terai region of Nepal, etc. The manushya-tirthas are those centres, which were made holy by the rulers of the Solar, the Lunar and the Janak dynasties of ancient India.

There are numerous sects in Hinduism, but of these the more dominant are the Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shakta. Therefore, we have a large number of tirthas associated with these three sects. However, the pilgrimage centres of Buddhism, Jainism and other faiths are also spread all over the subcontinent.

It is important to note that some of these centres are visited and patronised by one particular sect whereas some others owe their sanctity to the visits by multiple sects. For example, centres like Prayag, Kashi, and Kanchi are sacred to both orthodox and heterodox sects while Haridwar, Rajagrih, etc. are patronised by many sects. The pilgrimage centres like Puri, Ayodhya, Mathura, Ujjain, Dwarka, Nasik, Kamakhya, etc. are generally patronised by almost all sections of the Hindus. Nevertheless, there emerges an interesting feature of Buddhism-Hinduism continuum in Nepal where both, the Hindus and Buddhists, go together to worship Swembhu at the hill-top and patronise the deities enshrined there.

The concept of four dhams or the four cardinal points is popular among the Hindus. These include: Badrinath (north in the Himalayas), Puri (in east), Rameshwaram (in south) and Dwarka (in west). In or around them are located the four sacred seats of the Adi Shankara (788-820 A.D.), which every pious Hindu aspires to visit at least once in life-time.

There are 51 places of pilgrimage in Shakta tradition. These are spread from Hinglaj (in Baluchistan) to Kamakhya (in India) and from Kashmir (in India) to Sri Lanka. Likewise, for a Shaiva the sacred Mount Kailash (now in China) and temple of Pashupatinath (in Nepal) are located beyond the Indian boundaries. In India the Shaiva-tirtha are located at Amarnath and Kedarnath in the north, Rameshwaram in the south, Somanath in the west and Lingaraj in the east.

As India is the land of many religious faiths, we also have a number of pilgrimage centres associated with various other religious communities besides that of the Hindus. These include the sacred places of visit by the Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other faiths.

The birth of Buddhism and Jainism also took place in India. For the Buddhists, there are many pilgrimage centres associated with Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, preaching and mahaparinirvana (death). The monuments such as stupas, viharas, chaityas, etc. were erected on these sites. The famous Buddhist pilgrimage centres are located at Vaisali, Bodh Gaya, Rajagriha in Bihar and Kushinagar and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh. It is important to note that Buddhism was carried to many countries of Asia by the monks and merchants. So, the Buddhist shrines in India also attracts devotees from other countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Jain religious centres related with the birth and activities of Vardhman Mahavira and other Jain Tirthankaras are visited by Jain pilgrims. The chief Jain holy centres are at Pavapuri in Bihar; Sravasti, Kaushambi and Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh; Udaygiri and Khandgiri in Orissa; Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, and Dilwara temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan. A periodic festival organised after every twelve years for the mastakabhisek ceremony of the lord Bahubali at Sravana Belagola in Karnataka is very popular among the Jains.
Islam after entering the Indian soil interacted with the existing culture and influenced many regions of the Indian subcontinent. We have a number of Sufi shrines scattered in different parts of the country. These include the tombs of saints and mosques. The popular sacred spots of Muslims are the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer in Rajasthan, Khwaja Bande Nawaj at Gulbarga in Karnataka, Shah Sharaf Bin Ali at Panipat in Haryana, and Sheikh Nizammudin Aulia at Delhi. The Jama Masjid at Delhi and Hazarat Bal shrine at Srinagar are also visited by pilgrims.

Sikhism, though is popular in the Panjab region and Delhi, has pilgrimage centres scattered in different parts of the subcontinent. Its extent can be observed in the fact that while Guru Nanak was born in Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, was born at Patna in Bihar. The main sacred shrines of the Sikhs are located at Hemkunt Sahib in Garhwal, Golden Temple in Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib in Taran Taaran, and Patna Sahib in Patna.

Christianity is also followed by people in almost all parts of the country. However, the concentration of Christians is found in Kerala, North-eastern states and Goa. There are many churches and sacred spots visited by the Christians. Of all these, the churches in Goa are the most popular. The Santhome Cathedral (St. Thomas Church) at Mylapore and his burial at a hill in Chennai are other places of worship. Very recently, in 2008 Sister Alphonsa of Kerala was canonised and given the status of a saint by the Pope at Vatican. Worshipping her burial spot (grave) has resulted in miracles and today the place has become a sacred destination for the devotees.

These traditions of pilgrimage and pilgrimage centres or tirthas are very much linked with the different kinds of fairs and festivals observed in various parts of the subcontinent. The next section of this chapter deals with the practice of fairs and festivals in Indian tradition. However, it can be said with certainty that the unity of India was strengthened through the distribution and spread of these tirthas by eliminating all the geographical, linguistic and ecological barriers. A pilgrimage to holy places provides not only a fresh stimulus to pilgrims, but it also leads to interaction between people from different linguistic, geographical and socio-economic groups.

Intext Questions:
1. Which are the important types of tirthas mentioned in the Brahma-purana?
2. Mention a few examples of important tirthas in Indian subcontinent.
3. The four dhams popular among the Hindus include, (a)___________, (b)_________, (c)__________, and (d)__________.
4. Name the Hindu tirthas located in the following regions.
   (a) Baluchistan   (b) Nepal   (c) China
5. Name any three pilgrimage centres of Buddhists.
6. Sravana Belagola is located in the state of ____________.
7. Name the saints associated with the following sacred spots of Muslims.
   (a) Ajmer   (b) Gulbarga   (C) Delhi
8. Name any three pilgrimage centres associated with Sikhism.
9. Name the first women saint of India, who was canonised by the Vatican?
3. **Festivals and Fairs**

It is difficult to talk about the cultures of the Indian subcontinent without reference to the festivals and fairs, which have their origin in our ancient past and remain in practice till today. Nevertheless, in many cases we may find the merging of tradition and modernity.

3.1 **Festivals and their classification**

Since religion dominates the life of individuals, religious festivals have dominated the cultural life of the people. We can draw a long list of religious festivals associated with various gods and goddesses, regions and traditions. These include festivals such as Holi, Dashehra, Diwali, Christmas, Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Zuha, Gur Parab, etc. The cultural and regional diversities have led to the practice of multi-faceted festivals.

The festivals can be broadly divided into the following categories: (i) Religious festivals, (ii) Seasonal festivals, (iii) Cultural festivals, and (iv) Tribal festivals.

(i) **Religious Festivals**

The common religious festivals are: Holi, Diwali, Id, Christmas, Nauroz, etc.

Holi, the festival of colours, is celebrated in the *Phalguna* (February/March) month of the Indian calendar. It marks the end of the Lunar year’s end. This is the end of the cold season and the start of the hot season.

Dashehra or Vijayadashami is one of India largest festivals. This marks the culmination of the *Navaratri* (nine nights) and is observed on the tenth day. Depending on where one lives in India, *Navaratri* emphasizes Durga Puja or Ramalila, and sometimes the celebration of both. Durga Puja focuses on the worship of the goddess Durga and her victory of the buffalo demon Mahishasura. Ramalila is presented as the drama celebrating Rama’s exploits in the epic Ramayana. The climax on Dashehra depicts Rama’s victory over Ravana. This symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. Dashehra often ends with the torching of huge Ravana effigies. Ramalila is very fast emerging as the national drama of India.

Diwali, the festival of light, comes in the month of *Kartik* (October/November). This is celebrated on the new moon day (*amavasya*). Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is worshipped on this day. This festival is associated with the cleanliness and lightening of homes, and fireworks.

The festivals of Muslims such as Ramzan (Ramadan), Id-ul-Fitr, Muharram, Bakr-id (the Feast of Sacrifice), etc. cycle according to Muslim calendar. The ritual year begins with the month of Muharram. This marks the practice of Muharram festival that commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein venerated by Shia Muslims, as the third Imam (leader) of Islam after the Prophet Muhammad. On this occasion, a large procession with Tazia is taken out. The participants cry out Hussein’s name. Some devotees even torture themselves with knives, leashes and chains etc. to feel Hussein’s travail. A small fair is organised. In late afternoon, the Tazia is buried.

The Prophet’s birthday is celebrated in the month of Ramzan (Ramadan). The fast of Ramzan lasts the entire month. Everyone except the very young or infirm observe fast between dawn and sunset. The last day of the fast ends with the sighting of the moon, which marks Id-ul-Fitr. On this day, besides observing the fast, alms is given to poor and sweets are distributed.
The end of Ramzan is also the time of departure for Muslims for the Haj or the pilgrimage to Mecca.

_Bakr-id_ or the Feast of sacrifice celebrates Abraham’s sacrifice of his son. The goats (_bakr_) are sacrificed on this day and meat is shared with friends and the poor.

_Urs_ or the “death anniversary” is an important aspect of the religious faith of the Muslims. These are organised as festivals and pilgrims visit the tombs of saints. Committees are formed to organise _Urs_. On the anniversary day, the shrine is bathed and the tomb of the saint is decorated. The committee plans readings from the _Quran_, traditional song sessions, food distributions, and poetry readings. The biggest _Urs_ in India is at the Ajmer shrine of the saint Muin-ud-din Chisti. It is visited by thousand of pilgrims and a big fair is organised.

In Christianity too we have many religious festivals and ceremonies. The popular Christian celebration is that of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Christmas. The name is English in origin, which means “Christ’s Mass” or the mass celebrating the feast of Christ’s nativity. It is observed every year on 25th December. In this, the children wait for the legendary Santa Claus, the popular gift bringer. Other customs of the Christmas season includes the baking of special foods and singing of special songs called carols, which have mass appeal.

Easter is the most important of all Christian feast. It celebrates the passion, the death, and especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. Easter was fundamentally a nocturnal feast preceded by a fast of at least one day. The celebration took place from Saturday evening until the early morning hours of Sunday. The symbolism of light became a significant feature of this festival. In Northern Europe the use of special lights at Easter coincided with the custom of lighting bonfires on hilltops to celebrate the coming of spring. The main Easter foods include the Easter lamb, which is in many places the main dish of the Easter Sunday meal. Ham is also popular among the Europeans and Americans on the occasion of Easter. This is because the pig was considered a symbol of luck in pre-Christian European culture.

The Parsis (Zoroastrians) of India celebrate Nauroz (Nawruz) as their most popular festival. It is a festival of renewal, hope and happiness. The origins of Nauroz are obscure. According to legends, its institution is associated mostly with Jamshed, the mythical Iranian king. Nevertheless, till today it is observed as the Iranian national festival celebrating the arrival of spring. Zoroaster, the ancient prophet of Iran, probably reconsecrated Nauroz to his religion. Nauroz survived the advent of Islam and continued as the Iranian national festival. The Shia Muslims of Iran came to associate important religious events with Nauroz such as that the prophet Muhammad took his young son-in-law Ali on his shoulders to smash the idols at Mecca and he chose Ali as his rightful successor. The Muslim rulers of Iran, continuing the Sasanid tradition, celebrated this festival with pomp and show. The Parsis of India who left Iran in the 10th century in order to preserve their Zoroastrian faith also continue to celebrate Nauroz (_Jamashedi Nauroz_) as a major feast. The ceremonies include recitation of religious verses, visiting of relatives and friends, the exchange of gifts, organising music and dance, etc.

(ii) _Seasonal Festivals_

Most of the festivals in India mark the beginning of a new season and the new harvest. This is rooted in the fact that India is predominantly an agricultural economy and so the festivals are more associated with the agrarian society. The festivals such as Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Holi, Baisakhi, Onam, etc. herald the advent of a new season and new crops. Besides these
traditional festivals being celebrated through the ages, some very new festivals are also becoming popular and attract people. In this respect, we can include festivals like Boat Race Festival, Mango Festival, Garden Festival, Kite Festival, etc. But these festivals should not be treated in isolated manner as these too are organised in appropriate regions and seasons.

As mentioned before, many of the religious festivals too are based on different calendars and so are seasonal in nature. So, there is a thin line of difference between the festivals of religious nature and seasonal ones. The worship of divinities is an important feature of all these. Thus, sometimes the seasonal celebrations are also counted as the religious festivals. However, some recent festivals based on different kinds of entertainment and popular products differ in nature from the traditional seasonal/religious festivals.

Makar Sankranti (winter solstice) falls in the month of January. On this day, a bath in Ganga is considered sacred whereas in South India the devotees bath in the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Godavari and make offerings. Makar Sankranti is the only Hindu festival celebrated according to the Solar calendar for it marks the transition of the sun from one Zodiac sign to another. This is called sankraman and the day is called Sankranti. Thus, there are 12 Sankrantis in an year. But the most important are those occurring in the months of Asadh and Paush. In the month of Paush (14 January), the sun appears against the constellation that represents the Zodiac sign of Makar. This is the beginning of uttarayan, the auspicious half of the year, when sun appears to move northwards. This cosmic phenomenon is celebrated with preparation of items using sesame seeds, sugarcane jaggery and sugar all over India with minor variations. In South India this festival is celebrated as the ‘Pongal’, which takes its name from the sweet dish prepared by boiling rice in a pot of milk. In Panjab, where December and January are the coldest months of the year, huge bonfires are lit on the eve of Sankrant and is celebrated as ‘Lohari’. Sweets, sugarcane and rice are offered to the fire. Fairs and regional dances are organised in different parts of India and ritualistic bath in sacred rivers is considered auspicious on this day.

Baisakhi is celebrated on the first day of the Baisakh month (April and May). This month also marks the seasonal change. In northern India the cultivators adjust the obligations incurred to provide for the rabi crop. In other words, on this day the sacred offerings of the rabi crops are made and these are eaten. In a way, what this festival is to rabi crops, the Diwali is to the Kharif crops. The Hindus take the ceremonial dip in the sacred rivers and worship cattle. Fairs or melas are organised and there begins the manufacture of new agricultural implements for the cultivation of new crops.

Onam, the harvest festival, is the most popular festival of Kerala. Onam is part of the cultural identity of every Malayalee. The ten-day Onam festival is celebrated in August-September, which coincides with the beginning of the harvest season. It celebrates a happy blend of myth and reality. It brings back memories of the folkloristic tradition since the ages centred around the king Mahabali, whose reign was famous for prosperity, equality and righteousness. According to the tradition, every year, the people of Kerala, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, join together to welcome back their legendary king. Preparation of a floral carpet called Athappookkalam in front of the houses, from the first day of Atham to the tenth day of Thiruvonam is part of the festivities. This symbolic gesture is to welcome king Mahabali. Carnivals, Boat Races, Dance, Music and Feasts are organised during this festive period. The meals with the traditional sweet dish called payasam, etc. is served in every house on plantain leaves. It would be significant to mention here that this festival in recent times has become a great source of tourist attraction.
As mentioned earlier some newly created seasonal festivals have also become popular in recent times. The Boat Race Festival associated with Onam is among the most popular of these. It is a part of the celebration of the new paddy harvest in Kerala. On this day various boat race competitions are organised in the backwaters of Kerala at places such as Alleppey. The boats are very long in different shapes. These are decorated and sailed by scores of boatmen.

Mango festival is another such kind of festival. In fact, it is a brain child of the Tourism Department and is a recent entry. It helps in the promotion of mango cultivation as well as becomes a great centre of attraction for domestic and foreign visitors. This is celebrated at popular centres in almost all the major mango producing states such as Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Panipat in Haryana, Delhi, etc. Generally, it is organised in early July. In this, mango eating competitions are held, fairs (melas) with cultural evenings are organised, and mangoes and its plants are also sold to attract commercial visitors.

Garden festival is also gaining popularity these days. This newly created festival is organised at Delhi by the Delhi Tourism and Transport Development Corporation. It is organised at various centres and the entries have increased year by year. This festival is organised every year in the month of February. The festival aims mainly to highlight the importance of horticulture and enhancing the knowledge of the visitors in this field as well as to make the participants aware of the new discoveries in the field. In this, competitions of the flowers and plants of various species such as potted house plants, vegetables, fruits, foliage plants, etc. are held. These competitions are open to individuals and organisations like nurseries, horticulture departments, etc. The prizes are awarded for the best in the show. These activities are also accompanied by on-the-spot painting competition for school children, cultural programmes, sale of rare plants, organising seminars to discuss the problems related with gardening, etc. This festival is gradually assuming the status of a big carnival. Similar to the garden festival at Delhi an international flower festival is organised in the month of April at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

Tea festival, like the Mango festival, is celebrated in the major tea producing states like Assam, Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tamilnadu, etc. In Himachal Pradesh, the Kangra Valley tea festival is organised in June whereas another important tea carnival is celebrated at Darjeeling in West Bengal. In Tamilnadu the tea festival and tourism festival is organised together in January. This festival aims to benefit the tea planters as well as those related with this industry. Nevertheless, tourists in large numbers also visit to watch the events. International planters as well as Indian planters are offered packaged tour to acquaint themselves with the condition in different regions and encourage the planters to grow the varieties of other regions. An important fact to mention in this connection is that, this festival is not merely confined to the planters and the tea industry but it also promotes tourism to these hilly areas as the visitors may also be attracted to other destinations in that region.

Kite festival, though traced to the medieval period, has become a very popular entertainment not only among the children but also among the elders. This festival is organised at cities such as Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, etc. However, this is the most popular show at Ahmedabad on the Makar Sankranti day (January 14). Besides Ahmedabad, other cities of Gujarat also celebrate this festival with kite flying, feasting and cultural programmes including folk dances like garba. With its growing popularity International kite festival is celebrated every year in different cities like Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, etc. It is interesting to note that in this festival not only people belonging to different parts of India but also from countries like Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Canada and USA participate. Ahmedabad, also known as the
city of kites, has an International Kite Museum with kites of various sizes, colours and shapes from different countries. The exhibition of kites and contemporary Indian handicrafts are also organised. Kite flying has also developed as a popular sport in other countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, etc. where Kite Flying competitions are encouraged by the government. Gujarat Tourism Department is paying special attention to explore this popular event and make it colourful and attractive for tourists.

(iii) Cultural Festivals

The festivals belonging to this category highlight the cultural tradition of our country. These reflect the traditional art of India. Recently, State Tourism Departments have also taken initiative to highlight the unique culture and tradition of the region. Such festivals include the Phool Walon Ki Sair (a Flower Festival), Elephant Festival of Kerala, Desert Festival of Rajasthan, Music and Dance festival in different parts of India, etc.

Phool Walon Ki Sair is a three-day festival celebrated every year in the month of October at Mehrauli in Delhi. Although this is popular as a flower fest, the unique feature of this festival is the inter-religious bonding. Hindus and Muslims both celebrate this. This involves a procession decorated with flowers to the shrine of Devi Jog Maya and the dargah of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki. Hindus offer a chaddar (spread) decorated with flowers to the shrine of Bakhtiyar Kaki, while Muslims offer a floral pankha (fan) at the Jog Maya Temple. Cultural programmes including singing and dancing activities such as qawwalis and kathak are organised. Recent years have also seen the increased participation of youth in this festival.

Elephant festival was a novel idea initiated by Kerala Tourism Development Corporation in 1990. It was basically aimed to attract foreign tourists and since then it has become very popular among, both foreign and domestic visitors. It is celebrated every year for four days in the month of January. The march with elephants start at Trichur and ends at Kovalam, the famous beach. Each elephant is adorned with decorated headgear and mahouts bear colourful dress. The procession is live with the drum beats and playing of other musical instruments. During the journey, elephant rides are arranged for the tourists and traditional folk dances are organised at different places. Other attractions enroute include setting-up of handicraft stalls for shopping, facility of backwater cruise, boat racing, provision of Kerala style food, display of fireworks, etc.

Desert festival of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan is another such creation by Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation. It was started in 1979 and attracts a large number of visitors every year. It is celebrated during the full moon in the month of February. The highlights of the festival are the desert folk music and Rajasthani dances like Dhap, Ghormar, Moria, Chari, Gangane, etc. Camel acrobatics, camel races, camel decor competitions, polo, camel safaris, etc. are other attractions. The competitions such as the turban tying contests, moustache contest, etc. with grand finale ending with the selection of Maru-Shri – Mr. Desert, are the significant features of the festival.

Music and Dance festivals organised at different places also reflect the traits of Indian culture. Some of the popular music and dance festivals are – Mahabalipuram Dance Festival at Mahabalipuram, Bijapur Music Festival at Bijapur, Khajuraho Festival at Khajuraho, Dhrupad Mela at Varanasi, Konark Dance Festival at Konark and Tansen Festival at Gawali. Of these the festivals at Mahabalipuram, Khajuraho and Konark are the dance festivals where the performances by the leading exponents of various dance forms such as Bharat Natyam (Tamilnadu), Kuchipudi (Orissa), Kathakali (Kerala), Kathak (Uttar Pradesh), Manipuri
(Manipur) and even foreign dance like Balinese (Indonesia) are organised in the open space or mandap in the architectural setting of the temple complexes at the above mentioned sites. These festivals draw large crowds. The craft fairs are also organised at these centres. Music festivals of Varanasi, Gwalior and Bijapur are also becoming popular. The skilled musicians perform with instruments like shehnai, sitar, veena, etc. The classical music concerts are also organised.

Off late the film festivals organised at different places in India have also become popular. As we know, India is the largest producer of films. Due to linguistic variations, a large number of films are produced in various language. As a result, the film festivals are held at different places to screen the films in different languages. These films reflect the cultural traits of our society. The Annual Film Festival is held every year at Delhi. Besides this, the Film Festival of the films made in foreign languages, is also organised annually.

(iv) Tribal Festivals

Tribal festivals are organised in the regions inhabited by different tribes. These reflects the tribal culture and help to revive and preserve the traditional art forms. These have potential of attracting large number of tourists and enable them to watch and learn the tribal culture. Off late, the Tourism Development Corporations of various states also have started organising these festivals on wider scale.

In Maharashtra, a tribal festival in Gavilgarh fort of Vidarbha at Chikhaldara is organised every year. This area in Maharashtra is popular for its wildlife. A tribal museum and a botanical garden have been set-up at this place. The tribes of this region include Korku, Gavalis, Basodes, Gonds, Madias, etc. Various tribal dances such as the Bihawoo and Pola by Korkus, Ghorpad by Gonds, etc. on the tunes of the musical instruments prepared by these tribes are performed in this festival.

Similarly, the Banjara dance of the nomads is performed using bright costumes, ornaments, scarves and vocal music.

In Chootanagpur area, especially Ranchi in Jharkhand a tribal festival popularly known as the Adivasi Mela is held every year. The Santhals of this region celebrate their festival Sarhul adhering to their traditional practices.

In Gujarat, the tribal dances, drama and music are organised at Saputara. Gujarat Tourism highlights the rich tribal culture of the Dangi adivasis (tribals).

Intext Questions:
1. Name some popular festivals of different faiths.
2. Which regions of India celebrates the following festivals?
   (a) Onam (b) Pongal (c) Baisakhi
3. The Mango festival in organised at,
   (a) ________, (b) ________, (c) ________.
4. The Kite festival is one of the most popular show at ________.
5. Briefly discuss about some popular cultural festivals.
6. What does 'Phool Walon Ki Sair' signify?
7. Name some popular tribal festivals and the regions associated with those.
3.2 Fairs and their classification

In Indian tradition, the fairs are generally referred to as the ‘melas’. Most of these fairs are linked with the religious faiths, festivals, rituals, pilgrimage (tirtha) and destinations/places (localities) with specific significance. Some of these have been continuing since a long period. In other words, fairs are part of our traditional customs carried on since ages, of trading activities of the past or part of local cultural patterns.

Though most of these fairs are linked with the festivals, in recent times we find the emergence of new activity or theme-based fairs which also command huge popularity. Such fairs include the fairs for specific purpose or for certain products like the cattle fair, book fair, craft fair, textile fair, etc. On this basis, the fairs can be broadly classified into two: (i) Religious fairs (melas) (ii) Theme/Activity/ Product-based fairs.

(i) Religious Fairs (melas)

Of the religious fairs, the Kumbh mela is the greatest and most important. It is held periodically every twelve years at Nasik, Ujjain, Prayag and Haridwar. This also provides an occasion for the meeting of the religious heads of different sects in Hinduism and promotes the exchange of ideas. Millions of people visit these melas. They include the Indian pilgrims as well as the foreign tourists.

The Ganga Sagar mela in Bengal has become so popular now that it is attended by the Indians as well as the foreigners. At Kolkata (Calcutta), the river Hoogly (a distributary of Ganges) joins the Bay of Bengal. According to the tradition, the devotees bath in the river to wash away the sins and earn merits.

The Magh mela is another popular fair, which is held at Prayag (Allahabad) in the month of Magha (January-February). It is believed that the ritual bath and offerings at Prayag brings religious merits.

Pushkar mela is held annually in the month of Kartika on the banks of the lake Pushkar near Ajmer in Rajasthan. The only Brahma temple in India is at Pushkar. A large number of Indian and foreign visitors attend this fair. This is a popular cattle fair. It is believed that the bath in the holy lake at Pushkar cures the diseases and adds to religious merits.

Besides the above mentioned important religious fairs, there are many other fairs held on occasions of eclipses (grahan), full moon (purnima) and other astronomical occurrences.

(ii) Theme/Activity/Product-based Fairs (melas)

Since our ancient past cattle has been an important means used in agriculture. Thus, the cattle and other animals were either exchanged, sold or bought in fairs held in different parts of the subcontinent. This also provided an occasion for the exchange of other commodities. As the cattle trade dominated over the sale of other items in these melas, these were referred to as the cattle fairs or animal fairs. Many of these fairs continue till today. The popular cattle fairs include Pushkar fair of Rajasthan, Nagaur fair of Rajasthan, Sonepur fair of Bihar.

A number of book fairs are also held throughout the year. International Book Fair is held at Pragati Maidan in Delhi every year. In these fairs, the Indian and foreign publishers set-up their stalls. The aim of such activities is to make the readers aware of the recent publications on various subjects and also to bring the sources in various languages under one umbrella.
The India International Trade Fair (IITF), held every year from 14\textsuperscript{th} to 27\textsuperscript{th} November at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, is noteworthy in this context. The products manufactured by various countries as well as states in India, are displayed and sold in respective pavilions. The products include the items of everyday use to highly technical goods. Some of the halls in the fair are meant for exhibition of equipments used by the Defence Forces, Telecommunication wings, etc. Ethnic good of various regions, cultural programmes and other forms of entertainment are arranged for the visitors to present them the picture of India. This fair attracts huge crowds every year.

Craft and Textile fairs or \textit{melas} are also gaining popularity day-by-day. In the last quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century many private and public institutions were set-up to collect, nurture and display artefacts from different sections of our living cultures. They also organise festivals and fairs in order to bring together various cross cultural elements to reflect unity in diversity. The Surajkund (the Pool of the Sun) Crafts Mela in Haryana is the best known of these modern day fairs. It started in 1987 and is celebrated from the 1\textsuperscript{st} to 15\textsuperscript{th} February every year. Its primary focus is on the handicrafts and handlooms of India, which are projected statewise every year with food, music, dance and other folk entertainments of the selected state to add to the particular cultural atmosphere. In other words, each year a different state demonstrates a new cultural facet of the country. Many such fairs are held at local and regional levels.

In the context of popular culture, some newly created fairs related to various artistic activities are also successful in drawing crowds towards them. An example cited in this respect may be that of the fairs/festivals organised by schools, colleges or other institutions. These are generally organised annually with pomp and show. These help to encourage the youth to reflect their talents in various activities such as dance, music, plays, theatre, etc.

\textbf{Intext Questions:}

1. Explain religious fairs with some popular examples.
2. The International Book Fair in India is held at ________.
3. Which is the venue of India International Trade Fair?
4. Which state organises the Surajkund Crafts Mela every year?
5. Name any two popular Cattle fairs of India.

\textbf{(III)}

\textbf{4. Textile and Crafts}

\textbf{4.1 Textile and Trends}

When we see a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi on the famous Salt March, we are reminded of him leading towards his goal with the \textit{Khadi} loincloth wrapped around his waist and the staff in his hand. Secondly, his march to the sea to make salt, a food item, was in protest to the British tax imposed on a commodity used in every household. In a way, this picture reflects the importance of dress and food in everyday’s life. On one hand, \textit{Khadi} symbolized the efforts of Indian weavers or craftsmen, who were reduced to the state of impoverishment by the attack by the product of the British mills, while on the other British tax on an item of daily necessity meant causing pains to the masses.
The above mentioned example attest that textile and crafts should not be viewed in isolation from each other. The craft of weaving has been continuing in the subcontinent since ancient times. In early periods, mainly household women were engaged in this. Cotton, silk and wool were the best-known natural fibres. The use of cotton was prevalent in the Harappan civilization. The Vedic Literature and the texts of later periods also mention the use of cotton. The Sangam literature of South India also refer to the use of cotton and silk. Though silk was used in different parts of the subcontinent, its production was confined to eastern, north-eastern and southern regions. Silk also was an important item of import from China in ancient period. In medieval period the dress pattern was influenced by Islamic culture. Dresses such as salwar-kamiz, burqa, etc. were introduced.

Till today the traditional dress patterns are followed by a large number of population. In addition to this, however, the modern dress styles have been shaped up by three major trends – technological change, the independence movement and changing social identities.

Technological developments influenced the textiles to a great extent. In the 19th century, imported mill-made clothes replaced most produced on handlooms. Only a few entrepreneurs like Jamshedji N. Tata and Birla family were given permission to build textile mills at Bombay and Delhi respectively. Though the British relaxed the restrictions during the two World wars, it was not until after 1947 that the textile industry witnessed its expansion. As a result of the policy of economic liberalization there was tremendous growth in the synthetic textile industry. The synthetics, which were relatively expensive in the early 1980s became within the reach of all social classes at cheaper prices.

The independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, focused on the revival of handloomed textiles. Attempts were made to bring the Indian handicrafts and other industries out of the grip of deindustrialization caused by the economic policies of the British. There was a call on Indians to buy and use Indian products (Swadeshi), especially Khadi. Gandhi and many other leaders discarded western dress and experimented with varieties of Indian traditional clothing including those of Khadi. Soon the revived interest in hand-spun and loomed cloth led to diversification of colour, pattern and design. This included production of labour-intensive finer fabrics like silk. Today, synthetic yarn is also used in Khadi textiles to produce new quality of cloth. After 1947, the Government of India subsidized Khadi producers through institutions such as the Khadi and Village Industries Board and the All-India Handicrafts Board.

Changing social identities also affected the dressing style. A section of fashion-conscious population favoured the rural dress pattern such as hand embroideries, old fabrics and jewellery. For them, this represented a chance to revive arts that were being lost. On the other hand, local designs were often reworked in new ways and forms to attract the urban customers. However, though the traditional associations in this regard symbolized authenticity much liked by the westernized elites, it meant little to the urban population. Traditional prints in many cases marked the wearer as belonging to a low-status group. Modern fashion designers are consumer-conscious and focus on prints in abstract and floral designs. Even the Khadi prints, designs and texture have undergone significant changes to satisfy the needs of consumers.

Let us now discuss about the techniques of dyeing, printing and embroidery in brief. Indian weavers had access to plant-based dyes since ancient times. With passage of time they also developed many other techniques of dyeing with the use of wax, mud or other substances to keep dye from bonding with the fiber. Specific techniques include ikat, bandhej or tie-and-dye, batik, and kalamkari (pen work). In ikat, the yarn is tied up along its length and dyed in different
colours. In bandhej (tie-and-dye), little bundles of cloth are tied up to prevent the dye from penetrating. This produces pattern of spots or wavy striped patterns. In batik, wax covers the areas of the fabric that are not to be dyed. In Kalamkari, designs are made by painting on the design by hand with a thick brush, which holds a dye.

Hand block printing is one of the oldest industries of the subcontinent. In this, a master carver produces the block and creates the patterns. The printer lays on the design, directly stamping the pattern and using resist stamps to produce intricate effects. Printers create designs by stamping glue on the fabric in a pattern, then rubbing glitter over the fabric. Today, block-printing centres located near Jaipur in Rajasthan produce multicoloured cottons and silks.

Embroidery includes the zari work and chikan work. The zari work uses gold and silver threads. This kind of embroidery includes the Mughal-inspired designs such as flowers, vines and repeated geometric shapes on the borders of the garment. The chikan (white-on-white) embroidery produces garments with skilled stitches by master embroiderers. Lucknow is famous for its chikan industry, which produces lengths for women’s salwar, kamiz, and saris.

4.1a Regional Dress

Each region of the subcontinent produces distinctive fabrics and designs. The most common unstitched garment used is the shawl. A shawl roughly measures two to three yards in length and about a yard in width. It is wrapped around the body in different styles in various regions. It has fancy borders and sometimes decorated with embroidery. It is very common in the colder regions. The fabrics used range from coarse wool to the finest cashmere.

The dhoti, unstitched clothing, is popular among the men of rural areas today. It is a man’s lower garment wrapped around legs. A dhoti can be wrapped in different ways. In South India, a similar unstitched lower garment called mundu is worn by men. The lungi is another sarong-like garment worn by men of all regions.

The turban is the most distinctive unstitched male dress. This is wrapped around the head in different regional patterns. The turban tied by the Rajasthanis appear as big coils whereas the Rajputs tie it in such a way that a plume of fabric hangs down the back. For Sikh males, the turbans are integral part of their religious tradition. It is tightly wrapped, angular and almost geometric.

Kurta-Pajama is another set of traditional upper and lower garment worn by Indian men. The common fabrics used for this are cotton, silk and muslin. Kurta, either long or short, can be stitched in various printed designs or embroidery work. Pajamas too can be of different styles such as Pathani, Churidaar, etc. One can clearly make out the differences in the dhoti-kurta worn by the men of Bengal region and the lungi-kurta worn by the men of Panjab. Today, even synthetic fabrics are use for stitching these dresses.

Women of Indian subcontinent are fond of decorative garments and ornamentation. The dress of women reflects ethnicity and region much more than the men’s dress.

The sari is the most distinctive unstitched women’s garment. This is practically worn by women of all regions. The fabrics range from that for everyday use to expensive special occasion wear. Different ways of wrapping the sari and different fabrics and designs reflect regional differences. For example, in Maharashtra, women wrap the sari to the legs in the fashion of man’s dhoti, whereas tribal women in Orissa wear a short, thick, knee-length sari. A typical sari measures 13-26 feet in length and about 4 feet in width. A sari has three distinct
sections – the borders along the length of the top and bottom, the interior or field between the borders, and the *pallu* or the end piece. The borders may be wide or narrow with decorations. Pale and light coloured with simple *pallu* worn in Bengal and Eastern India can be easily distinguished from heavy Kanjeevaram silk saris of Tamilnadu.

The *Salwar-Kamiz* is a popular stitched dress among women of almost all regions. However, this dress predominates in the northern regions including Kashmir, Panjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The *salwar* is a type of pant and *kamiz* is the upper garment similar to the *kurta*. A wide scarf (*chunni*) to drape over the head and shoulders is used with this garment. The *kamiz* may be stitched in different styles such as long or short, fitted or loose, long or short-sleeved.

Other stitched garments of women include skirt-and-blouse outfits, the *burqa*, etc. The traditional skirt is long or full ankle-length with pleats and matching border. It is worn with a matching short bodice with sleeves. Today, the influence of western countries can be seen in the use of knee-length or even shorter skirts with modern designs. The *burqa* is worn by Muslim women. It is a loose cotton or synthetic overcoat with an attached veil.

The contemporary dress pattern of youth, especially urban, is greatly influenced by the foreign elements. The fashion shows and other forms of media have attracted people to experiment with the new patterns of clothing. Garments such as jeans, T-shirts, cargo pants, etc., liked by both the sexes, have flooded the Indian markets. Nevertheless, a synthesis of tradition and modernity can be observed in the works of designers reflecting indigenous features in combination with industrial technologies. In today’s competitive market machine textiles compete with handwork and sometimes hand workers copy machine technology. But the vitality of the traditional style continues till today.

**Intext Questions:**

1. Which were the popular natural fibers used for making clothes in ancient India?
2. Name the important dyeing techniques practiced in India.
3. Differentiate between the *zari* and *chikan* embroidery works.
4. Define the terms: (a) *pallu*, (b) *chunni*, and (c) *burqa*.

### 4.2 Crafts and their classification

Craft can be defined as an art, trade or profession requiring special skill and knowledge by which a livelihood is earned. As India lives in its villages, it is mostly the traditions and customs of these people which constitute the rich cultural heritage of folkarts and crafts. Thus, the local cultures are well reflected in these arts and crafts. Their origin can be traced in the folklore, history, myth, superstition, science, religion or simple day-to-day practices. However, their commercialization by making them objects of exhibition in a museum or fairs today may have adverse effects on their originality. Therefore, a balance should be retained so that the visitors, especially foreigners, to these places understand Indian culture without imposing their distant and alien culture and invading the privacy of the other. These artefacts help us to know about the identities of different societies as reflected in their dress, household articles, agricultural and hunting implements, musical instruments, baskets, furniture, cooking vessels, terracottas, etc.
Outside their zones of production, folkarts and crafts are found either in market place or in specialized museums. These can be broadly divided into three categories – (i) the living crafts, (ii) the languishing crafts, and (iii) the extinct or museum category of arts and crafts.

The ‘living’ crafts include all those objects, which are still being manufactured for local and personal use as well as for sale by the craftsmen in their respective regions.

The ‘languishing’ arts and crafts are those which have shown trends of decline in recent times due to the onslaught of modern life with its mechanization and mass media culture. These include those skills and arts forms, which are still known and practiced but are fast losing their relevance and popularity. Their revival or regeneration requires special design, technical or marketing strategies, which in some cases are being taken care of.

In the ‘extinct’ or museum category of arts and crafts, the manufacture and designs of those may be extinct but not necessarily the skill. This is because the artisan communities maintain traditional knowledge and often pass it on orally. In other words, no craftsmanship or skill can be considered as completely extinct as long as the traditional knowledge remains with the artisan community. However, many objects have gone out of use, and many traditional skills today either require high level of effort for manufacture or are not cost-effective. Such objects are displayed in the National Museum at Delhi, in State museums and specialized Crafts Museums.

4.2a Crafts and their historical past

Looking at the history of crafts in the subcontinent, we are reminded of the technology used for making simple stone tools by the prehistoric man in Stone Ages. The earliest literary references in the \textit{Rigveda} mention the craftsmen such as the jewellers, goldsmith, metal-workers, basket-makers, rope-makers, weavers, dyers, carpenters and potters. The sophistication can be observed in the discoveries such as bronze dancing girl, seals with figures such as a seated yogi, terracotta figurines of man, women, animals, etc. from various sites of the Harappan civilization. Almost all archaeological sites in the subcontinent, from Harappan period onwards, have yielded many of the terracotta objects. However, most of these were produced from the Mauryan to the Gupta period. The craft of Bead-making or lapidary also has been continuing since ancient times.

The masterly skill of the craftsmen is well reflected in the Ashokan pillars of the Mauryan period. These pillars are mounted with the animal capitals such as the bull, elephant or lion. The most famous pillar with four lions seated back to back, has become our national emblem.

The art of building in stones seems to have been learnt slowly from the Mauryan period onwards. The earliest sculpture of historical period show certain features common to the Harappan terracottas or clay figures. Most of the art pieces produced by the craftsmen of ancient times were associated with religious use. The ancient sculptors produced beautiful Buddha images in various \textit{mudras} (postures). In the early centuries of the Christian era, these developed three major schools of art – the Gandhara School influenced by the Indo-Greek art in northwestern part, the Mathura School in the Gangetic plain and the Amaravati School in Andhra region. The images/sculptures produced by the craftsmen of these schools attest their level of excellence which can be seen in the \textit{stupas} at Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi.

Gupta period witnessed the development in the field of iconography related to Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Images of deities like Vishnu in his boar (\textit{Varaha}) incarnation, sun and
others still look attractive in museums. The craftsmen also created the sculptures of Buddha and Jain *tirthankaras*. However, the most noticeable example of Gupta metal-work can be seen in the famous Iron pillar near Qutub Minar at Delhi. This is made of single piece of iron and reflects great metallurgical skill of Gupta craftsmen.

The period 6th-12th centuries A.D. (Post-Gupta period) marked advancement in the sphere of art and architecture. Most of the paintings of Ajanta date back to the 6th century A.D. One is also reminded of the sculptures of Mahabalipuram, adorning the rock-cut temples built by the Pallava kings. The influence of the Pallava school of sculpture was also felt in ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Western Deccan. The most remarkable development was the construction of magnificent temples between 10th-12th centuries A.D. Their structures varied according to the style followed in the construction. The three prominent styles or architecture were – the Nagara style, the Dravida style, and the Vesara style. These walls of these temples were adorned with well carved images. The famous temples of the period include the Thanjavur (Tanjore) temple built by the Cholas, Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho, Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneshwar, Jain temple at Mount Abu, etc. Nevertheless, the Chola craftsmen produced bronze figures with great skills. The most popular is the image of dancing Shiva or *Nataraja*, captured in the frenzy of the dance that creates the universe. During the Palas of Bengal, the bronze images, mostly Buddhist, were produced on mass scale. These were also exported to Southeast Asia, Nepal and Tibet.

During 13th-18th centuries A.D., the workshops of artists and craftsmen produced noticeable paintings and other creations. In the Mughal period, the artists developed a highly realistic style of miniature painting. The rulers, especially Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir, encouraged the artists. Humayun even recruited Persian artists for a workshop at his court. The paintings were influenced by Persian, European, Chinese and Southeast Asian features. The subjects of paintings included historical events, city scenes, rural life, portraits, animal and plant life, etc. Rajasthan and the Punjab hills also emerged an important centres of miniature painting. After the arrival of the Europeans, the influence of European art was very evident.

The period between 19th and mid-20th century saw the beginning of the modern art in India. There emerged new patrons of art and the new techniques were experimented. The introduction of photography in 1840s displaced portrait painters. The development in the print technology resulted in mass production. The spirit of nationalism encouraged interest in the folkart and pre-Islamic art.

Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) became the first Indian painter to achieve international fame. His naturalistic paintings of Hindu deities in oil on canvas became popular. Western art colleges were established at Chennai in 1850, Calcutta in 1854, and Mumbai in 1857. The artists trained here discovered that the images of deities and scenes from folktales had mass appeal. The archeological discoveries at Ajanta brought to light the glory of our past.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Tagore brothers, Abanindranath (1871-1951) and Rabindranath (1861-1942) emerged as India’s most popular figure in the arts. Abanindranath Tagore was very much influenced by the foreign elements. He attempted synthesis of various features to create new aesthetic modes. His most popular paintings is the *Bharat Mata* produced in 1905, which depicted India as a young sari-clad woman. This became iconic for the nationalists. Rabindranath Tagore formed a club for the artists’ gatherings. He founded the school at Santiniketan, which focussed upon the artistic developments. These led to
the emergence of the Bengal School of art with blend of modern and folkart motifs. Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941) and Jamini Roy (1887-1972) were popular artists of this movement.

By the middle of the 20th century, a group of artists in Mumbai were influenced by the French and German arts. In 1940s they formed the Progressive Artists Group. Francis Newton Souza (born 1924) of Goa became known for his paintings of Catholics and the upper classes. However, Maqbool Fida Husain (born 1915) emerged as the most successful pointer from this group. His canvases were inspired by the paintings of Pablo Picasso of Italy.

Since the mid-20th century several new trends have been observed in this field. The elite as well as non-elite artists played important role in different forms of art and craft. The elite art forms are exhibited in the galleries which cater to the upper-class audiences. Nevertheless, the non-elite local art forms are not able to compete with the industrially produced specimen. This, in many cases, has led to the traditional artists embracing other occupations.

Regional specialities can be seen in the local arts and crafts produced by skilled workers. The following examples would reflect the diverse creations of various regions:

(i) the painters of Bengal painting scroll (patachitra) used by Bengali stroytellers,
(ii) the painters at Udaipur in Rajasthan decorating house facades with bright images of elephants, warriors, etc.; and the potters of the same region making red or black fired clay plagues depicting deities, which are painted and installed in temples,
(iii) the craftsmen in Tamilnadu producing the popular horse image to be installed in shrines; the craftsmen of Mahabalipuram carving the stone images with great skill, and
(iv) the women of Madhubani district in Bihar creating beautiful paintings on the canvas.

The national and state governments have taken measures for the conservation of our arts heritage. In 1953, the Crafts Museum was established in New Delhi with this objective. In the last quarter of the 20th century many private and public institutions have been set-up to collect, nurture and display artefacts from different sections of our cultures. The non-elite artist are also encouraged and supported in various ways. There are museums that also have live displays and demonstrations of folk skills.

Tourism, in recent times, has provided an important market through state-sponsored institutions and private dealers. Most recently, a fruitful effort has been to construct ‘artists’ villages’ affiliated with museums or institutional cultural centres for the propagation of fokarts and crafts, and offer as a tourist destination. Here, the artists demonstrate and sell their work. The most notable step in this direction is the creation of the Shilpgram, the west zone cultural centre at Udaipur in Rajasthan. **Shilpgram** is a model of traditional village life, which is to a considerable extent self-contained with the farmer, the potter, the carpenter, the blacksmith and weaver living in harmony and mutual interdependence. The sanctuaries, folk shrines, tribal totems, etc. are recreated with authencity nearby the **Shilpgram**.

Other institutions at zonal level include the **Bharat Bhavan** at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, North Zone Cultural Centre at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, East Zone Cultural Centre at Kolkata in West Bengal and South Zone Cultural Centre at Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. These institutions help in organising festivals and fairs, and also participate in these in order to bring together various cross cultural elements in a presentation of unity in diversity.
Intext Questions:

1. Differentiate between the 'living crafts', the 'lan guishing crafts', and the 'extinct or museum category crafts'.

2. Name any five crafts practiced by Rig Vedic people.

3. The three major schools of art in ancient India were,
   (a) ________, (b) ________, and (c) ________.

4. Which periods or dynasties are associated with the following popular images?
   (a) Bronze Dancing girl (b) Bronze Natraja, and (c) Bronze Buddha Figures.

5. Patachitra is popular in ________.

6. Which state is famous for the Madhubani paintings?

7. What is Shilpgram?

5. The Culture of Food

How important are food and clothes in our lives has been shown earlier in this chapter through an example. Food and dress link India to history, culture and identity. Since ancient period India has been famous as the source of exotic spices and its cuisine known for its variety and infinitely subtle blends of aromatic spices and seasoning, which flavour meat, pulses and vegetables. This is evident by the role of South Indian spices in the ancient Indo-Roman trade, which earned huge profits for the Indian merchants.

5.1 History of food in our cultures

The Neolithic period is characterized by the domestication of plants and animals. The earliest example of the domestication of plants in the subcontinent comes from the archaeological site of Mehrgarh in Pakistan. In the earlier periods, the Paleolithic and Mesolithic, man depended on hunting animals and gathering plant products for his food as he had no knowledge of agriculture or domestication of animals. The early staple food included cereals like barley and species of beans and lentils. The diet of the Harappans consisted of barley as the staple food including finger millet, wild millets, pulses, oil seeds, dates, and jujube (a small round berry-like fruit). They domesticated cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goats and also obtained food from fishing and hunting.

The Vedic culture developed in the Gangetic region. The alluvial and rain-fed soil was suitable for the cultivation of rice. Other food items included honey, sugarcane, linseed, grapes, cucumber, dates, etc. The dairy products such as yoghurt, butter, and ghee were also consumed. However, one of the most mysterious of these ancient foods was the soma, a sacred drink used in sacrifices. This produced altered states of consciousness. There have been many attempts by scholars to identify the plant source for soma. The studies have indicated a possibility that the fly agaric mushroom (Amanita muscarita) could have been the source for the same. The people also knew about other stimulants including marijuana (Cannabis sativa), and distilled liquors that can be put in the category of sura, the popular drink of the period.

Animal sacrifice was an important aspect of Vedic ritual. These animals included the horse, cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, chicken, etc. The meat of these animals were eaten after their offerings to deities. Due to the development of agriculture and ecological factors, the
The economical use of animals for dairy products and other purposes became more important. Later, the heterodox sects like Buddhism and Jainism preached non-killing of animals in sacrifices. Thus, vegetarianism became associated with value systems. The transformation of Vedic religion into Hinduism in later periods, also brought in the plant products like coconuts, fruits, vegetables, etc. for offerings to deities rather than meat. However, the practice of animal sacrifices continued in tantric practices. Nevertheless, according to an estimate about 75% of the population of the subcontinent is non-vegetarian. In India, the popular vegetarian belts are Gujarat and Rajasthan were majority of the population in vegetarian.

By the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, the contacts with the West Asia added new elements to the Food culture. The Muslim rulers, especially the Tughlaqs (14\textsuperscript{th} century), introduced \textit{Kebabs}, items stuffed with vegetables or meat, and other eatables to the existing traditions.

In the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Mughal emperor Babur brought Central Asian melons, cherries, peaches, and apricots to India. Trade brought the New world crops or plants to the subcontinent. The potato and tomato were commonly used for the vegetarian food during the Mughal period. The use of these New world plants in Mughal cooking such as the \textit{dum aloo} (potatoes cooked in rich curry) became much liked by the elites. However, the most prominent of the New world plants was the \textit{capsicum} chili which became an integral part of Indian cuisine. Other important New world plants include the pineapple, papaya, maize, custard apple, peanut, sunflower, topioca, cashew nuts, tobacco, etc. The Hindi name for cashew, \textit{kaju}, is from the Brazilian \textit{acaju} and the Brazilian \textit{nana} for pineapple became \textit{ananas} in Hindi.

British influence promoted the habit of tea drinking and western habits of wine and dine. In the 1970s, Soviet agricultural advisors introduced Russian varieties of sunflower. By the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the urban snacks market was flooded with Chinese food, pizza, chips, and burgars, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The economic liberalization in the 1980s resulted in the agreements with foreign companies to manufacture popular western brands of food and beverages.

### 5.2 Food Behaviour

Food in our culture, represents ritual purity and group membership. For example, Jain temple complexes include a dining hall, which serves vegetarian food. Sikhs follow religious services with a communal meal called the \textit{langar}. Hindus do not eat beef and for the Muslims pork and alcohol is prohibited. Fasts are observed by both, the Hindus and Muslims. This ritual practice is generally observed by the women among the Hindus. The Muslims, on the other hand, may not eat anything between the dawn and sunset during the Ramadan (Ramazan) period.

### 5.3 Classification of Food

The food culture of the subcontinent has many similarities with that of the Middle East and Mediterranean region. On the basis of its quality, the food is generally classified into two – hot and cold. In Indian tradition, the concept of five basic substances (\textit{panchatatva}) is very popular. These include earth, water, fire, air (mind), and sky (ether). Their respective combinations determine three special qualities – \textit{kapha} (earth and water), \textit{pitta} (fire), and \textit{vatha} (air and sky). \textit{Kapha} is characterized by courage since it is not linked to knowledge. Fire symbolizes excitement, energy, and passion. So, \textit{pitta} type of food is associated with intelligence, disciplined knowledge, and pleasures. The heat promotes courage and excitement. The food such as pork, beef, fish, etc. and intoxicants enhances courage while bitter and salty food make a person excited and restless for taking action. The “cold” food promotes spirituality.
These include dairy products, honey, chicken, eggs and wine. Human nature and quality is also determined by the food habit. So, one can balance too much heat with cold food or vice versa. Consuming a particular type of food is also related to the climatic conditions. For example, cold foods are suitable in the summer. In our culture, a particular food habit is also associated with the identity of a community in many cases. For instance, the Brahmins of many regions do not eat onion, garlic or non-vegetarian food because it causes much excitement, whereas the Rajputs prefer meat and drinks to maintain their vigour. However, at present this cannot be applied to all members of the community.

5.4 The Sanctity of Kitchen

The kitchen in Indian homes is a sacred place. The ritual purity is maintained in cooking and serving the food. The modern lifestyle, though, has brought about many changes in serving, etc., on special occasions the traditional practices are followed. A general traditional practice is to offer the cooked food to the fire and other divinities before serving it to the family members or guests. In our culture, one is uncomfortable with the idea of jootha, that is, if it is first eaten by someone else other than for whom it is served or is leftover by someone. Even many persons eating in one plate is not considered pure.

5.5 Regional Flavours or Cuisines

Now, we shall discuss about the popular flavours or cuisines of different regions.

Starting with the northwestern region, we find that the food culture has been influenced by the invaders or immigrants since long past. The Afghani dishes such as naan, kebab, etc. are popular. The Mughal rulers brought in the Turkish and Persian influence with certain refinement. In today’s Delhi and Punjab, the favourite foods include tandoori chicken, keema (minced meat), choole-bhature, paneer, raita etc. The people prefer bread/chapati/roti made of wheat of maize flour more than the rice.

In the extreme north, Kashmiris use ingredients such as saffron, mushrooms, lotus roots, etc. for cooking. They prepare tea with carrdamom, almonds, and sweeten it with a little sugar, which is called kahva. A samovar, a heated urn for making tea, is fired up throughout the day to keep the tea warm.

In the west, Rajasthani food consists of millet, dairy products, and lentils. The commonly used ingredients are onion, red chilli, garlic, etc. The Rajputs prefer meat. Daal-baati is a popular item in Rajasthan. Gujrati dishes are generally cooked without onion and garlic due to a strong Jain influence. The food items are sweetened with different agents. Other dishes include kadhi, spiced noodles, papad, pakoras, etc. The Maharashtra region was located away from the Mughal control. So, there was not much impact of Moghul flavours. The people prefer spiced vegetables of various types, though the fish is common in the coastal belt. In Goa, the food habit is very much influenced by the European habits, especially that of the Portuguese. This is because it was a colony of the Portuguese. The commonly used items include coconut milk, tamarind, garlic, chilies, cinnamon, curry leaves, peanut, cashew nut, etc. Goanese are fond of meat.

In south, the food of Kerala is different from other southern states, though with a few common dishes. Coconut oil is a very common ingredient for cooking dishes. The flavours vary from sweet banana and coconut to sour lime, fresh green mango and yoghurt. The food is spicy with curry leaves. Rice is the common diet and seafood including fish features in many dishes. Rice products like idali, dosa, etc. with spicy sambhar are prepared in every home.
Nevertheless, *payasam* is the sweet dish and *rasam* serves as a soup. The influence of the food habits of Syrian Christians is very much seen in Kerala. Of the meat of various animals, beef and lamb stew is much preferred.

The cuisine of Tamil Nadu, in the far south on the east coast, include *idli, dosa, vada, sambhar, appam, iddiappam, uttapam, rasam* etc. A *dosa* is crisp pancake made from fermented rice and *dal* (pulse). It is often stuffed with potato or onion filling and is called *masala dosa*. *Idli* is steamed rice cake. *Uttapam* vaguely resembles a pizza. Sea fish is available in plenty in coastal areas.

Andhra Pradesh has spicy and sour dishes. The sour taste comes from the use of tamarind, lemon and unripened mangoes. This sour flavour has been probably inherited from pre-Mughal Persians, Turkish and Arab traders who were fond of vinegar and pomegranates.

In Orissa, rice is the staple diet. Special preparation of rice after its fermentation, is very much liked. Different varieties of fish in coastal areas are other important part of the diet.

West Bengal and other northeastern regions prefer rice, fish, prawns, milk-based sweets, etc. The people generally use mustard oil or paste for cooking. The Bengalis are known for their sweet tooth. Bengali sweets are famous, the *rosogullas* being the most common. The sweets are made of milk, sugar, almond cream, etc. In the extreme northeastern states, the tribal culture has a great influence on the eating habits. They prefer non-vegetarian diet.

The areas covered by the fertile Gangetic valley including the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar produce many varieties of fruits and vegetables. The cultivation of the *rabi* and *kharif* crops on large scale significantly adds both wheat and rice to the menu. Many kinds of lentils are also included in the daily food. Besides the mango of many varieties being the favourite fruit, this region produces many species of fruit. Many forms of products such as *sattu* (roasted gram and barley flour), *chiwda* (rice flakes or flattened rice), *mudhi* (puffed rice), etc. are consumed as snacks. *Litti* with *chokha* or mutton is very popular in Bihar. *Litti* is the flour-cake stuffed with *sattu*, and the *chokha* is a spicy preparation of fried brinjal, peas, etc. The people are also fond of many sweets and dishes prepared using milk, butter, dry fruits, etc.

**Intext Questions:**

1. Which period is characterised by the beginning of food production?
2. Name any three fruits introduced by Babur in India.
3. Name any two Brazilian crops introduced in India.
4. Which are the three types of food in Indian tradition classified on the basis of their special qualities?
5. Name the regions associated with following food or drinks.
6. (a) *kahva*, (b) *daal-baati*, (c) *rasam*, (d) *uttapam*, (e) *rosogullas*, (f) *litti-chokha*, and (g) sweet *kadhi*.

**Conclusion**

The discussion about various aspects of the cultures, especially popular cultures, in the subcontinent provides information about the various traditions in different spheres followed in different regions. These features link a particular region to its history and identity. The traditional folk literature, arts and crafts, etc. reflect the way of life. Many of these practices have been
continuing since ancient period, though some modifications or refinement can be observed in many cases. Nevertheless, the development of tourism and modernization has affected the forms of cultures. Thus, to maintain their originality and sanctity, it is essential that tourism should take into account their preservation rather than distorting or destroying them. Our approach must be sensitive to the maintenance of our cultural essence and efflorescence.

**LONG QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the concept of 'Popular Culture' and its usage in different contexts.
2. What is meant by 'Folklore'? Explain.
3. Discuss about the tradition of tirthas and tirtha-yatras in our cultures.
4. Discuss the dress pattern of males and females in any two regions in the Indian subcontinent.
5. Write an essay on the tradition of various crafts present in out cultures and their evolution since ancient period.
6. Distinguish between the food habits in North India and South India with suitable examples.

**SUGGESTED READINGS**

CHAPTER 8A
CULTURE, PATRONAGE AND AUDIENCES

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Introduction

Art as an expression of a particular person or group of people, makes up a large part of culture, as it is symbolic of traits, morals, and religious characteristics. An artist is defined as “a person whose creative work shows sensitivity and imagination”. That sensitivity and imagination is what can make a culture and something that influences many parts of our lives.

The arts provide a way for people to explore new possibilities “to notice the world”. Art defines a culture because “culture is a pattern of behaviours, ideas, and values shared by a group”. Without art, what is a culture? A way of life

There is evidence that since ancient times humans had art as part of their culture. Art and culture were entwined from the beginning; art in its most basic form after all is a means of communication between one person and another. The first cave paintings were popular culture because they were the culture. They were pictographic representations of the lives of people, who drew them. The same concept still applies (whether the artist intends it or not) to contemporary work today, albeit in a more complex way.

Historically, the arts flourished under the support of two main categories of patron--the larger Hindu temples and the princely rulers of states both small and large. There are three main motives for a patronage of art and culture--piety, prestige and pleasure. Art patronage was good public relations for rulers.

Patronage and its Rationale

The products of cultural activities and the institutions for their productions display an enormous diversity and accordingly ways for financing them also vary. Some activities may be carried out entirely on a commercial basis. Others need public intervention for their survival. The main issue in connection to subsidies, in addition to that of the public good character already discussed seems to be the fact that the production period for cultural goods is very long, as in their economic lifetime. It may extend over much longer periods than the lifetimes of individual artists or scientists, so that it becomes practically impossible for the cultural workers to recover the discounted values of all the future revenues, provided they can at all the anticipated.

Only after very long periods do the prices of cultural commodities reach substantial values, and this only for embodied goods. Painters, sculptors and architects are thus better off than composers, writers, and scientists. The uncertainty, inherent in future evaluations, however, makes the situation difficult even for those producing embodied cultural goods.

Investors in such objects tend to regard them as speculative investments, and then everything pertinent to the investors’ volatile expectations comes to play. For these reasons the market can seldom provide for an adequate production of culture, and patron becomes an essential ingredient in this context.
Motivations for patronizing the arts

First, we must begin with a clear motivation for patronizing the arts. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to assay the reasons for the necessity and purposes of art, let us at least say that art is an inevitable part of what man does. Being created in the image of God and with the capacity for imagination and thought, man will have his art. You can be sure that the most primitive and wretched of all human societies is a culture which has surrounded itself with artistic objects (though what they mean by art and use it for may differ). It is therefore not a question of “Shall we have art or not?” but a question of “Which art should we support?”

Secondly, we must recognize, especially in India, that art is always religious in nature. This should in no way be considered an exaggerated claim, since it is clear that all of life is inherently religious. Men may or may not acknowledge their religious nature, just as they may or may not acknowledge their Creator, and the art they produce may or may not be consistent with their religious beliefs. Nevertheless, all art is religious. Whether we are considering the Vedas, a Chola bronze, classical dance and music, or the Taj Mahal, all art reflects a certain worldview, which is to say a certain religion. This means that art is not neutral. Something is being asserted about God and the world He has made, and that something measures up to varying degrees to what God Himself has revealed to us.

Therefore, we have a clear motive for care in selecting the art with which to adorn our environments. We must never permit ourselves to be lulled to sleep by our contemporary ease of procuring art or by the surfeit of goods which has been spread before us. Every artistic choice we make (and we make many during a typical day) is a vote for a particular piece of art, and that vote has consequences as real and effective as the political votes we cast.

When we speak of patronage of art, we are not speaking necessarily of Art or the fine arts. Sometimes the term ‘art’ is reserved for the art of painting, and sometimes it also includes all of the fine arts. But art is never limited to these. Look around you – you will be surprised at the amount of art the 20th century man has surrounded himself with, much of it unconsciously.

Finally, our motivation in patronizing the arts should be to encourage those whose calling before the Lord is in the arts. We have much to learn from the artists in our midst, just as we have much to learn from those who are scientists, businessmen, or housewives. Artists are a virtual part of the body of culture, perhaps akin to our eyes. Without them our sight begins to fail.

A brief history of patronage in India

Any student of history, broadly speaking, is well-equipped to grasp immediately the history of patronage. The history of patronage follows the history of culture. The vast scope of the Indian art mingles up with the cultural history, religions and philosophies which place art production and patronage in social and cultural contexts. Where monarchs have been ascendant, monarchical patronage has also reached its summit. When a particular religion has extended its kingdom, then ecclesiastical patronage has flourished with it. And wherever the middle class and common man have come into their own, then middle class and common patronage has become ubiquitous. The following sketch of patronage through the ages is not meant to be complete or definitive but only suggestive.

Art appears not because it is imposed from the outside but because of the internal needs of society. Public architecture and sculpture in ancient India, as in many other pre-modern civilizations, was created to satisfy religious needs. Faith alone, without the material wherewithal, could not realize such ambitious projects. There is a complex interaction between
patronage and social institutions, and between artistic tradition and individual creativity, a phenomenon which Pierre Bourdieu aptly put as ‘the field of cultural production’. One of the problems of studying ancient Indian artists is their relative anonymity, commensurate with their artisan status. Only exceptionally did the artists publicly declare their authorship.

Indian art is an expression of Indian life and thought attuned to its vast natural background and its socio-religious traditions. It is not exclusive or sectarian in the narrow sense of the term. Its style, technique or general tenor has nothing to do with any particular religious outlook. It is fed and fostered upon a vast store-house of Indian traditions, symbols and designs.

With about a 5000 years old culture, Indian art is rich in its tapestry of ancient heritage, medieval times, Mughal rule, British rule, Progressive art and now contemporary art.

The term Hindu, Jaina or Buddhist art is but a popular nomenclature to distinguish one group of monuments, including painting, cave temples and architecture, etc., from another standpoint of the predominance of one or the other religious theme. Hence, by Buddhist art is meant popularly those monuments and paintings which have for the main purpose the edification or popularization of Buddhism.

The earliest recorded art of India originated from a religious Hindu background, which was later replaced by a soaring popular Buddhist art. Moreover, from a timeless era art in India has been inspired by spiritualism and mystical relationship between man and god. Art in India had survived in its homeland and spread from time to time all over the world. This was possible because many kings who recognized budding talent patronized art and themselves were great connoisseurs. Each king has left a deep impression of his affinity to the artist community. Until today, art is patronized by the rich and famous in the country.

**Development of Arts in India**

Indian artists relied heavily on religious scriptures to draw inspiration. Since there was no restriction, they flourished under the patronage of rulers. Their art has survived the ravages of time and has a unique place in historical records. Water colors, charcoal, vegetable dyes were popular methods of painting. Fabric painting was extensive and Indian designers still adapt ancient patterns to modern fabrics. The purpose of art in ancient India was not just to adorn the walls. Each painting had a story to narrate. Visually ancient Indian art was colorful, aesthetic and appealing to naked eye. Mostly kings used to commission the artists to paint from inspiration. Stone and marble were also used to create art. Indian sculpture until today remains a mute testimony of the talent that emerged under many different kings. One of the many purposes of art was to spread the word around about the king and glorify his deeds. Good art symbolized the prosperity of many empires in ancient India. Most of the art was produced to promote religious activities. Most Hindu kings were well-wishers of Brahmin community. Art was an extension of their tribute and respect to the knowledgeable class. It is no surprise that most of the artwork of Hindu kings depict scenes from epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and other mythological stories which continue to inspire artists even now.

In India, whether a religion is govern by conduct or ritual, the final goal is to obtain communion with the Almighty. This goal is realized by different modes of worship. The study of religious art reveals the manner in which visual art has disseminated religious teaching, mythology and philosophy and aroused the fervor of the common man. The spiritual and ritual aspects of most native and foreign religions in India have manifested in artistic form using visual, performing and literary arts as their media of expression. It is on this note of concurrence that one may look at Indian religious art with its icons, manuscripts and ritual accessories.
The pre-Vedic Harappan culture bequeathed to later times sacred animals and trees, the Mother Goddess, the preoccupation with personal cleanliness, and, less certainly, other aspects of Indian culture. From the Vedic Aryans came many of the gods, the Vedic hymns, some of the most important personal rituals of Hinduism, the patriarchal and patrilineal family systems, and the horse. Later Vedic times (circa 1000-600 BC) brought the passion of speculation on ultimate causes, the quest for the absolute, the doctrine of transmigration, the search for release from the cycle of rebirth, and mystical gnosis. In social life and material culture the same period saw the crystallization of the four classes (varnas) of Hindu society, the introduction of iron from Western Asia, the domestication of the elephant, the development of kingdoms out of tribal chieftainships. In the 300 following years, coined money became common, and writing, known in the time of the Harappan culture and later apparently forgotten, became widespread. Heterodox teachers, chief of whom was the Buddha, spread new doctrines which bypassed the gods, the Vedas, and the Brahmans, and the era of civilization steadily expanded into the remoter parts of the subcontinent.

Political developments over the preceding led to the first great empire of India, that of the Mauryas, when for the first time most of the subcontinent was united under a single government. This period (circa 320-185 B.C.) produced the Machiavellian system of statecraft associated with the name of minister Kautilya, the reputed author of the famous Arthasastra. From the Mauryas also came the earliest surviving stone sculpture of India, the oldest artificial caves, and the most ancient Buddhist stupas. Under Asoka (circa 272-232 B.C.), Buddhism increased its influence, and was taken to Ceylon.

The 500 years between the Mauryas and the Guptas (circa.184 B.C. – A.D. 320) saw tremendous developments in Indian civilization, partly due to fresh influences brought in by various invaders and traders, and partly the result of internal developments. New forms of devotional religion emerged, centering around the gods. Magnificent art and sculptures gave way to meticulous carving of intricate detail without nobility of conception or design. The vigour and richness of language, powerful yet simple, were followed by highly ornate and complex literary forms.

It was an urban civilization, where the merchant class was wealthy and evidently played an important role. The streets, lined with stalls and what were probably small shops, give the impression of an Indian bazaar of today. Professor V.G. Childe says, “It would seem to follow that the craftsmen of the Indus cities were, to a large extent, producing ‘for the market’.”

Among the exports from India were silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewellery and gold (seldom silver). These were the main articles in which the merchant dealt. India, or rather north India, was famous for her weapons of war, especially for the quality of her steel, her swords and daggers.

There are books on the training of elephants, the breeding of horses, etc; each one of these are called a Shastra. This word has come to mean scripture or holy writ, but it was applied indiscriminately to every kinds of knowledge and science, varying from mathematics to dancing.

Writing in India goes back to the most ancient times. Old pottery belonging to the Neolithic period is inscribed with writing in the Brahmi characters. Some of Ahoka’s inscriptions are in the Brahmi script while others, in the north-west, are in the Kharoshti script.
As early as the sixth or seventh century B.C., Panini wrote his great grammar of the Sanskrit language. He mentions previous grammars and already in his time Sanskrit had crystallized and become the language of an ever growing literature.

The study of astronomy was specially pursued and it often merged into astrology. Medicine had its textbooks and there were hospitals. Dhanwantri is the legendary founder of the Indian science of medicine. The best known old textbooks, however, date from the early centuries of the Christian era. These are by Charak on medicine of Sushruta on surgery. Charak is supposed to have been the royal court physician of Kansihka who had his capital in the north-west. These works enumerate a large number of diseases and give methods of diagnosis and treatment.

They deal with surgery, obstetrics, baths, diet, hygiene, infant-feeding, and medical education. The approach was experimental, and dissection of dead bodies was being practiced in the course of surgical training. Various surgical instruments are mentioned by Sushruta, as well as operations, including amputation of limbs, abdominal, caesarian section, cataract, etc. wounds were sterilized by fumigation. In the 4th or 3rd century B.C. there were also hospitals for animals. This was probably due to the influence of Jainism and Buddhism with their emphasis on non-violence.

In mathematics the ancient Indians made some epoch-making discoveries notably that of the zero sign, of the decimal place value system, of the use of the minus sign, and the use in algebra of letters of the alphabet to denote unknown quantities. In the Arthashastra, we are given the weights and measures which were in use in North India in the 4th century B.C. They were used or careful supervision of the weights in the market places.

In the epic period we have frequent mention of some kind of forest universities, situated not far from a town or city, where students gathered round well-known scholars for training and education, which comprised a variety of subjects, including military training. These forest abodes were preferred so as to avoid distractions of city life and enable the students to lead a disciplined and continent life. After some years of this training they were supposed to go back and live as householders and citizens. Probably, these forest schools consisted of small groups, though there are indications that a popular teachers would attract large numbers.

But in the north-west, near modern Peshawar, there was an ancient and famous university at Takshashila or Taxila. This was particularly noted for science, especially medicine, and the arts, and people went to it from distant parts of India. The Jataka stories are full of instances of sons of nobles and Brahmins traveling, unattended and unarmed, to Taxila to be educated. During the Buddhist period it became also a centre of Buddhist scholarship and attracted Buddhist students from all over India and across the border.

There was a growth of luxury in the Mauryan Empire. Life became more complicated, specialized, and organized. ‘Inns, hostleries, eating houses, serais, and gaming are evidently numerous; sects and crafts have their shows as too great a distraction from the life of the home and the fields. At the same time there were penalties for refusal to assist in organizing public entertainment. The King provided in amphitheatres, constructed for the occasion, dramatic, boxing, and other contests of men and animals, and also spectacles with displays of pictured objects of curiosity...not seldom the streets were light for festivals. There were also royal processions and hunts.

Ashoka was a great builder and it has been suggested that he employed foreign craftsmen to assist in building some of his huge structures. This influence is drawn from the
designs of some clustered columns which remind one of Persepolis. But even in those early sculptures and other remains, the characteristically Indian art tradition is visible.

Between Pataliputra (Patna) and Gaya lie the impressive remains of Nalanda University, which was to become famous in later days. It is not clear when this began functioning and there are no records of it in Ashoka’s time.

The age of the Guptas, from the literary and artistic point of view, was a brilliant period. King of Kannauj, Harshavardhana, the king of Kannauj was a famous ruler, who thereafter built up a powerful state right across Northern and Central India. He was a poet and dramatist and gathered round his court many artists and poets, regarded as the ‘nine gems’, making his capital Ujjayini, a famous centre of cultural activities. Astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata was the first human known to have calculated the solar year accurately, and Kalidasa, ancient India’s greatest poet and playwright. So was Vatsyayana, who composed the 

Kamasutra. A contemporary reference to Gupta images as being ‘made beautiful by the science of citra’ suggests the existence of aesthetic manuals. Drama and lyrical poetry, written in courtly Sanskrit, reached unprecedented heights. The theatre was at its peak during this time of the Gupta era and many great dramatic authors received support for their work. Drama had precise rules of conduct and was codified in various pieces, making dramatic writing an art designed for the educated and was of no appeal to the Sudras and untouchables. Actors depended on the patronage of the kings and the wealthy, for there were no permanent theatre companies. Actors were constantly on the move from town to town, performing in courts, temples, or a place would be built for the occasion. The theatre was in a form of a rectangle where the audience sat according to caste or trade, but the untouchables and Sudras who were illiterate were excluded. The performances took place for religious or princely festivals, and new works were presented in the spring. The actors were taken from the low castes, and had atrocious reputations, the actresses were considered to be part of the courtesans’ guild. The aristocracy enjoyed leisure through literature and the merchant class were able to enjoy it to a small extent. Ambitious stupas, viharas, and caityas continued to be raised all over India and beyond, as a complex network of Buddhist patronage stretching throughout the Silk route.

The patronage of Jain merchants rivaled that of royalty. These powerful urban merchants often acted as bankers to monarchs. The repeated invasions of North India did not affect the South directly. Indirectly they led to many people from the North migrating to the South and these included builders, craftsmen and artisans.

Kingship was an integral feature of Indian history and civilization. Ancient and medieval India was for the most part shared amongst many contending kingdoms and dynasties. Much of Indian history was thus a history of majesty and splendor, and of courtly pomp and opulence, despite the fact that kings spent a great part of their time warring as well. It was a history that saw royal patronage and indulgence in the arts reach unprecedented heights.

**Court Patronage**

In ancient India, kingship was an important office which entailed heavy public responsibility. Hindu legal texts set out the ideal that the king was expected to aim for. The Arthashastra, for example, lists the standards of royal existence, from the daily activities of the king, his moral and public duties, to the qualities of his courtiers, councilors and servants. Numerous poets, painters, musicians and learned men also dwelt in the palace and enjoyed royal patronage. The Brahmins or priests were among the most honored members of the court.
The Islamic dynasty in India, composed of nineteen sovereigns who ruled from A.D. 1526 to 1858. Many of India’s greatest works of art and architecture were produced during the Mughal period. Under the patronage of Mughal sultans, court artisans produced many royal portraits and illustrated literary and historical texts. Domestic metal work, metal engraving, and jade carving also became prominent art form during the Mughal period. The red sandstone and marble masjid jami (Friday mosques) at the successive Mughal capitals of Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Fatehpur Sikri were erected during this period.

It was Shah Jahan (reigned A.D. 1627-1658) who built the Taj Mahal as a tomb garden for his wife, establishing it as the greatest creation of Mughal dynasty.

A typical court had not only its usual entourage of courtiers and literary scholars, but also an assemblage of highly skilled artisans. Indeed, it was primarily due to the patronage and financial support of royalty that some of the most splendid examples of art and architecture in India were created. Sculpture, painting and the decorative arts were commissioned to bolster the magnificence of the courts and the sovereignty of kings. Hindu rulers also believed that they would acquire merit by commissioning religious work of art. The Mughal emperors (A.D. 1526-1857), in particular, were ardent patrons and connoisseurs of the arts. Mughal autobiographies and diaries, were written not only by the monarchs but also by the ladies of the harem.

For much of India, the refined urbanity and elegant lifestyle of the Mughal Court, its standards of haute cuisine and its codification of Indian classical music remain the essential benchmark. Mughal blood sports were taken up by the British Raj, as was the game of polo. Mughal emperors took their sartorial elegance as seriously as their collections of curiosa, jewellery, and precious objects of jade and hardstone.

The Rajput maharajas, who had spent varying periods at the Mughal court after their subjugation, were influenced by the opulence they saw and began to commission decorative arts for their courts, some of which were no less inferior to those of the Mughals in terms of their quality and sophistication.

The courts of the Mughals, as well as the Deccani (A.D. 1500-1868) and Rajput rulers, had workshops attached to them. Some of these workshops (known as karkhanas or manufactories in the Muslim courts) were situated within the palace walls while others were established in cities away from the capital where local craftsmen were readily available.

The most skilled craftsmen were employed in the karkhanas and they were mostly indigenous workers. Such was the value of craftsmen that when Timur massacred the inhabitants of Delhi in A.D. 1398, he spared the Indian craftsmen and recruited large number into his service. The local artisans employed in the karkhanas were either converts to Islam or were former slaves. Mughal trained Muslim artists also entered into the service of the Rajput courts. The number of foreign craftsmen who came to India was fairly small. Many of the foreigners who were employed in the royal workshops were highly skilled craftsmen who usually acted as the guide and teacher of their local counterparts. Akbar, for example, employed Persian masters to train Indian artists in the atelier that he founded. During Jahangir’s reign (A.D. 1605-1627), European and Persian artisans entered into the ranks of the karkhanas. In this way the expatriates did exert some influence on the style and decoration of objects, as is evident from the artworks of this period, which show discernible European and Persian elements. As they were expected to attain a high standard of excellence, the craftsmen in the royal
workshops were closely supervised. Jahangir, for example, personally selected his craftsmen, and sometimes even oversaw the production of their work.

Given the specialization of craftsmen and the fact that skills were often passed down from father to son, the production centers in the various regions came to specialize in a craft or technique which, in time, had come to be associated with that region. For example, Bidar in the Deccan was famous for its bidri (metal with silver inlay) industry while the Kotah region in Rajasthan was well known for its resist dyed fabrics. The materials from which the objects were made as well as the degree of sophistication and ornamentation were important indicators of the wealth and standing of those who commissioned them. Thus, objects made of jade and gold were usually produced for the Mughal court. Imperial items were also generally more ornate and spectacular than those made for the other Indian courts. The finest articles produced by the royal workshops were usually given away as gifts or were used for ceremonial purposes. However, functional objects such as weapons, carpet weights, huqqas (a traditional instrument of smoking using coal, water and tobacco) and drinking vessels were just as elaborately designed and ornamented. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether an object was made explicitly for a utilitarian purpose or for a purely decorative or ceremonial function.

Each religion and philosophical system provided its own nuances, vast metaphors and similes, rich associations, wild imaginations, humanization of gods and celestial beings, characterization of people, the single purpose and ideal of life to be interpreted in art.

During the Mughal period the incipient ‘urbanism’ affected the subject matter of art, hitherto the preserve of the three great religions, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Mughal painting expressed lively engagement with the external world, which may be loosely termed as ‘realism’. The art of the book had transformed patronage during the Sultanate, a process that reached a climax during the Mughal era. Art became an autonomous activity, fostering a close relationship between the patron and the artist; it ceased to be a communal concern. The Mughal emperors were fervent patrons of the arts, their multifaceted personalities informing their patronage – Akbar, the brilliant creator of a vast efficient empire; Jahangir, the endearing hedonist; and Shah Jahan, the royal architect and avid collector of precious objects--each was unique in his personal style of patronage.

Folk and Tribal Consciousness

Folk and tribal arts in India take on different manifestations through varied medium such as pottery, painting, metalwork, paper-art, weaving and designing of artefacts such as jewellery and toys.

They differ from the classical mainstream art forms, in the sense that folk and tribal art traditions have been evolving and transforming at a much greater pace. They are the visual expressions of people belonging to different cultural and social groups.

Folk and Tribal arts represent the kernel of energy of the respective communities as a whole. It is a living, changing art form which changes with time, necessity, memories and experiences of peoples. It is the expression of people whose life is tuned to the rhythms of nature and its laws of cyclic change and whose life is entwined with the energies of the earth.

Often Puranic gods and legends are transformed into contemporary forms and familiar images. Fairs, festivals, and local deities play a vital role in these arts. It is an art where life and creativity are inseparable.
The tribal arts have a unique sensitivity, as the tribal people possess an intense awareness very different from the settled and urbanized people. Their minds are supple and intense with myth, legends, snippets from epic, multitudinous gods born out of dream and fantasy. Their art is an expression of their life and holds their passion and mystery.

Folk art also includes the visual expressions of the wandering nomads. This is the art of people who are exposed to changing landscapes as they travel over the valleys and highlands of India. They carry with them the experiences and memories of different spaces and their art consists of the transient and dynamic pattern of life. The rural, tribal and arts of the nomads constitute the matrix of folk expression. The folk spirit has a tremendous role to play in the development of art and in the overall consciousness of indigenous cultures.

**Patronage and Audience under Colonial Rule**

British colonial rule had a great impact on Indian art. The first sign of change was the loss of courtly patronage in India with the fall of the Indian powers in the late 18th century. The old patrons of art became less wealthy and influential, and Western art more ubiquitous. Rabindranath Tagore, referred as the father of Modern Indian art, had introduced Asian styles and Avant garde western styles into Indian Art.

The East India Company employed artists for its wide ranging economic surveys and documentation of natural history. British residents commissioned paintings of Indian flora and fauna from Indian artists who were trained in western techniques. The new rulers also engaged artists to produce ethnographic subjects, especially castes and professions, which enjoyed popularity during the Enlightenment.

The rise of Calcutta as a rapidly expanding urban centre drew village scroll painters (*patuas*) to the city. A more revolutionary development was the introduction of the techniques of mechanical reproduction. By the end of the 19th century Calcutta had become a staple of popular consumption.

As traditional art declined, the Indian rulers as well as the leading Indian elite turned to collecting western art and sitting for portraits by European artists. By the middle of the 19th century, the taste of the elite, and to some extent of the underclass, had become thoroughly Victorian.

The advent of academic art was accompanied by a social revolution in India. In contrast to the earlier humble position of court artists, the colonial artists enjoyed the elevated status of independent gentlemen, in part because they now hailed from the elite. The growth of art exhibitions, art journalism, and the rise of an art conscious public changed the public’s perception of arts and the artists. However, while gaining freedom, they faced an uncertain economic future. Art societies, originally founded by British residents, became with the admission of Indians an instrument of Raj patronage.

**State Patronage**

With the decline of India’s traditional patronage culture in the arts, the state gradually took on the role of arts patron. In independent India, a national art institute, the Lalit Kala Akademi, promotes the visual arts through lectures, prizes, exhibitions, and publications. The government supports the Sahitya Akademi, which was set up in 1954 to promote excellence in literature. The National School of Drama (1959) and the Sangeet Natak Akademi (1953), promote dance.
Apart from these India has long had government-sponsored national research organizations for the sciences, including the **Archaeological Survey of India** (1861), the **Botanical Survey of India** (1890), the **Census of India** (1890), the **Census of India** (1867), the **Ethnological Survey of India** (1901), later the **Anthropological Survey of India** (1946), the **Geological Survey of India** (1851), the **Indian Forestry Service** (1865), the **Indian Medical Service** (1786), the **Indian Council of Medical Research** (1912), the **Indian Meteorological Department** (1875), the **Linguistic Survey of India**, and the **Zoological Survey of India**. The antecedent of all these institutions was the **Survey of India** (1832)), which did the first scientific mapmaking of the subcontinent. There has been an annual **Indian Science Congress**, a national conference, which began as the **Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science** in 1876.

With independence, an overarching bureaucratic organizations came into being, the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research**, as well as an **Atomic Energy Commission** and the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research**. To avoid centralization of these organizations in and around Delhi and Bombay, regional institutes of technology were set up in a number of large cities. The government also supports four national academies: the **Indian National Science Academy** in New Delhi, the **Indian Academy of Sciences** in Bangalore, the **National Academy of Science** in Allahabad, and the **Indian Science Congress Association** in Calcutta. Other centrally supported research councils include the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research**, the **Indian Council of Historical Research**, the **Indian Council of Philosophical Research**, the **Indian Council of Social Sciences Research**, and the **National Council of Educational Research and Training**.

**Conclusion**

The cultural products such as art forms, etc. require patronage and audiences for their survival development. The patron could be either an individual or a group. The nature of art forms, the patronage to these and their popularity among the various groups of audience has been changing since our ancient part. During the ancient period there was a strong link between the art and religion, which influenced the themes of the art forms. The royal or the court patronage play a significant role in the promotion of art and culture during the ancient and medieval periods. The **karkhanas** or the workshops, meant for the product of art products by skilled craftsmen, were important feature of the Mughal period. The folk and tribal traditions have helped in preserving our culture to a great extent. During the colonial rule, there was much focus upon the western art and the older less wealthy and less influential patrons were replaced by the rich and powerful patrons. In the post-independence era the role of state as a patron of arts became significant mover in this direction. The state with its various created institutions help in the promotion of arts accompanied by lectures, exhibition, prizes, publications etc.

**LONG QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss briefly the history of patronage in India.
2. Trace the development of arts in India.
3. How did the court patronage help in the promotion of arts in India?
4. Discuss the changes in the nature of patronage and audiences under colonial rule.

**SUGGESTED READINGS**
CHAPTER 8 B

CULTURE AS COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

“Prolixity is not alien to us in India. We are able to talk at some length.” (Amartya Sen: The Argumentative Indian). It is our nature to communicate. And not just as Indians but all humans from the beginning of time to the present, and in every culture or geographical grouping and setting, have had the innate ability to communicate. Other living species and certain machines communicate, but they do not necessarily duplicate the quality of human communication. Among living species, we accept as basic that humans are the only genuine symbol building, - using, and – manipulating animals, and the only genuine tool-building, -using, and –manipulating animals. Only we can make tools which build tools. Despite recent dramatic scientific discoveries in studying other forms of animal communication, our ability to work with symbols and tools remain unique.

Several premises emerge. Communication and culture are both processes. Communication, like culture, is a human necessity. Communication always occurs at the human level, both intra-personally and inter-personally when human interaction is involved. Certain communicative acts are involuntary, causing the communicator never to exercise total control of the communication event. At the same time, culture itself makes it possible to every human being to exert partial control over his or her culture and communication. Often we seek to control or influence the attitudes or behaviour of others in a positive or negative way.

Communication and culture are inseparably linked. Both are of primary importance. They become linked through communication within our own cultural setting, and through inter-cultural communication. Thus, cultural communication occurs interpersonally and collectively.

Culture and Communication are process

Life, culture, and communication are ongoing, changing, and evolving processes without precise beginnings or endings. All such processes may be isolated artificially to study or analyses as processes. Still, such processes are essential part of the long term history of the individual, the culture, or human history. Most of us develop self concepts throughout our lives, in the context of the cultural environment around us. Somehow, the total development of our own individual culture and culture at the broadest human levels has played an important part in leading us to our own self-identity. As individuals, we are constantly changing. We constantly create our cultural traditions, norms, and values and pass them on to others through the ongoing process of communication and social discourse.

We act upon culture through communication

Culture is often defined as the traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, values, and thought-patterning which are passed down from generation to generation. Implicit, too, in a definition of culture is the ability to control one’s environment at least to a partial extent. As humans, we never can control our cultural setting entirely, but the very nature of culture is that in consists of
those characteristics which make us truly human within a specific social setting. Thus, although all humans are normally blessed with the same biological characteristics, it is our specific culture which allows us to determine partially how we will utilize normal biological functions. For example, all normal men and women have the innate ability to eat, sleep, move, and undertake other bodily functions. It is culture, however, that teaches us how to manipulate our biological environment to make it our cultural environment also. While animals react to culture, we act creatively upon it.

Communication and culture are so closely bound together that virtually all human social interaction is culturally linked. Even when we engage unconsciously or consciously in intra-or-interpersonal communication, our own cultural background affects all our actions and reactions. We have relatively little choice about much of our cultural heritage and background. In other words, we carry our cultural baggage with us and cannot isolate ourselves from our cultural roots. Still, it is possible either by accident or through design, for children to be moved entirely out of the culture into which they were born, and into a totally new culture. They may never recognize that they were once members of an alien culture. Biologically, such children inherit certain traits which will affect their cultural development, but the new cultural environment itself may be more important in such a case. The adult who seeks to drop old cultural habits to take new ones rarely do so completely, especially if culture penetrates to the entire roots of one’s nervous system. Since a major aspect of cultural transmittal does include the passing down of cultural traits, it is clear that many of these contributions affect the individual largely unconsciously.

It is a given fact that all humans possess a similar potential for complimentary communicative and cultural development. These developments are always affected by many factors. Culture transcends time and space. The age in which a person lives, the locality, the climate, the geography, and many other factors deeply influence the way he or she communicates as a cultural being.

The rich variety of the human character evolving in different time sequences and localities is a feature which both unites us and pulls us apart. Many studies have illustrated that the more that people have in common with each other, the less likely they are to suffer serious breakdowns in communication or cultural distortion. Unfortunately, despite the closest personal and cultural affinities, communication breakdowns and cultural distortion continue to be frequent. When the differences among members of distinct cultures become intensified, it is no wonder that greater tensions develop.

Our sophisticated modern world has potentially reduced itself to a global village by the rapid expansion and distribution of communication networks such as the telephone, communication satellites, and jet airplanes. Generally, we are unable to communicate personally with all other humans alive today. Nevertheless, it is now possible to communicate collectively with more people in the world simultaneously than existed in the entire world a few centuries ago. As more and more control is exerted over communication and culture through the human applications of technology, an understanding of communication and culture and their linkages becomes of paramount importance.

**Cultural components of communication**

The communication even can be seen as total culture communicating, or as a major communicating situation of the culture itself. The culture’s messages, its communicators, its
codes by which the messages are presented and interpreted, and its channels or media serve as other important communication components.

The fundamental issues can also be viewed in the context of major aspects of culture, including such cultural components as perceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, beliefs, norms, values, and thought-patterns.

Human social life depends upon the constant development and varied uses of modes of communication and upon shared and contested understandings of the world, necessitating the systematic study of communication and culture, and of their mediation through a variety of channels. In a regional, national and global order in which the cultural and communications industries play an increasingly central role, and forms of social and political organization and creative expression are touched at every point by media forms and practices, such study becomes even more vital.

Culture is communicated

You are familiar with the concept that culture is an accumulated store of symbols, ideas and material products which are transmitted from one generation to the other. Cultural forms regulate social activities. Thus, in the present context, cultural processes of change show the various ways through which Indian culture responds to numerous changes earlier introduced in India. The sources of change fall under two broader categories--endogenous and exogenous.

While endogenous sources of change originate from within the society, exogenous sources flow from outside a particular society. Changes in the cultural structure of India have emanated from both endogenous and exogenous sources. In the following sections, the significance of these cultural processes has been discussed with the help of four concepts namely, Sanskritisation, Islamisation, Westernisation and Secularisation.

Anthropologists have been deliberating on the question: Why do humans have culture? There have been books written on the subject that explain the origins, development and function of culture in society.

Actually humans are human because they have culture. The emergence and evolution of humans are coeval with the emergence and evolution of culture. Formation and acquisition of culture is precisely the point of departure between the humans and non-humans like living beings.

What is culture then? Though it is a very familiar term widely brandied about in every day parlance as well as scholarly discourse, when it comes to definition we all fall into a mire of confusion, mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought. The modern connotations of this highly evocative word are very recent. In Indian languages, the equivalents of “culture” acquired its current meanings only after the First World War. Rabindra Nath Tagore lamented the absence of an equivalent Bengali term for the English word “culture”. It was then that the great linguist Suniti Kumar Chatterjee came forward to save the situation by suggesting the adoption of “samskritic” for culture. The usage of this word in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi etc. also could be traced to the post-First World War decade.

All these goes to prove not just the evolution of the meaning of the word but the evolution, transformation and even metamorphosis of the concept itself – the concept of culture, its nature and functions. Both, the material culture of the anthropologists and the mental culture and cultural products of non-anthropologists, were always recognized as very vital to human life.
and society, but relation of culture to power structure of society and its hegemonic patterns and their ideological underpinnings are new discoveries of the recent one or two decades – generally termed as post-modern era.

**Cultural media and Cultural messages**

It is through communication that culture is inherited, exchanged and transformed. And communication needs media. Almost 250 centuries ago human began communication through the media of lines, colours and shapes, paintings and artifcats. About the symbolic communication through abstract and arbitrary lines. The alphabet is a newfangled fashion in human history with no more than fifty centuries. For many centuries only microscopic minority of society had the skill and permission to handle this device, which may be termed the first technologisation of the word. Even in this century more than half the humanity is illiterate.

Now on the threshold of the 21st century, we have traveled a long way from the days when our forefathers discovered this wonderful device of the alphabets – skins parchaments, palm leaves, bricks, metal sheets, paper, printing – and back again to live sound and image communication of the dawn of civilization with our electronic gadgets.

The growth and expansion of media technology at break-neck speed and hair breadth precision increased human communication skills and effectiveness immensely. Accumulation and propagating of knowledge and ideas have become truly global reaching out to every nook and corner of earth and even to ethereal expanses. But along with such benefits dangerous and counter-productive hazards too.

According to ancient Indian sages, culture or sanskriti is the sum total of faculties of the individual which enables him to be attuned to his immediate environment on the one hand and to the historical past on the other. The idea of continuity and the need for adaptation and assimilation was inherent in this concept.

In ancient India, ideas moved faster than objects. The whole of India bears the impress of certain common ideals and institutions which distinguish the civilization of India from all other civilizations of the world and marks it out “as a unit in the history of the social, religious and intellectuals development of mankind”.

Thus, in these very early days we find the beginnings of the civilizations and culture which were to flower so abundantly and richly in subsequent ages, and which have continued, inspire of many changes, to our own day. The basic ideas, the governing concepts were taking shape, and literature and philosophy, art and drama, and all other activities of life were conditioned by these ideals and world view.

**Culture must be communicated**

The urge to express, to communicate, to share something beautiful gave birth to performing arts. In this process, the living progressive impulse to the timeless universal gets a coherent shape in creative designs. Tradition plays an important role in the creative artistic process particularly in the field of folk performing arts. Folk art is functional and spontaneous. Every activity in the village has its relevant music, dance or theatre. The folk performing art is changing its structure continuously over countries modifying itself to the needs of the changing situations making it functionally relevant to the society. Tradition is the process of the transmission of age-old values and the contextual manifestation and interpretation of the universal. Tradition is not only a repetitive behavioral pattern or some persistent symbol or motif in community culture. It is also an assertion of an identity, a revival and regeneration of
the life-force of the community. The traditional performing art is an aesthetic of the constant concept of belongingness and affinity in a cultural context. In tribal societies, art is an integral part of the general life of the people. Every activity in the tribal village has its relevant music, dance and theatre.

In the process of cultural change, innovation has a special role. The roots are unchanging, the process is continuous, yet the fusion of newer concepts and ideas regenerate newer forms of creative expression. It is the same tree with the same root. It is the sap which unfolds itself in a variety of leaves and flowers. The essence of creative existence manifests itself in many forms. The degree of innovation depends on the degree of the evolution of society and its sense of cultural identity or self image. Tradition and its transmission implies the value judgment about the desirability or superiority of some transmitted elements from the past.

**Sruti and Smriti : Communication Media**

The **Sruti** and the **Smriti** are the two initial authoritative communication media in Indian culture. **Sruti** literally means what is heard, and **Smriti** means what is remembered. **Sruti** is revelation and **Smriti** is tradition. The **Upanishad** is a **Sruti**. The **Bhagavad Gita** is a **Smriti**.

**Sruti** is direct experience. Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of religion and left a record of them for the benefit of posterity. These records constitute the **Vedas**. Hence, **Sruti** is primary authority. **Smriti** is a recollection of that experience. These **Smritis** have varied from time to time. The injunctions and prohibitions of the **Smritis** are related to the particular social surroundings. As these surroundings and essential conditions of the Hindu society changed from time to time, new **Smritis** had to be compiled by the sages of different ages and different parts of India.

**Indian culture maintains unbroken continuity through communication**

The older strata of India’s cultural life go back far beyond anything in the West. Some practices and beliefs of popular Hinduism, for instance, the cults of the sacred bull and the **pipal** tree, are as old as the protohistoric Harappan culture, and probably even older. In fact every generation in India, for over 4,000 years, has bequeathed something, if only very little, to posterity.

No land on earth has such a long cultural continuity as India. In India the **Brahman** still repeats in his daily worship **Vedic** hymns composed over 3,000 years ago, and tradition recalls heroic chieftans and the great battles fought by them at about the same time. In respect of the length of continuous tradition China comes second to India and Greece makes a poor third.

A civilization may be known by its ideals and the means by which these are sought to be realized. No observer of the complicated picture of ancient and medieval Indian polity can fail to note the ideals which were affirmed. He will find them voiced in adages and maxims as numerous as their companions, the witty formulate that embody the essence of statecraft. The ideals were common to all regions, and were shared by learned and illiterate alike. Our treatises on law and politics contain principles popularized through the epics and the **Puranas**. The essence of good manners and good policy reached the uneducated by such means, while the worldly wisdom of these texts fed the compilers of fables and less juvenile handbooks. The great popularity of **Chanakya-niti**, that great pool of wise saying on ‘good policy’, proves that techniques of managing any social or political question were not the perquisite of courtiers.

There is something unique about the continuity of a cultural tradition through five thousand years of history, of invasion and upheaval, a tradition which was widespread among the
masses and powerfully influenced them. Books and old monuments and past cultural achievements helped to produce some understanding of India.

Yet this is not a complete or wholly correct survey. If there had only been a long and unrelieved period of rigidity and stagnation, this might well have resulted in a complete break with the past, the death of an era, and the erection of something new on its ruins. There has not been such a break and there is a definite continuity. Also, from time to time, vivid periods of renascence have occurred, and some of them have been long and brilliant. Always there is visible an attempt to understand and adapt the new and harmonize it with the old, or at any rate with parts of the old which were considered worth preserving. Often that old retains an external form only, as a kind of symbol, and changes its inner content. But something vital and living continues, some urge driving the people in a direction not wholly realized, and always a desire for synthesis between the old and the new. It was this urge and desire that kept them going and enabled them to absorb new ideas while retaining much of the old.

Everywhere in India we have a cultural background which has exerted a powerful influence on our lives. This background was a mixture of popular philosophy, tradition, history, myth, and legend, and its was not possible to draw a line between any of these. Even the entirely uneducated and illiterate shared this background. The old epics of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and other books, in popular translations and paraphrases, were widely known among the masses, and every incident and story and moral in them was engraved on the popular mind and gave a richness and content to it. Illiterate villagers would know hundred of verses by heart and their conversation would be full of references to them or to some story with a moral, enshrined in some old classic.

**Some example of culture as communication**

Before the discovery of the Indus Valley civilization, the *Vedas* were supposed to be the earliest records we possess of Indian culture. There was much dispute about the chronology of the Vedic period. Whatever the exact date may be, it is probable that this literature is earlier than that of either Greece or Israel, that in fact, it represents some of the earliest documents of the human mind that we possess. Max Muller has called it: ‘The first word spoken by the Aryan man’.

Indian mythology is richer, vaster, very beautiful, and full of meaning. I have often wondered what manner of men and women they were who gave shape to these bright dreams and lovely fancies, and out of what gold mine of thought and imagination they dug them.

Looking at scripture then as a product of the human mind, we have to remember the age in which it was written, the environment and mental climate in which it grew, the vast distance in time and thought and experience that separates it from us.

There was the unfolding of the human mind in the earliest stages of thought. The *Vedas* (from the root *vid*, to know) were simply meant to be a collection of the existing knowledge of the day; they are a jumble of many things; hymns, prayers, rituals for sacrifice, magic, magnificent nature poetry.

The *Rig Veda*, the first of the *Vedas*, is probably the earliest book that humanity possesses. In it we can find the first outpourings of the human mind, the glow of poetry, the rapture at nature’s loveliness and mystery. In India, as in China, learning and eruditions have always stood high in public esteem, for learning was supposed to imply both superior knowledge and virtue. Before the learned man the ruler and the warrior have always bowed. The form is
terse, often of question and answer between pupil and teacher, and it has been suggested that the *Upanishads* were some kind of lecture notes by the teacher or taken down by his disciples.

The two great epics of ancient India – the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* – probably took shape in the course of several hundred years, and even subsequently additions were made to them. They deal with the early days of the Indo-Aryans, their conquests and civil wars, when they were expanding and consolidating themselves, but they were composed and compiled later. There are no books anywhere which have exercised such a continuous and pervasive influence on the mass mind as these two. Dating back to a remote antiquity, they are still a living force in the life of the Indian people.

Translations and adaptations, and in those innumerable ways in which tradition and legend spread and become part of the texture of a people’s life. They represent the typical Indian method of catering all together for various degrees of cultural development, from the highest intellectual to the simple unread and untaught villager. They make us understand somewhat the secret of the old Indians in holding together a variegated society divided up in many ways and graded in caste, in harmonizing their discords, and giving them a common background of heroic tradition and ethical living.

Popular open-air performances where the *Ramayana* story was enacted and vast crowds came to see it and join in the processions. Indian mythology is not confined to the epics; it goes back to the Vedic period and appears in many forms and garbs in Sanskrit literature. The poets and the dramatists take full advantage of it and build their stories and lovely fancies round it. This lack of historical sense does not affect the masses, for as elsewhere and more so than elsewhere, they build their view of the past from the traditional accounts and myth and story that were handed to them from generation to generation. This imagined history and mixture of act and legend became widely known and gave to the people a strong and abiding cultural background.

The *Mahabharata* itself is a storehouse of sociological and other data and many more books will not doubt yield useful information.

Another example is Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* of the 4th century B.C., which gives details of the political, social, economic and military organization of the Maurya Empire. An earlier account, which definitely takes us back to the pre-Buddhist period in India, is contained in the collection of the *Jataka* tales. They are supposed to deal with the previous incarnations of Buddha and have become an important part of Buddhist literature. But the stories are evidently much older and they deal with the pre-Buddhistic period and give us much valuable information about life in India in those days.

The *Jatakas* deal with the period when the final amalgamation of the two principal races of India, the Dravidians and the Aryans, was taking place. They reveal ‘a multiformal and chaotic society’ which resists more or less every attempt at classification and about which there can be no talk of an organization according to caste in that age. The *Jatakas* may be said to represent the popular tradition as contrasted with the priestly or *Brahminic* tradition and the *Kshatriya* or ruling class tradition.

What Ashoka felt and how he acted are known to us in his own words in the numerous edicts he issued, carved in rock and metal. Those edicts, spread out all over India, are still with us, and they conveyed his messages not only to his people but to posterity.

Thus, Indian culture is a mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold includes almost every aspect of the life of India.
Cultural change is also communicated

Change is characteristic of all cultures but the rate and direction of change vary considerably. The factors that influence the direction of such changes are the degrees to which a culture encourages as well as approves flexibility and the particular needs of the culture at a specific point of time. Even when the cultural changes are supposed to be beneficial, it may be difficult for an individual within a culture to accept the change, because of an individual in a society is guided by certain norms and beliefs. Hence for securing social change and development, what is required is the change in the beliefs and the value systems of the individual and thus making him more adaptive and responsive to organic development and growth. This is the role of the communicator in the society. The communication potential of Indian traditional performing art has been proved time and again by many instances of national importance. The traditional media became effective in many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi. After independence, the union government continued to utilize these traditional performing arts to convey the message and to generate awareness of the development programmes in the rural areas.

Traditional art forms have survived for centuries and they will survive in the future for their flexibility. They could be the media for social change in rural India. Traditional performing arts being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the message of change, development and growth. As Rabindranath Tagore put it aptly, “All traditional structure of art must have sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicate or virile, to grow with its growth, to dance with its rhythm”.

Conclusion

Culture and communication are closely associated with each other. All human interactions including actions and reactions are linked to the cultural background. The cultural traits are either inherited acquired and transmitted through communication. In modern times, the rapid expansion of communication networks due to application of newer technologies has made it possible to communicate collectively to wider audience in efficient manner.

**LONG QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the relationship between the culture and communication.
2. Explain how Indian culture maintains unbroken continuity through communication.
3. Discuss some examples from our ancient traditions to show culture as communication.

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LESSON 8C

NATIONALISM AND THE ISSUE OF CULTURE: CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

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Introduction

In common parlance Culture is a social concept and nationalism is understood primarily as a political concept meaning an ideology which provides basis for national integration and cohesion. In the case of India, nationalism in its contemporary connotation came into being for seeking national independence from colonial or semi-colonial rule of imperialist powers.

Destruction of old socio-economic system in India and initiation of modern trade and industry and most importantly, rise of new classes constituted the basis of nationalism. This ideology was adopted in its modern sense by the Indian people in the 19th century, during their movement for independence from British colonial domination. It was in this process that multifarious national and ethnic identities, who had for the most part of their history lived under separate rulers, but now for nearly a century had come under the same foreign power's rule, came closer to each other. It is in course of this very struggle against the common enemy, the British colonialists, they together forged a nation.

We must note here that culture is something very different from politics and economics. Nationalism is a product of a definite stage of development of society and its political and economic aspects take concrete shape in that particular period, and in this respect they do draw a demarcating line from the past socio-economic systems. Democracy based on adult franchise and capitalist production relations are manifestations of these aspects. But culture is continuous, it transgresses the dimension of geographical space and time. It cannot be bound to nationalism because its sources cannot be bound to a geographical territory.

Indian Civilization or Indian Nationalism?

India is a subcontinent with a vast population of the most diverse levels of culture. Anthropological knowledge of the people of India reveals that almost all known racial groups have migrated to India at different times in the past with their own language, religion and culture. Since there was plenty of space, the migrating cultural and racial groups could pass on and penetrate further into the interior without much opposition. Thus, the various cultural groups did not destroy each other, but continued to live on and consolidate into the main components of the present-day population. The caste system also helped to keep the diverse racial, social and cultural groups apart, for it prevented them effectively from mixing with one another. The population of India is thus very heterogeneous. Variety and diversity permeates the whole subcontinent, every state and district, every town and village.

According to Kothari (1988), "In the absence of a centralized political authority it was 'the Indian civilizational enterprise' which 'over the centuries achieved a remarkable degree of
cohesion and held together different sub-systems in a continental-size society’. Thus, the
unifying force of Indian civilization was the acceptance of multi-culturality and linguistic
diversity rather than a political ideology of regimentation.

The Age of Nationalism in the modern sense of the word is a recent phenomenon. It
developed in the eighteenth century in the West and emerged at a later period as a universal
political concept. In India nationalism emerged in the context of colonialism. It can be traced to
the political and administrative unification followed by the economic unification by the British.
The introduction of English education, European science and philosophy, as well as the pride in
India as a nation and her past culture, emerged at this historical turning point.

**What is the Cultural Foundation of Modern India?**

Pannikar (1995) observes that in its early manifestation, the struggle for nationalism, anti-
colonial consciousness and the need for independence were not in the realm of politics but in the
realm of ideology and culture. The first expression of this consciousness was in the form of
social and religious reform movements. The important question then was — what is the cultural
foundation of Indian society and how are we to reconstruct it as a modern nation on a par with
other modern nation states?

Two strands of thought emerged: one led to an attempt at reconstructing Indian society on
the basis of Western ideas originating in the age of Enlightenment and Liberalism, and the other
wanted the reconstruction to take place on the basis of ancient Hindu traditions. These two
visions of India developed their own ideology, leadership and organization in the course of
freedom struggle in India. A third vision was voiced by oppressed and marginalized people of
India. These three visions of modern India shaped the course of dialogue in India at the birth of
the Indian nation and the framing of her Constitution. They are also influential in the current
political debates today.

**Indian Identity(ies) and the Framing of the Constitution**

All these visions were active and influential in the formation of the modern Indian State
during the freedom struggle. A continuous dialogue took place with regard to identity in free
India.

After almost three years of deliberation, the Constituent Assembly of India on 26
November 1949 adopted a constitution for the world’s largest liberal democracy. The debate in
the Assembly reflected the paradoxes of the Indian situation, which we highlighted above as the
contending visions for India. The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution defended the notion
of a pluralistic society and a neutral state based on equal rights and citizenship. The Indian
Constitution may justifiably be described as secular and multicultural. Recognition and
protection was offered to religious, cultural and linguistic minorities. Equal respect, fairness and
non-discrimination were to be the guiding principles of state policies towards minorities.

Differences are recognized but so are the values of equal citizenship and equal rights.
After protracted discussions in the Constituent Assembly, the Constitution was passed upholding
ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious pluralism in India and promising recognition and
protection for all and non-discriminatory state policies. It articulated a secular and inclusive
nationalism of equal opportunities and equal liberty for all, regardless of their religious
affiliations or social status. It meant that the state itself was not to become partisan to any
particular group, nor does it privilege any particular religion. The equidistance to all religions
became the quintessence of secularism and this is ensured in the Constitution.
Institutions of Cultural Practices: Colonial and Post-Colonial

There were two major phases in colonial rule, the early phase in which Orientalist forms of knowledge about the colonised and Christian missionary views dominated, and the later, more important phase, when (after the Mutiny of 1857) direct rule was established and major transformations in the nature of colonial state took place, and concomitantly, new forms of knowledge emerged, and Indian tradition and social institutions were studied.

Colonial conquest was not only the result of the power of superior arms and military organisation, but sustained and strengthened as much by the cultural technologies of rule. This was achieved by the creation of an archive, built up through Orientalist approach to archaeology, ritual texts, agrarian structure, land organisation, classification and assessment, anthropological surveys and the enumeration of caste in the census, through which the British set in motion equally powerful transformations. Colonialism played a critical role in the identification and production of Indian tradition, devalued under conditions of colonial modernity.

In the second half of the 19th century, in the wake of the 1857 rebellion and the establishment of direct British rule, colonial ethnology took the place of colonial history. Ethnography became the primary colonial modality of representation linking politics and epistemology. Knowledge became privileged more than any other form of imperial understanding. Attempts to find some method that could produce useful and uniform knowledge for all of India, beyond district gazetteers and manuals, led to compilation of material on demographics and identities, in a new kind of empirical quest. A relentless anthropologising resulted in a colonial anthropology and sociology, which had the greatest impact and force in relation to the subsequent colonial and post-colonial history of India. This resulted in setting up of Central Institutions such as Anthropological Survey of India, Archaeological Survey of India, a network of site museums as well as museums of national importance (Indian Museum, and Victoria Memorial, Kolkata; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangharalaya, formerly Prince of Wales Musuem, Mumbai to name a few).

As a step towards preservation and protection of cultural heritage, first antiquarian laws were formulated and put into effect.¹

Cultural renaissance of early nineteenth century witnessed enactment of the first ever antiquarian legislation in India known as Bengal Regulation XIX of 1810. This was soon followed by another legislation called as Madras Regulation VII of 1817. Both these regulations vested the Government with a power to intervene whenever the public buildings were under threat of misuse. However, both the acts were silent on the buildings under the private ownership. The Act XX of 1863, was therefore enacted to empower the Government to prevent injury to and preserve buildings remarkable for their antiquity or for their historical or architectural value.

¹. Legislations are from the website of The Archaeological Survey of India

http://asi.nic.in/asi_legislations.asp
The Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878 (Act No. VI of 1878) was promulgated to protect and preserve treasure found accidentally but had the archaeological and historical value. This act has enacted to protect and preserve such treasures and their lawful disposal. In a landmark development in 1886, James Burgess, the then Director General succeeded in prevailing upon the Government for issuing directions: forbidding any person or agency to undertake excavation without prior consent of the Archaeological Survey and debarring officers from disposing of antiquities found or acquired without the permission of the Government.

The cultural heritage ushered in a new era when the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (Act No. VII of 1904) was promulgated. This act provided effective preservation and authority over the monument particularly those, which were under the custody of individual or private ownership. As this Act has not been repealed, it is deemed to be in force. Next act was the Antiquities export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947) and Rules thereto which provided a regulation over the export of antiquities under a licence issued by the Director General and empowering his to decide whether any article, object or thing is or is not an antiquity for the purpose of the act and his decision was final.

In 1951, the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951 (No LXXI of 1951) was enacted. Consequently, all the ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains protected earlier under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (Act No. VII of 1904) were re-declared as monuments and archaeological sites of national importance under this act. Another four hundred and fifty monuments and sites of Part ‘B’ states were also added. Some more monuments and archaeological sites were also declared as of national importance under Section 126 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956.

In order to bring the act on par with constitutional provisions and providing better and effective preservation to the archaeological wealth of the country. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological sites and remains Act 1958 (No 24 of 1958) was enacted on 26th August 1958. This act provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects. Subsequently, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules 1959 were framed. The act along with rules came into force with effect from 15 October 1959. This act repealed the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951.

The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 (No. 52 of 1972) is the latest act enacted on 9th September 1972 for effective control over the moveable cultural property consisting of antiquities and art treasures. The act is to regulate the export trade in antiquities and art treasures, to provide for the prevention of smuggling of, and fraudulent dealings in, antiquities, to provide for the compulsory acquisition of antiquities and art treasures for preservation in public places and to provide for certain other matters connected therewith on incidental or ancillary thereto. This act was also supplemented with the Antiquities and Art Treasure Rules 1973. The act was Rules have been in force with effect from 5th April 1976. This legislation repealed the Antiquities Export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947).
The effects of colonial anthropology were most direct in the census, which was related in fundamental ways to imperial projects of army recruitment, policing, labour migration or even controlling of prostitution.

As catalysts for innovation, education, and economic development, cultural institutions play a powerful role in creating vibrant communities. Through exhibitions, theater and opera productions, dance and music performances, creativity prospers, diversity is celebrated, and local businesses and economies are supported. As societies and forms of cultural expression evolve, however, it is important that the relationships between cultural institutions and their communities evolve as well and keep pace with the times.

India is one of the unique nations in the world having a developed culture and a developing economy. Its culture is deeply rooted in a pluralistic ethos of age-old history providing creative expression, value sustenance and belief patterns to society. India also occupies an important place on the cultural map of the world. We have witnessed in India the emergence of the role of culture as giving meaning to our existence. The role of culture lies not only in encouraging self-expression and exploration on the part of individuals and communities, but also supporting to arts and artists and also correcting some of the distorting effects of cultural expression by people at large, and developing creativity as a social force.

The Department of Culture has given a fillip and helped to preserve this diverse cultural background through a network of institutions and schemes. Our cultural heritage has been regenerated through organizations such as the Archaeological Survey of India and the Anthropological Survey of India, and a network of museums and archives. The setting up of Zonal Cultural Centres has created awareness among the masses at the regional level. The department has also provided a forum for the exchange of cultural traditions with other nations.

An attempt has been made by the Department of Culture to build up linkages through a network of institutions and schemes between the past and the present in terms of their bearing on future development. Within this conceptual framework, the preservation of our cultural heritage through the Archaeological Survey of India, Museums and Archives, has maintained the continuity of cultural traditions in the context of development.

The Department of Culture operates Plan Schemes of the Government of India for preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the country. It has a network of subordinate and attached offices besides a number of other autonomous institutions/organizations in the field of Culture, such as, Archaeological Survey of India, Anthropological Survey of India, National Archives, Museums, Libraries, Akademies, etc.

The focus of the schemes of Department of Culture has been on development of Culture from the grassroots level in association with a network of institutions for promotion, preservation and dissemination of the cultural heritage of the country.

Broadly speaking, there are three dimensions of culture: National Identity, Mass Media, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage. However, seen from a higher perspective, it also addresses issues relating to history, values and beliefs in conjunction with several other Ministries/Departments, such as, Tourism, Education, Textiles and External Affairs. Within this conceptual framework, the preservation of cultural heritage through the Archaeological Survey of India, Museums & Archives, has maintained the continuity of cultural tradition in the country.
The programmes of encouragement of contemporary creative activities through three National Akademies of performing, literary and visual arts as well as through incentives, awards and fellowships have helped in the articulation of the creative genius of India. The establishment of seven Zonal Culture Centers has highlighted not only the cultural kinships transcending territorial bonds, but also close relationships that subsist between sharpening of people’s cultural consciousness and upgradation of Human Resource Development.

In addition to the services provided by the ministry, a wide range of services are provided through two Attached Offices, six Subordinate Offices and twenty five Autonomous Bodies spread all over the country.

**Attached Offices – Department of Culture**

1. **Arcaeological Survey of India, New Delhi**
   - Aims to maintain, conserve & preserve Centrally Protected Monuments/Sites and Remains.
   - Also conducts archaeological exploration and excavations, architectural survey of monuments and training in archaeology.

2. **National Archives of India, New Delhi**
   - Houses Central Government records of enduring value for permanent preservation and use by administrative scholars.
   - It also assists Government Departments in their record management programmes.

3. **National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.**
   - Creates an understanding and sensitivity among the Indian public towards visual and plastic arts and promotes the development of contemporary Indian Art.

4. **National Museum, New Delhi.**
   - Main activities are in the areas of exhibitions, education, public relations, publication and conservation.
   - It undertakes numerous activities in improving the displays and strengthening conservation activities.

5. **National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow**
   - Aims to develop conservation capabilities of different cultural institutions in the country and provides services to museums, archives, archaeology departments in conservations of cultural property.

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2. Website of the Department of Culture
   
   [http://www.indiaculture.nic.in](http://www.indiaculture.nic.in)
4. Central Reference Library, Kolkata
   • Responsible for Compilation and Publication of Indian National Bibliography and Index Indiana.

Subordinate Offices

   • An Institute of national importance, which acts as a reference centre for research scholars.
   • It co-ordinates and determines standards in the fields of library services in the country.

6. Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata
   • A scientific organization for research in the field of anthropology engaged in activities like collection, preservation, maintenance, documentation and study of ethnographic materials as well as of ancient human skeletal remains.

Autonomous Bodies

1. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manva Sangrahalya Bhopal
   • Houses a collection and display of antiquated objects and endeavours to record and revitalize both traditional and contemporary community knowledge.

2. National council of Science Museums, Kolkata
   • Engaged in popularizing science and technology amongst students in particular through a wide range of activities and interactive programmes

3. Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi
   • Maintains a personalia museum which portrays the life and times of Jawahar Lal Nehru, a library of printed materials, books, periodicals and photographs with special emphasis on history of modern India

4. Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi
   • The Akademi is devoted to furtherance of performing arts of India, and bestows honours annually on outstanding artists in the field of performing arts and also arranges performances by renowned veterans as well as by talented artists of younger generation through training programmes, award of scholarships, documents etc.

5. Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi
   • The Akademi promotes the cause of Indian Literature and National Integration by way of publications, translations, seminars workshops, cultural exchange programmes and literary meets organized all over the country.

6. Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
   • The Akademi aims to promote and propagate an understanding of India art both within the country and abroad.
7. National School of Drama, New Delhi
   - Aims to train students in all aspects of theatre, including theatre history, production, scene-design, costume design etc.

8. Centre for Cultural Resources & Training, New Delhi
   - Aims to revitalize the education systems by creating an understanding/awareness among students about the cultural plurality of India.

9. Gandhi Smriti & Sarshan Samiti, New Delhi
   - Objective is to preserve, maintain and look after the upkeep of Gandhi Smriti and Gandhi Darshan Complex.
   - Propogates the life, mission and thoughts of Mahatama Gandhi.

10. Allahabad Museum, Allahabad
    - Museum organizes lectures, seminars, workshops on varying issues of art and culture.

11. Delhi Public Library, New Delhi
    - It is a premier public library system of modern India in Delhi and has become the busiest public library in South East Asia.
    - It provides services to rural, urban, folk, adults, children, students, visually handicapped etc.,

12. Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata
    - Promotes and supports the public library movement in country by providing adequate library services and popularizing reading habits.

13. Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh
    - Main aim is to develop the multifaced personality of students through inculcation if wisdom of Buddhist thoughts, literature and to familiarize them with research work relevant to Buddhist studies.

14. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi
    - The main aim is restoration of ancient learning and implementation of multidimensional Tibetan Studies.

15. Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata
    - Objective is to conserve memorial buildings and all artefacts, modernize galleries, digitization of artefacts, holding exhibitions, seminars and lectures.

16. Indian Museum, Kolkata
    - Organises exhibitions, seminars, lectures and mass communication programmes.
    - Acquires antiquities/art objects/ethnographic artefacts.
    - Reorganises galleries.
17. Asiatic Society, Kolkata
- It is a vast treasure house of rare books/manuscripts, journals and other printed materials on Asiatic Arts and Science.
- Its museum preserves and exhibits a large stock of manuscripts, archival materials of historical importance, coins, inscriptions and sundry other objects of academic value.

18. Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad
- It is a rich repository of global art collections. The collection of museum consists of India, art, Middle eastern art, Far Eastern and European art.

19. Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna
- It has the richest collections of manuscripts with over 20,000 manuscripts, 2,00,000 printed books and about 230 original paintings of Mughal, Rajput, Oudh, Iranian and Turkish schools.

20. Rampur Raza Library, Rampur
- It is considered to be highly valued treasure house of thousands of rare manuscripts, miniature paintings, illustrated manuscripts, specimen of great calligraphers of Islamic World.

21. Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai
- Integrates all art forms and regional variants thereof and to revive the ancient glory of Indian culture and set standards of true arts.

- Conducts M.A. and Ph.D. courses in History of Arts, Conservation and restoration of works of arts and museology. It also conducts certificate courses on Indian art and Culture, Art appreciation and Bhartiya Kala Naidhi.

23. Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, Bihar
- It is the only institution in India devoted exclusively to teaching, research and publication in Pali and Buddhist studies.

24. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian studies, Kolkata
- It is a centre for research and learning with focus on social, cultural, economic and political/administrative developments in Asia from middle of 19th century onwards and the life and works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

25. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.
- It has a collection of resources materials and fundamental research in filed of arts and humanities.
- It focuses upon the inter-relationship with the disciplines of science physical and material metaphysics as also anthropology and sociology.

Besides the above there is the Central secretariat Library, New Delhi, which is mainly responsible for providing Reference and Referral service to Registered members, Policy Planners, Academicians, Research Scholars and to general readers etc.
Moreover, under the existing central and state legislations, 3,673 monuments and sites are looked after by the central government and about 3,500 monuments and sites by the states respectively as protected heritage is highly limited, compared to the vast number of monuments existing in the country. For a country of the size and cultural wealth of India this admittedly is not a big number. There are still a large number of monument and sites that fall outside the purview of either of these two agencies. Whereas for the protected monuments, a good deal of data is available, no documentation exists for the unprotected monuments. It is now realized that if we want to understand our history and also ensure and preserve our heritage for posterity, we must have a proper management plan of our highly fragile cultural resources. This is possible only when we understand its cultural value in terms of quality, quantity and nature of such cultural remains in the context of our heritage.

Keeping the above mentioned scenario in the country, the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities has been launched with the following major mandates-

1. Preparation of National register and set up state level database of built heritage, sites and antiquities for better management of such cultural resources.
2. Promote awareness programme concerning the benefits of preserving the historical and cultural aspects of built heritage, sites and antiquities.
3. Extend training facility and capacity building to the concerned state departments, local bodies, NGOs, universities, museums, communities etc. in the field of conservation of built heritage, and preservation and management of antiquarian remains.
4. Help in developing synergy between institutions like the Archaeological Survey of India State Departments, concerned institutions and NGOs to generate close interaction for effective management of archaeological resources.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous organization of the Government of India, was established in 1950. The objectives of the Council, as defined in its Memorandum of Association, are:

- to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India’s external cultural relations to promote cultural exchange with other countries and peoples.
- to promote and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.
- to establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture

The council, with its headquarters in Azad Bhavan, New Delhi, carries out this mandate of cultural diplomacy through a wide spectrum of activities which include:

3. information available on ASI home page
4. for more information on ICCR see www.iccrindia.org
A. Programme Wing:

- Exchange of visits by scholars, academicians, opinion-makers, artists and writers
- Facilitation of the organization of and participation in seminars and symposia abroad
- Exchange of visits by performing arts groups
- Exchange of exhibitions
- Commissioning of busts and statues of Indian leaders for installation abroad
- Presentation abroad of informatics, audio-visual material, books on India and Indian musical instruments
- Active collaboration in the operations of some Foreign Cultural Centres in India (e.g. nine of the thirteen British Libraries in India – the ones outside the four metropolitan cities – are run jointly by the ICCR and the British Council)

B. Administration & Education Wing

- Administering of scholarship schemes for foreign students for studies in India
- Assisting organization of and participation in seminars and symposia in India
- Maintaining the Council’s Regional Offices in India and its cultural centres abroad
- Establishing and maintaining Chairs and Professorships for Indian Studies in Universities abroad
- Administering the Jawharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding
- Organising the Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture
- Conducting the Maulana Azad Essay Competition
- Publications

The council has regional offices in Bangalore, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Mumbai and Thriuvananthapuram.

The council has cultural centres abroad in Georgetown, Paramaribo, Port Louis, Jakarta, Moscow, Berlin, Cairo, London, Tashkent, Almaty, Johannesburg, Durban, Port of Spain and Colombo (in order of establishment)

Conclusion

Through the centuries Indian culture – while retaining and revitalizing its unique insights and expressions, its wisdom and multiplicity, has always remained open to outside influences. It is in the realm of culture that the Indian dynamics of internalizing change within tradition, of integrating modernity with traditional wisdom, of bringing about a consonance between continuity and innovation, has most clearly, constantly and effectively manifested itself.
LONG QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the important legislations implemented during the colonial and post-colonial periods for the protection and preservation of our cultural heritage.

2. Discuss about the role of at least ten autonomous bodies which have been set-up for the preservation and promotion of our cultural traditions.

3. Write short notes on the following:
   a. National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities
   b. Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).

SUGGESTED READINGS

4. -------- Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
Introduction

The arts in the Indian tradition were considered to be creations of the gods, and therefore none was superior to the other. Just as dance and music was begotten by Shiva, painting and sculpture was begotten by Vishnu and architecture by Rudra Vishvakarman. Cultural creation was believed to be a reflection of the divine and therefore saundarya or aesthetic pleasure was built into its production and consumption. It is no wonder that the majority of ancient and medieval arts came up within a socio-religious context. Art for its own sake was not known or created in either the classical or the folk context. The artist was a sadhaka, a person who meditated upon his creation using a number of prescriptive and ritual texts rather than an individual genius, since art was an offering as well as revealed to him.

India has a long sculptural tradition that may be traced back to the Neolithic cultures, however archaeologically; a continuous trajectory of evolution may be traced from the 3rd century B.C onwards. References to the existence of sacred sculptures antedate the material evidence. Early texts call images -- pratima, sandrshi, prakriti or bimba, which later came to denote arca, or religious objects of worship, the term comes only later.

The earliest reference to the attributes of gods comes from the Vedic period where we have word pictures of various deities such as that of Shri in the Shri Sukta though it is not archeologically proved. Panini, a grammarian belonging to the sixth Century B.C however has referred to the existence as well as rituals surrounding a prakriti or an image. Similarly Saunaka in his digest Brihat devata refers to ten essential elements that help us identify a deity such as form, relationship, emblem, vehicle, name, attribute, symbol etc. the Grhyasutras are unequivocal in the recognition of pratima of icons and the domestic rituals involved in their worship.

However, creation of images comes into prominence only with the popularization of bhakti as a religious doctrine amongst all sects, be it Buddhism, Jainism, Shivaism or Vishnuism. The personal bond between the devotee and the ishtadevata or personal god through the offering of obeisance, puja and archana required a direct and identifiable object of worship as well as place of worship. This led to the creation of anthropomorphic images as well as shrines to house them. Another impetus was the worship of popular spirits such as yakshas, vrikshas (trees) and waters along with funerary remains of Mahapurushas such as Buddha and Mahavira and their principal disciples. The third stream that inspired early sculptures were the word images of deities found in Vedic hymns that were translated into sculptures of various sectarian gods.

1. Shilpasatric Normative Tradition

An entire textual tradition exists, consisting of the Shilpashastras and the Vastushastras that gives rules and regulations along with the description of numerically increasing as well as progressively complex icons. These texts coincide with the creation of the Pauranic tradition
which is based on a variety of myths and of familial (such as the families of Shiva or Vishnu) as well as sectarian relationships of the gods within a pantheon for example the various avatars in Vishnuism or the variety of subsidiary deities such as Nandi, gana etc. in Shivaism. The creation of icons corresponds to the incorporation of deities and myths into the pantheon of Vishnu, starting from Matsya to Kalki as is seen in sculptures on the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh.

Like the other shastric texts the Shilpashastras lay down the exact prescriptions as well as rituals, in this case for the creation of sculptures and buildings. These regulations range from the “state of being” of the sculptor to the selection of stone or other media, the preparation of the surface to the technique of sculpting and characteristics of the icon itself. The texts also give exact measurements and proportions of each image, which is known as iconometry which along with iconography lays down rules for making an icon. Iconography literally means the study of icons, and includes within it the identification, description, and the interpretation of the content of images. It can be interpreted as a) Pictorial illustration of a subject b) The collected representations illustrating a subject or c) a set of specified or traditional symbolic forms associated with the subject or theme of a stylized work of art.

The Pratimalakshna of Naganjot was one such text that had a lasting impact on later treatises such as the Brihatsmahita of Varahmira and of Utpala. Other texts like the Vishvakarmavataraashastra, the Aprajitaprichha, the Samgraustradhara of King Bhoja, Abhilashitarthactamani of king Somesvaradeva of the Chalukayas, Manasara, Manasollasa, Mayamata and Shilparatna of Shrikumara are some of the specialized texts that fall under the category of the Shilpashastras. These were largely written between the sixth to the thirteenth centuries.

The information contained within these is largely taken from religious texts such as the Samhitas, Agamas and Tantras along with Puranas such as Agni Purana and Vayu Purana. The most important of texts on iconography is an upapurana called the Vishnudharmottarapurana that was composed in Kashmir somewhere during the late seventh century. This text gives detailed descriptions of the form, attributes, colour of most of the significant deities of north India. Similar texts belonging to both north and south India continued to be composed during the medieval period and have made an enormous contribution to our study and understanding of traditional Indian art and architecture. However, this is not to suggest that Indian artists were bound only by the formal prescription given in the texts and could not innovate or adapt these to their individual genius or regional practices of which we have countless examples.

2. Classicism –Narrative and Sculptural

Free standing sculptures of local deities such as the Manibhadra Yaksha were commissioned by individual merchants such as Kunika from the third century onwards. These local spirits, called yakshas and yakshis in inscriptions as well as texts, were guardian deities of cities, city gates, orchards, trees and waters. They were associated with fertility and prosperity and the ability to fulfill the earthly aspirations of the devotee. Some of the earliest examples are the Didarganj Yakshi and the Parkham Yaksha though of course other such larger than life size figures are found all over north India during this period. In terms of art, there is a remarkable uniformity of idiom and style in the conception and execution of these huge sculptures from all
over India, indicating a kind of pan Indian religious belief system as well as mobility of ideas and of lay people.

Contemporary to the production of these images, the imperial art of the Mauryas also flourished that centered on the production of polished columns and animal capitals. However this was a short lived experiment because post Mauryan art that followed the Mauryan experiment was largely corporate and narrative in character. The period between 2nd century B.C and 3rd century A.D. is marked by the construction of structural stupas at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Kausambi and Sanchi, alongwith rock cut chaityas and bodhi grihas and viharas at Karle, Kanheri, Bhaja, Bhedsa, Pitalkhora and Ghatokachha caves. Most of these early surviving examples of art are either Buddhist or Jaina. The structures were embellished with bas relief sculptures of sectarian emblems such as the triratna or dharmachakra along with lotuses and other auspicious (mangala) symbols such as couples or mithunas. Alongside narratives from the live of Buddha in previous lives such as the Jataka stories or avadana stories were also presented for the instruction of the pilgrim.

The earliest surviving example of narrative art comes from Bharhut, near Satna in Madhya Pradesh. Only the great railing or the vedika running around the stupa and the gateways or toranas constructed on all four cardinal points survive from this site now. Sanchi is a better preserved monument that showcases early narrative Buddhist art. Built over many centuries, the main structure of the stupa, the vedika and torana may be dated between 50 B.C. to A.D.150. Relief sculptures on the stone gateways not only illustrate episodes from the life and worship of the Buddha along with the inscriptions about the donors, but also provide a glimpse onto the life, beliefs and structures of the period. These inscriptions inform us that traders, householders, craftsmen, guilds, queens, ministers, nuns and monks –ordinary and great men and women contributed to the construction of this monument to Buddhist piety.

The early stupas are first examples of sculpture in hard stone while the earlier tradition was to carve in softer surface of wood and ivory and this was the prototype for stone carving, thus the relief is shallow and rather flat with little three dimensionality. In the narratives the main character of the story is generally placed in the centre of the panel with subsidiary figures on either side. The human figures are placed in a frontal pose, and profile is very rare.

In these early carvings, the Buddha is represented by his symbols be it a throne, a bodhi tree, a stupa or footprints but not in his human form as the art was made by monks and lay people who followed the earlier form of Buddhism or Thervada where Buddha is not worshipped in his human form. A large number of carvings at Sanchi depict episodes from the life Buddha particularly the Birth, the Great Renunciation, Enlightenment, the First Sermon at Sarnath and the Parnirvana or death. One also finds episodes from the Jatakas such the Vessanatara Jataka and Mahakapi Jataka. Other episodes include the miracles performed by the Buddha such as walking on the Nilanjana River and the conversion of the Kashyapa Brahmins. There are number of scenes of worship of Buddha and his symbols.

The art of Sanchi is important for the study of narrative devices, one of the most important being the invention of continuous narrative. Here in a single panel, the same figure is shown three or four times, each showing a moment from the story such as the story of the Buddha leaving his palace on the east gateway. On the left is the gate of city and the palace (which gives us a fair idea of urban architecture) with the horse and umbrella indicating the
presence of the divine being. This is repeated four times till we reach the extreme left where a set of footprints suggest that the Buddha has left the horse and the umbrella to proceed towards meditation under the Bodhi tree. Under this we see a horse without the umbrella being led back to the palace.

At Sanchi nature has been depicted not in a truly realistic manner but to suggest its recognizable aspects. Thus water, especially the river, is depicted through horizontal waves, with aquatic animals emphasizing the water environment. Trees are shown with large leaves and fruit and with short trunks, generally surrounding by a platform.

The developments at Sanchi and elsewhere gave rise to three important schools of art in India that flourished in north and the Deccan from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourth century A.D.: in and around Mathura, north-western region of Gandhara and near the Krishna river at Amaravati. The developments in sculpture in these regions laid the foundation of classicism and iconographic canons in the India.

Intext Questions:
1. What do you understand by iconography?
2. Discuss the importance of the shilpshastric tradition in the development of Indian art.
3. Describe some of the features of early Buddhist art.

2.1. Mathura School of Art
Mathura art reflects the urban and sophisticated tastes of the inhabitants, patrons and sculptors of the region who adapted the older forms of Bharhut-Sanchi and foreign artistic influences of Bactro-Gandharan art to create a widely spread and influential art style.

Mathura and the surrounding region have a long history though continuous political history can be traced from the 6th century B.C. onwards when this became the capital of the Surasena janapada. Later, it came under the control of the Magadhan kingdom under the Nandas and Mauryas from whom it passed on to the Sungsas under whom it was a prosperous city as recorded by Patanjali in the 2nd century B.C. It continued to be under the suzerainty of local chieftoms such as the Mitras and Dattas whose coins have been discovered form the region. It is in the middle of the 1st century B.C. that Mathura came under the rule of Saka-Kshaptrapas whose rulers such as Rajula and his son Sodasha issued the inscriptions of importance. It is under the Kushanas, especially under Kanishka that Mathura became the eastern capital and emerged as a major centre of art activity. The Kushanas ruled this region till about A.D. 250 after which there is a hiatus or gap here till the rise of the Gupta in the 4th century B.C. though art activity continued in the transitional period. This period saw an expanding urbanization and the rise of long-distance trade. This led to an increased contact within larger areas of the Kushana Empire. The art of this period also has a pronounced urbanized sensibility as the tastes and desires of the lay city dwellers transform.

By 2nd Century B.C. Mathura was both an important urban center as well a as a center for various faiths such as Buddhism, Jainism, Shivaism, Vishnuism and Naga Cults. The Bhagvata cult of Vishnu spread here in 1st-2nd century A.D. (Kushana Period). Thus, during the period art derived from religion flourished here. In the early period large Yaksha and Yakshi images were carved. During the Shunga period worship of gods through symbols such as the Bodhi tree.
chakra etc continued. Later Jaina and Buddhist stupas were built at Mathura along with the rest of central India.

The art of Mathura is characterized by the use of mottled red Sikri sandstone that is found in the area around it. Majority of sculptures have been recovered from sites in and around the city from various Buddhist, Jaina and other sectarian building. The important Buddhist sites include Katra Keshavadeva, Jamalpur, Chaubara, Bhutesvara, Palikhera, Maholi and Govindgarh, while the most famous Jaina site is at Kanakali Tila. Sonkh has revealed the existence of apsidal structural temples belonging to naga cult along with other antiquities. However, the influence of Mathura art was spread over most of north India with specimens being discovered from Sarnath, Kausambi, Bodhgaya and Rajgir in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, along with Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh and Chandraketugarh in Bengal, Vadinagar in Gujarat and Taxila in Pakistan. From Ahicchatra and Sanghol in UP and Punjab respectively a considerable quantity and variety of sculptures in Mathura style have been discovered that provide proof of the export and popularity of the art beyond the city itself.

The sculptures from the Mathura School have remarkable stylistic unity. The figures have oval or round-ish faces with open eyes, thick lips and sharp nose with a fleshy full bodied figure are shown in a number of postures. Most of the female figures are delineated in a voluptuous manner with heavy round breasts, narrow waist and broad hips. The male figures are shown with slight V-shaped torsos. The figures are generally shown wearing a diaphanous (almost transparent), clinging dhoti, while a scarf like uttarīya emerges from behind one shoulder over one forearm. The divine figures are shown with one hand upraised in abhaya mudra and the other is placed on the waist near the knot of waist band, with a canopy like halo atop and behind the head. Plants, leaves, birds and animals were rendered in a realistic manner and much care has been to create details of these on background as well as the reverse of many sculptures at Mathura. The figure of the Buddha wears a samghati that covers only one shoulder, the hair are arranged in small snail like curls or are gathered in a kapardin like top knot. A large halo with scalloped edges representing a flame or light can be seen behind the head. Often attendant deities such as bodhisattvas or Indra and Brahma are shown on both sides of the Buddha.

The discovery of a number of dated donative’s inscriptions from the pedestals of the Buddha and bodhisattva images from Mathura and surrounding areas have contributed greatly to our understanding of the evolution of the Buddha image as well as the Buddhist principles and tenets popular during the time. One of the best preserved specimens is from Ahicchatra whose inscription reveals that is was a gift of the Bhikshu Virana for the ‘benefit and happiness of all teachers, together with elderly shramanas and disciples.” The inscription is dated in the year thirty two, probably of the Kanishka era., i.e A.D. 152. In another example the sculpture of seated meditating Buddha founded from Katra informs us that it was dedicated by a Buddhist nun named Amoha-asi ‘for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings’. Such inclusive generosity is indicative of Mahayana Buddhism which emphasizes the belief that merit or punya can be transferred from one to another.

The large number of sculptures of bodhisattvas is another indication of the popularity of Mahayana Buddhism in the region. These were generally shown as standing royal personages, lavishly bejeweled with a dhyani Buddha figure in their crown or diadem. The attributes in their hands such as a purse or a lotus identifies them as a particular bodhisattva such as Maiterya or Avalokiteshvara.
This early development of the identification of particular deities based on their posture, attributes, vehicle and form are termed iconographic traits. These iconographic traits are characteristic of the Mathura school of art and reflect the religious environment of the post Mauryan era based as it was on bhakti and sectarian principles. Shaiva figures were found from the region though their numbers are limited. Ekamukhalinga and Chaturmukhalinga, linga icons with one of four faces of Shiva carved on four sides began to be made during this period though the classic examples come from the subsequent Gupta period. Karttikeya- Skanda is one of the more prolific deities with independent as well as composite images being made of them. Or the latter, he is shown with Shashthi, as well as with Ekanamsa and with Vishakha. The pancharatra cult of Vishnu seems to have taken root here with a number of images being created such as Chaturvyuha Vishnu that shows Vasudeva as the central figure and Samkarsana, Samba and Aniruddha as emanations emerging from this main figure. Icons of Vishnu holding a mace and disc were also found from the region along with Krishna and Balarama-Haladhara both of whom evolved from independent pastoral and agricultural deities into becoming the incarnations or avataars of Vishnu.

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth is associated with Kubera-Panchika, the lord of wealth and prosperity. They are seen not only in the Brahmanical context but also in the Buddhist and local cults because their association with material well being and growth was rooted in common cultural environment rather than in a particular sectarian creed. Kubera is also shown in conjunction with Hariti, a yakshi-goddess who is associated with children and their well being. In fact, small votive plaques of these two are found in plenty from Mathura. Other deities such as the Matrikas or the Mothers, Naigamesha and Skanda are associated with children and had protective-destructive functions were created and donated in large numbers during the post-Mauryan period at Mathura. The Jainas of Mathura produced votive tablets called ayagapattas that contain auspicious marks of worship such as fish couple or matsya yugala, the swatiska, shrivatsa, ratna-bhanda, bhadraoptha, purna kumbha, divyamana, indrayasti and matsya.

The most distinctive feature of Mathura art is the plethora or abundance of female figures in various poses carved on railing pillars and torana uprights engaged in activities such as bathing under a waterfall, playing with swords or a ball and with a child, carrying an offering basket, holding a lamp, tying a waist band, dinking from a cup, etc. They are often shown standing on a dwarf yaksha or on a lotus or an incline. These figures wear very transparent dhoti revealing the form beneath, a heavy waist band or mekhala and other jewelry such as bangles, anklets, bracelets and the like. They sport different coiffures and are generally voluptuous and sensuously delineated. These females derive from the shalabhanjika and yakshi figures found on the early stupas and probably conferred an element of fertility on the stupa and the devotee who visited these. Often scenes from Jataka stories or lotuses are carved on the other side of the pillars such as at Bhuteshvara.

Two sided panels with an offering bowl on top are another distinguishing specimen of sculptural art from Mathura, whose precise function and meaning are still to be ascertained. Perhaps alms and offering or water for ritual ablation were placed in these bowls. These may have a tree carved on one side and a figural panel on the other or a narrative passage on both sides such as the ‘Vasantsena panel’ from Maholi that depicts moments from the play Mrichchhakatika or Kubera and attendants drinking wine from Palikhera. Many scenes from royal life such as drinking and adorning the self seem to have taken the fancy of sculptors and
patrons in the area. These include the Sundari and Nanda episode and kamaloka scenes of mithunas or couples in amorous play that are depicted on the torana and railings of structures.

This is not to imply that narrative passages from Jataka katha and avadana katha relating to the life of Buddha did not adorn the railings and other architectural elements of stupa and vihara buildings, but only that they became less popular as newer subjects came to the fore that catered to the sensibility of an increasingly urban society.

There was a strong royal cult also flourishing under the Kushanas where the royal family was worshipped in a devakula or shrine. One such shrine has been discovered at Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan and the other at Mat just outside the town of Mathura. Here portrait sculptures of the first four kings have been discovered of whom Wima Kadphises seated on a lion throne is very majestic and impressive. There is also the standing headless figure of Kanishka wearing a stiff tunic and boots, holding a sword with a makara symbol on the scabbard. A head from the site wearing a conical helmet gives and idea of what a royal figure may have looked like at the time.

The art of Mathura of the Kushana period had a lasting impact on the subsequent art of the Guptas. Many of the sectarian forms crystallized and got elaborated while others such local deities lost popularity as we shall see below.

Intext Questions:
5. What was the political and economic backdrop of the Mathura school of art?
6. Discuss the characteristic features of Mathura style.
7. Discuss the material used in and geographical spread of Mathura school of art?
8. What were the new forms introduced during the Kushana period at Mathura?

2.2 Gandhara School of Art

Gandhara art represents the art that developed and spread in the north western part of India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 4th Century A.D. The major centers of art activity of this school were in the kingdoms in this region such as Bactria, Kapisha, Swat and Gandhara. The main material used in the Gandhara School is metal such as the gold used in the Kanishka reliquary from Shah ji ki Dheri. Stone wherever used is usually blue or grey schist and slate.

Style has naturalism in body form, drapery, and pictorial scale. The bodies are made in the classical tradition with its emphasis on perfection of the human form. Therefore they are usually shown as youthful and strong. The male figures are shown with musculature and with a squarish torso. The rendering of drapery with sharp flowing folds is similar to those seen on a Roman toga and is a distinctive feature of Gandharan art as are wavy curled hair and sharp features.

Gandharan style was an amalgam of Hellenistic- Roman, Iranian and indigenous art. A number of compositional traits were adapted from Roman mortuary art, while the divine attributes and decorative elements were taken from Hellenistic (Greek) and Iranian roots. This interaction of artistic components was largely due to the geographical position of the region which was at the cross roads of cultural exchange. The area saw the advent of number of foreign powers and political configurations ranging from the Greek, Bactrian to Kushana. It was also at the hub of economic activity based on trade with the west through the great Silk route.
Sculptures of the school are usually found as part of architectural contexts with a deliberate iconographic scheme or pattern. There is a standardization of composition, pose of figures and other incidents from the life of Buddha which suggests that the sculptors are following an established iconographic mode.

Most of the sculptures from this period are Buddhist, though some Hellenistic sculptures also survive. Standing Buddha images are most characteristic feature of the style. These figures have a uniformity of pose, costume, *lakshana* and other characteristics. The Buddha is usually depicted standing frontally with one leg bent. He is shown wearing a heavy robe that covers both shoulders, his left hand hangs down but the right hand is raised in *abhaya* or *varada* mudra. There is an *ushnisha* or a top knot on the head. He is not adorned with any other jewelry, though his elongated ear lobes suggest that as a prince he did wear heavy ornaments. Behind the head a halo with lotus, etc can be seen. Seated Buddha figure is shown in *dharmanachakra* mudra which is the gesture of teaching or in *dhyana* mudra which suggests meditation.

*Bodhisattva* icons are another important category of sculpture found from Gandhara region. These represent mahasattva bodhisattvas who embody the fulfillment of bodhisattvahood that is that future Buddha hood and form one of the most important elements of Mahayana Buddhism prevalent in this area. These male figures are shown standing or seated and wear a *dhoti* like lower garment, the torso is bare except for the a shawl-like length of cloth over the shoulder, the hairstyle is more elaborate with wavy hair falling over the shoulder. They, like the Buddha images of the region have an *urna* on the forehead and an *ushnisha* on the head with a halo behind. They are shown wearing sandals, and sometimes like the Buddha, may sport a mustache. Distinct *bodhisattvas* are recognized by their attributes, symbols and headdress, an example being *Maiterya*, the personification of love who is depicted holding a vase. The figures are usually depicted as royal figures with a profusion of ornaments and a crown. Influenced as they are by the Graeco Roman tradition they are also shown as muscular with perfect and realistic proportions.

Narrative panels relating to Jataka and Tushita phases of Sakyamuni’s life are also found in Gandhara art. Of these the moment of Enlightenment and after are depicted in great profusion. These narratives are based on the canonical (orthodox) Buddhist literature and also on biographical texts such as the *Buddhacarita* of Asvagosha. The Birth of Buddha by Mayadevi (his mother) under a *sala* tree, the enlightenment of the Buddha, *Mara Vijaya* (victory over Mara) are some of the subjects that are popular in Gandharan art. Naturalistic proportions, scale and poses are sought be depicted and composition is used to emphasize the central and key figure through a hierarchy of scaling; that is the more important figure may have a larger size. One of the distinguishing features of Gandharan art is the depiction of paradise such as Sukhavati which was part of the Paradise cult within Buddhism prevalent in North West India during the Kushana period. The cult centers on the belief that every devotee, through accumulation of merit, seeks to be reborn into paradise where he can reside without further rebirth and transmigration till he reaches *nirvana*.

Attendant deities other than Buddha and Bodhisattva were also created, such as Kubera-Panchika and Hariti. The former is shown as a slightly corpulent royal personage while the latter is shown with children all around her. Bacchanalian scenes showing grape vine and wine drinking individuals are distinctly classical in their rendering.
Besides stone, some sculptures in stucco, especially busts of Greek and Roman deities and princes, are an essential part of Gandharan art. Interestingly these were painted, with red colour being used for the lips and black for the eyes and hair. Ivory is another medium used to carve figures as is attested by large assemblage was found from Bagram in Kapisa region. A number of furniture pieces found in a secular palace complex demonstrate that style was not limited to production of religious imagery but permeated the cultural matrix of the area. Bagram ivories are also interesting for the amalgamation of classical and indigenous style. The preponderance of female figures in all kinds of voluptuous poses is very reminiscent of the yakshi-shalabanjikas found on railing pillars at Mathura.

The interaction between the art styles prevailing in northwest Indian, north and central India was a dynamic process with many borrowings, assimilations and influences. Gandhara style continued to influence Indian art up to the early medieval period as is seen in Kashmir and parts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Intext Questions:**

1. What were the main influences on Gandharan art?
2. Discuss the main features of Gandharan style.
3. Describe the achievements of Buddhist art of Gandhara.

### 2.3. Amaravati School of Art

Buddhist art was not confined to north India alone and a very large religious complex grew around Amaravati. It represents the evolution of uniquely beautiful regional art style based on a thriving commercial and imperial system. The rise and fall of the ruling dynasties of the region influenced the construction of the monument, as did the doctrinal changes in Buddhism itself.

The Amaravati *stupa* is the largest and the grandest of all *stupas* found in the region though many other *stupas* have been found in Andhradesha region such as at Jagayyapeta, Goli, Ghantasala, Bhattiprolu and Nagarjunakonda. The *stupa* of Amaravati was product of a complex package made up of civilization, polity and economy of the area. An architectural site of this scale suggests that there was a large Buddhist population in the area who not only undertook the project of building this but whose spiritual needs were met through this *stupa*. It also presupposes that there was an adequate supply of raw material as well as the presence of skilled artisans to work on these in the area. Thirdly and most importantly there existed adequate resources based on economic surplus that could patronize the building over the large period of its construction.

These resources must have been provided by the ancient city of Dharanikota which is about half a kilometer downstream on the mouth of river Krishna. This was a port on the river that allowed an enormous waterway, that could be easily navigated by large ships, into the hinterland of Andhradesha The port and the hinterland had prosperous commercial relations with distant countries included the west from the beginning of the Christian era. Donative inscriptions found carved on the *stupa* refer to merchants as well as royal patrons who must have derived their riches from this trade.
Buddhism was significant in the religious milieu of Andhradesha from the Mauryan period onwards, and the society was literate, complex and highly organized. At Amaravati one sees the transition from aniconic representations characteristic of Theravadin Buddhism to representing the Buddha in his anthropomorphic form.

The stupa consisted of a huge, solid dome mounted on a cylindrical, drum like platform and the whole was surrounded by a great railing. Like at Sanchi, this railing is made up of pillars, crossbars and a coping. There is a gateway or torana at each of the cardinal points that lets into the railing into the pradikshanapatha or the circumambulatory processional path that is paved with black flag stones. All these along with the drum and the dome are decorated with sculptures in high relief. There are early engravings dating from the third century to the first century BC and were influenced by the art of Bharhut and Sanchi. However the best known sculptures come from the second and third centuries AD that coincide with the rule of Satavahanas in Andhradesa, and the later the Ikshavakus continued to adorn the stupa here at Amaravati and also at Nagarjuanakonda.

The sculptures at Amaravati have a profound and quiet naturalism in human, animal and floral forms. There is a sense of movement and energy in the sculptures. The human figures are slender and slightly elongated. The faces are oval with sharp and well delineated and expressive features. The animals such as makaras have scaly naturalism and the vegetation environment is lush. There is emphasis on the narrative element with stories from the life of Buddha and bodhisattva dominating such episodes relating to the Birth, the miracles, Enlightenment and the victory over Mara, Sundari and Nanda, Tushita heaven, Angulimala. There are few Jataka scenes such as the Shibi, Nalagiri and Chhadanta Jatakas.

The perfection of form and proportion seen in the middle phase of Amaravati as well as some of the themes continued to influence art at Nagarjuankonda and also later Vakataka and Gupta art styles.

**Intext Questions:**
1. What are the main elements of the stupa at Amaravati?
2. Discuss the importance of location in the construction of Amaravati stupa.
3. Describe some of the features of Amaravati style.

**3. Classicism: Gupta Art**

As seen above, the styles and themes of all three schools of art influenced each other during the early period. The evolution of art in these areas was largely based on narrative bas relief carved on stupa railings and gateways. The forms and images that developed here led to the elaboration of decorative schemes on the temples as well as the evolution of sectarian icons under the Gupta and Vakatakas. This period is also known as the period of classicism in Indian art because the high aesthetic benchmark set by the sculptors and had a lasting impact on subsequent art styles all over India.

The Gupta Empire marks a culmination of various strain of cultural developments from the Maurayan period onwards. Their fruition is seen as a result of the long reign of relatively political stability of the Gupta empire. The Gupta period is recognized as the peak of the
development of the classical ideal as described in the *Visnudharamottara Purana* in all forms of art including literature, sculpture painting and drama etc.

The main difference in the Gupta religious sculpture is that its inspiration is a “god” or a deva rather than an enlightened being like the Buddha. Traditional deities such as Vishnu and Shiva and the religious authority of the Vedas find reflection in the works of the Gupta period along with the incorporation of local pastoral or folk traditions. The Gupta Classical form also has a Pan-Indian character and large geographical spread and influence.

One aspect of Gupta art is that the deities are depicted as having a multiplicity of hands and legs as also heads and bodies. This is because the metaphoric nature of the deity, Vishnu or Shiva or any other deity, as indicated in the Vedas, is sought to be depicted. The deity is representative of the “Purusha” or the original man/deity who gets dismembered into creation. The multiplicity also indicates an attempt to fuse the older deities with aspects of the folk deities derived from the new area brought within the empire and brahmanical fold.

The Gupta deity is depicted standing crowned and ornamented like a king. It is shown adorned with thin clinging folds or garments and while the characteristics of the chakravartin find depiction, more stress is given to the spiritual aspect of the figure than the muscular physical that were emphasized in the Gandhara School. The eyes are usually half closed in a meditative or yogic posture. The various hands represent different aspects of the divinity such as the mace in the hands of Vishnu representing force or strength while the abhaya mudra of another hand showing blessing. The numbers of heads apart from depicting either “panchratra” emanations (or the Visvarupa) also depict different aspects of the divinity and often show the merger of more than one cult in one deity. The deities are often depicted with one or more attendants from the sectarian faith of the main deity.

An example of the early Gupta art is the representation of Ganesha in the Udaygiri caves where the iconography is relatively simple and there is no crown or jewelry while the Mahisamardini and Vishnu figures depict the classical traits. Narrative art of the Gupta period has fluidity and depiction in great detail as can be seen from the amritmanthana on the lintel of a cave temple at Udaigiri. Shiva as Dakshinamurti or facing south the archetypal teacher at Ahhichhatra is another good illustration of early Gupta art which is relatively less complex than a later work such as Gajendramoksha at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh.

The ekamukhalinga is a characteristic icon of the Gupta period. The bust of Shiva with three tiered jatamukuta on which a crescent moon is placed is superimposed on the linga shaft. The face is serene and calm. The carving of Yamuna and Ganga on the doorjambs of temples was a Gupta innovation and is linked to their political rise. Sectarian images such as Varaha enjoyed great popularity in central India around Eran where the cult must have had special significance.

The Gupta style is marked by use of few ornaments and simple apparel. The modeling is based on inner idealized structure rather than on outward musculature. The face is oval with downward looking; eyes are half closed, sharp nose and full smiling lip. The whole has soft flowing contours that are revealed through the relatively simple drapery.
The Gupta style was prevalent in most of the Gangetic valley and central India which was under the Gupta imperial suzerainty. The Gupta artistic production is marked by experimentation in both themes as well as material. Though stone is used prolifically, one has found impressive life sized free standing terracotta sculptures of the river goddesses from Ahicchatra. The same site has revealed a number of terracotta panels depicting scenes from the Epics and Puranas. Sita, Parvati, Shiva, and other subjects such as a laughing boy are also found in terracotta.

A number of regional sub schools within the pan north Indian Gupta style existed, such as the Sarnath School. Buddha and Buddhist imagery were the dominant themes here. The classical figure of the Buddha is characterized by tight curls, introspective downward looking eyes, elongated ears and slightly upward turned full lips. They are marked by serenity and inner calmness.

With the rise of various dynasties by the end of the Gupta and Vakataka empires, such as Chalukyas in Karnataka, the Pallavas in Tamil Nadu, the Vallabhis in Gujarat, the Maitrakas in Rajasthan-Gujarat and later the Palas in east, Pratiharas in the centre and Rashtrakutas in the Deccan, the Gupta style flowed into the rise of many regional styles in art and architecture. This was also the period of political fragmentation and religious elaboration marked by the composition of the Agamic and Pauranic tradition, resulting in the rise of local cults and complex pantheons.

**Intext Questions:**

4. Why is Gupta art considered classical?
5. Discuss the main elements of Gupta style.
6. Do you agree with the view that the Gupta style was uniform over India?

**4. Post Classicism: Pallava-Chola sculptures.**

Though the Pallavas and Cholas were prolific builders of temples and generous patrons of arts, their art is identified with the magnificent bronzes. These great pieces of workmanship were made primarily for processions on festive occasions in temples though some were also made for private worship. Derived from earlier clay images, this form while deemed to be folk art incorporates all aspects of classical art.

These bronzes are cast in the cire perdue or lost wax process. The image is first made in wax; it is then given several coats of fine clay and then dried in the shade. Then two holes are made on the top and the bottom, and next the whole is heated so that the wax melt away leaving a hollow mould into which molten metal is poured. The clay mould is broken off after the metals solidified. Final dressing is done by hand with a chisel and abrasive material.

The rule of the Pallavas and Cholas between the 7th to the 13th centuries saw the high-watermark of bronze sculpture. Pallava art form manifested itself around the 7th century and probably derived inspiration from the Amaravati School. While there was a foreign influence in the form of Yavana or Roman influences and the presence of Roman artifacts, the bronzes are believed to be largely an indigenous art form. The patronage for these art objects too comes from Pallava rulers like Mahendravarman and others. These bronzes have a resemblance to the lithic
(stone) sculpture of the period. The development of the Pallava bronzes can be divided into four phases viz.

1st Phase (Phase upto the 7th Century A.D) termed Mahendra Phase named after Mahendravarman.
2nd Phase (1st half of 8th Century) termed Rajsimha Phase named after the builder of Mammalapuram and Kanchi (AD 700-730).
3rd Phase (Second half of 8th Century 750-800A.D.) named after Nandivarman II.
4th Phase (Ninth Century 795-845) named after Dantivarman.

The later half of the ninth century marks the transitional toward the Chola type of bronzes. (Rajaraja Chola establishing himself around AD 850). In terms of the bronzes itself the early bold forms gradually change to slender rounded ones that are delicate and more refined with the contours of the figures being softer. The Kalayansundrammurti (depicting the wedding of Shiva and Parvati) from Vadakalattur being a fine example of Chola bronze art. During the Chola period a large number of temples of stone were transformed into grand and complex buildings as can be seen from the temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and the large stately Gopurams of Chidambaram. The Chola period saw elaborate festivals with music dance and processions. The bronze images are intended as manifestations of the main deity enshrined in the garbha-griha when taken out in procession were worshipped with adoration.

Chola bronzes can be divided into four distinct phases:

1st Phase (Phase unto the first half of the 10th Century A.D) named after Aditya Chola
2nd Phase (last quarter of 10th century) named after Sembiyan Mahadevi.
3rd Phase (11th century AD) named after Rajaraja I
4th Phase (12th century) called Later Chola.

It was during the 10th and 11th centuries that the epitome of artistic excellence was reached by the bronzes where great emphasize placed on graceful depiction, bhavas, flowing lines and supple contours.

It may be noted that dance forms and poses, karnas, influenced the form of the images. The Agamic and Vastu literature were also sources of inspiration for the creation of these images. Some of the more popular icons created by the sculptors are Kalayanasundarammurti of Shiva and Parvati who are also seen in the Somaskanda depiction. Shiva as Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja and Vrishabhanvanamurti as well in Sukahasana were popular subjects. Some portrait sculpture of saints such as Manikavachakar and the royal patrons such Rajendra Chola and Sembiyan Mahadevi also exist. Besides Hindu icons, Buddhist and Jaina images were also cast in bronze during the period. The Chola bronze tradition continued to inspire artists well into the medieval period as is attested by Vijayanagar bronzes.

Intext Questions:
3. Describe the technique used for making Pallava-Chola bronzes.
4. Discuss the evolution of bronze art in South India.
Conclusion

The sculptural tradition of the Indian subcontinent dates back to the Neolithic period. However, its continuous evolution can be observed from the 3rd century B.C. Its development in different regions with its distinct features is reflected in different schools of art, viz. Mathura, Gandhara and Amaravati. The Gupta period witnessed the culmination of these developments. Several regional styles in art and architecture came into being after the decline of the Gupta Empire. The contributions of the Pallavas and the Cholas (7th-13th centuries A.D.) in the form of bronze sculptures marked a magnificent chapter in the history of Indian art.

Glossary

*Abhaya mudra*: a hand gesture with right hand upraised and open palm signifying protection.

*Anthropomorphic*: human form

*Aniconic*: Where divine presence is suggested by symbols.

*Apsidal*: a rectangular chamber with a circular ending.

*Avadana*: stories relating to the life of Buddha

*Bhagavata cult*: based on the worship of Vishnu Vasudeva

*bodhi grihas*: shrine surrounding a *bodhi* tree

*Bodhisattva*: these represent enlightened beings who refused to enter into the state of *nirvana* or salvation for themselves so that they could transfer the merit onto others.

*Chaitya*: an object that acts as a focus for worship: the term is sometimes used by itself for the hall housing the *chaitya* or for a barrel vaulted window motif based on the hall type.

*Dharmachakra mudra*: a hand gesture signifying the turning of the ‘Wheel of law’ by the Buddha by preaching the first sermon at Sarnath.

*Dharmachakra*: Buddhist ‘Wheel of Law’

*Dhyana mudra*: a yogic posture.

*Lakshana*: characteristic mark

*Mahayana Buddhism*: a branch of Buddhism that came into prominence after the beginning of the Christian era that advocates the transference of merit, *prajnaparamita*.

*Mudra*: A hand gesture

*Naga cult*: based on the worship of local snake deities such as Erapata naga with independent sculptures of many hooded *Naga* and *Nagini* figures.
Pancharatra: an esoteric doctrine of the Vaisnavas centering on Vishvarupa form of Vishnu.

Shaiva: affiliated and related to Shiva

Shalabhanjika: a sculpture showing a woman with a tree, holding or bending its branch

Stupa; is solid funerary mound constructed of brick and masonry and often with sculpted stone panels attached to them. In a tiny chamber at the heart of the mould, contained in a casket are the ashes of the Buddha or a Buddhist dignitary.

Triratna: three Jewels representing Buddha, Dharma and Samgha

Vaishnava: affiliated to or relating to Vishnu

Viharas: a monastic institution

Yakshi; female local cultic spirits and deities who are sometimes ogresses and at other times fertility goddesses.

Suggested Readings:

Introduction

Of various art forms, painting has always been a very powerful medium of cultural tradition and expression. It is associated with values, beliefs, behaviour of mankind and provides material objects to understand people’s way of life, their thought process and creativity. In simple words, painting has become a bridge to our past, reflecting what people think and want to depict. Painting is also a part of tangible material culture, where human creations are termed as artifacts and helps in understanding the cultural values. It is a human way of transforming elements of world into symbol, where each of it has a distinct meaning and can also be manipulated. Compared to sculpture, painting is easier to execute and that is why Stone Age people chose it as an expression of their beliefs and imaginations. In fact, painting marks an entirely new phase in the human history and is regarded as a giant cultural leap. Painting in contemporary Indian literature is also referred as ‘Alekhya’. In other words, it is a medium of expression of artist’s instinct and emotion reconciled and integrated with his social expression and cultural heritage.

Murals and Frescoes

Murals are painted on thin coat of limestone mixture dried with glue, whereas, Frescoes are painted on wet lime plaster. The colours used in these paintings are derived from natural organic pigments.

Painting in the Pre-Classical period (upto A.D. 350)

The earliest example of painting can be traced to Upper Paleolithic age (which began 35,000 years ago) and specimen of it has been found in the rock shelters, caves of Asia, Europe, and Africa, etc. The early paintings were merely rough outline of non-descriptive nature but over a period of time, it became graceful, descriptive and colourful through use of variety of colours derived from local earth and minerals. In context of India, the earliest evidence of painting is from Nevasa (in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra) and rock shelter caves of Bhimbetka (in Raisena district of Madhya Pradesh). Excavations at Nevasa have yielded two pieces of pottery having painted figures of a dog and a deer with a pair of wavy horns. Though these are linear representation, yet it gives a sense of volume and feeling for life. It can aptly be referred as the earliest specimen of creative painting in India.

The first evidence of cave painting from Bhimbetka is essentially murals, directly executed on the walls of cave. The technique of painting deep inside the cave was a difficult task, requiring considerable skill but the authors of cave painting perfected it. Like other rock shelters of the world, elaborate drawing and painting has been done on the walls of Bhimbetka caves. Executed mainly in red and white and occasional use of green and yellow---the basic themes of paintings has been taken from everyday life such as hunting, dancing etc. Animals like bison, tigers, lions, wild boars etc have been abundantly depicted. In some caves religious and rituals symbols occur frequently. Human figures appear in stick like forms and hunting scenes are drawn in sharp line and angles-representing movement and life. An interesting aspect of these paintings is that there is neither inflation of particular human figures which might reflect class distinction within society nor there is any suggestion of agricultural or pastoral activities.
Super imposition of paintings at Bhimbetka suggests that same canvas was used by different people at different times. The oldest paintings are believed to be 12,000 years old but some of the geometric figures date to as recently as medieval period. Scholars have speculated about underlying motive of this art. At one end of the debate is the concept of ‘art for arts’ sake’, i.e. just for aesthetic pleasure and at the other end are those, who have read so much meaning into it. Cave paintings should not be dismissed as primitive art of primitive people. In fact these paintings not only show artistic sophistication but also their highly evolved thinking process and keen observation. In the words of Henri Breuil, “Upper Paleolithic paintings were magical in nature – with an aim to exert control over some objects or natural phenomenon.” It also marks the beginning of religious belief – a particular way of looking at the world.

The murals on the walls of rock shelters of a relatively later age have also been found in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. We have no record of paintings from protohistoric Indus Valley to the historical period. However, the earliest evidence of painting in the historical period is from the middle of 1st century B.C, found in vaulted ceilings of Yogimara Caves in Ramgarh hill. There are few irregular row of human figures and large aquatic animals painted in yellow and ochre. Certain faint traces of early paintings have also been found in cave number IX and X of Ajanta and on the walls of Caiya cave at Bedsa.

**Painting in the Classical period**

During the classical period (350-700 AD), the art of painting had achieved high aesthetic and technical standard. In the Classical text like the *Kamasutra* of Vatsayana, it is referred as one of the sixty four arts. The popularity of painting is also evident in the Brahmanical and Buddhist literature, where there are frequent references of ‘Citragaras’ (picture galleries) and techniques like ‘lepya citras’ (representation in line and colour on textiles), ‘lekhya citras’ (Sketches) and ‘dhuli citras’ (alpanas). The ‘Brhatsamhita’ (circa 6th century A.D.) and the ‘Vishnudharmottara Purana’ (circa 7th century A.D.) introduce technical details such as – method of preparation of ground for painting (Vajralepa), application of colour, rules of perspective etc. Works of Bhasa, Kalidasa, Vishakhadatta, Bana also contributed to that intellectual ferment of the Classical period – especially the theory and the technique of painting.

One of the best examples of the Classical paintings is from the Ajanta Caves, painted between circa 200 B.C. and A.D. 600 Ajanta has thirty one Caves, built in two phases – first one was around 2nd century B.C. and second was between 4th and 6th centuries A.D. In both phases, the art was patronized by the Hindu rulers – the Satvahanas (in the early period) and the Vakatakas (in the later period). The cave paintings of Ajanta are often referred to as frescoes, but A.L. Basham disagrees with it. A true fresco is painted while the lime plaster is still damp, whereas, the murals of Ajanta were made after it had set. The famous Ajanta caves can be considered as ancient art galleries. The earliest paintings are sharply outlined where as the latter are more carefully modeled. The principal colours like red ochre, yellow ochre, indigo blue, lapis lazuli blue, chalk white, lamp black, geru and green have been widely used. The Indian art has been inspired by spiritualism and mystical relationship between the God and man. The earliest recorded art was inspired by religious Hindu background and it was later replaced by the popular Buddhist art. The philosophy of aesthetics was closely related to thoughts in the *Upanishads* and thus art played a very important role in the Indian religious life. Inward vision, sense of great peace and tranquility – are the hall marks of Indian art. The early caves of Ajanta are of the Hinayana order, where the monks worshipped symbols such as stupa, wheel etc. Oldest surviving paintings are of cave number X. Large bodies of surviving paintings are associated with the Mahayana Buddhism belonging to 5th and 6th centuries A.D. and here Buddha is represented in human form and worshipped as God. The paintings of 5th and 6th centuries A.D. also depict the *Jataka* tales i.e., stories of Buddha in his previous life.
The paintings of Ajanta caves are, although based on the Buddhist themes, yet they bear a secular message than the religious. The depiction of Princes in their palace, ladies in their harems, flowers, fruits, animals, ascetics, mystical creatures – presents the whole image of time. Qualities of virtuous life, journey of soul into cycle of rebirths, illusion of material world, cheerful scenes of everyday life, humanity, compassion, grief – is very well portrayed in the paintings like ‘the Padmapani, the bearer of lotus’, ‘the dying Prince’ etc. One of the most striking aspect of Ajanta painting is the sympathetic, humane treatment of animals and emphasis to create a work out of the artist’s own vision. According to Lawrence Binyon: ‘in the art of Asia, Ajanta occupies supreme and central position’.

The tradition of Ajanta continued between 6th century and 10th century A.D. at Bagh, Ellora, Sittannavasal, Kanheri, Pitalkhora and Keonjhar. Though the themes are religious but in their inner meaning and spirit, they are secular and their appeal is worldly and aesthetic. A panorama of contemporary life, endowed with richness of expression of refined emotions, sensibilities of highly cultured society is rendered with skill. Attached to it, is high spiritual level – showing detachment and mystical experiences.

**Painting in the post – classical period**

While studying painting tradition of India, the contribution made by the south Indian kingdoms of the Cholas, Vijaynagara and Nayakas cannot be ignored. In the Chola temples there are many fresco paintings seen at Vijayala Colesvara temple at Narttamalai (A.D. 1100), Brihadesvara temple at Tanjavur (A.D. 1100), Sangita – Mandapa at Tiruparuttikunram in Kanchipuram (A.D. 1387-88 ) and Vcayapa Matha at Angundi (about the same date). The Chola frescoes were first discovered in A.D. 1931 within the circumambulatory passage of Brihadeshvara temple. Researchers have discovered the technique used in these frescoes. A smooth batter of lime stone mixture was applied on the stone and over it , large paintings were painted in natural organic pigments. The Chola frescoes have ardent spirit of Saivism expressed in them. In all paintings, Chola physiognomical and stylistic forms are apparent. The Classical values of full roundedness of volume, subtle plasticity are also retained. But at the same time, there is also strongly perceptible lessening of the consistency of colour modelling and hence a flattening of surface is there, despite ample curves and colour. During the Nayaka period, the Chola paintings were painted over. The latter paintings belonging to the Vijaynagara period (the Lepakshi wall painting), show general decline in the art style. Outline became sharper and dedicate modelling of earlier period is absent. The human figures appear as phantoms, devoid of expression and there is greater emphasis on the display of iconographic forms and mythological stories.

**Medieval Indian Painting**

The advent of Islam and the spread of Islamic influence, initiated a new period in Indian history ---the medieval period. It also had a direct impact on the realm of painting. The pattern of large scale paintings, which had dominated the scene, were replaced by the miniature painting during the 11th and 12th centuries A.D.

The miniature paintings are small paintings. They were often part of manuscripts written at the time and illustrated the subjects of the manuscript. Thus, a new kind of illustration was set during the period under review.

**Painting during the Sultanate Period**

There are very few illustration, which can be ascribed to the Sultanate period (13th century -15th century A.D.), e.g., the Bustan manuscript, the illustrated manuscript Nimat Nama painted at Mandu during the reign of Nasir Shah Khalji. *Nimat Nama* represents early synthesis of indigenous and Persian style, though it was latter which dominated in the paintings. Another
type of painting known as *Lodi Khuladar*, flourished in the Sultanate domain of North India, extended from Delhi to Jaunpur.

**Mughal Painting**

Medieval painting is, largely represented by the Mughal School, which developed during the period of the Mughal empire (16th-19th centuries A.D.). Renowned for their brilliant colours, accuracy in line drawing, detailed realism, intricacy and variety of themes – the Mughal paintings were a class by themselves. It was distinct from all other styles and techniques of Pre-Mughal and Contemporary art. Contrary to Delhi sultanate, the Mughal paintings were more popular and widespread. There were several factors responsible for it – urbanization, better administrative system, exclusive patronage by the rulers and nobility, synthesis of cultural values and tradition of Central Asia, integration of Mughal economy with world economy, etc. In fact painting became a widespread source of livelihood during the rule of Mughals.

The Mughal paintings reflect two types of cultural tradition – ‘high culture’ and ‘popular culture’. The notion of ‘high culture’ is equated with the sophisticated elite class with an exclusive taste and high culture products are not shared by the ordinary people as they are expensive, artistic and intellectual creations. The ‘popular culture’ is usually equated with the common people and products of ‘popular culture’ are common, cheap and easy to understand. In the context of Mughal empire, the ‘high culture’ was exclusive domain of Mughal emperors, their nobles who gave exclusive patronage to the artists, whereas, the ‘popular culture’ was associated with aspirations, norms, customs of the general Mughal society and in spite of lack of patronage, it continued to survive, for example, the bazaar paintings.

The Mughal painting did not develop in vacuum. It had clear influence of different tradition of contemporary world, namely, Persian, Timurid, Mongolid, Chinese and European. The diffusion of these styles with the indigenous style created a new living tradition of painting, popularly known as Indo-Sino-Persian art. Initially, the Mughal style of painting had dominant Mongolid characteristics but gradually the Mongolid elements diminished and the Indian characteristics came to the forefront. Thus diffusion of various styles led to creation of a new cultural element. The Mughals used paintings as a tool of display of political power, imperial ideology, authority, status and economic prosperity. The Mughal paintings were very rich in variety- in terms of themes and colours. Some of the themes were- illustration of battles, scenes from court life, wild life, hunting, portraits, etc. Rich use of colours obtained from precious stones, metals like gold and silver-were also hallmark of the Mughal paintings.

**Development of the Mughal Painting-Babur to Aurangzeb**

Although, no works of art can be associated with Babur (A.D. 1526-30), the founder of Mughal dynasty in India, still his ideas which were reflected in his lively autobiography (*Waqiat – i – Baburi*) was responsible for setting the mood for future Mughal art.

The first documented patron of the Mughal painting was Humayun (AD 1530-1556). His visit to Safavi court in A.D. 1544 was crucial to the history of art, as to the empire. It was here that he admired brilliant paintings of Shah Tahmasp’s artists. He invited Safavi artists, Mir Sayyid Ali (a pupil of Bihazad, popularly known as Raphael of the East) and Abd Us – Samad to join his court in Kabul in A.D. 1549. Of the two, Mir Sayyid Ali, a brilliant designer of arabesque was the sharpest but it was with flexible and adaptable Abd Us-Samad that a relatively longer, productive phase of the Mughal art began. In other words, it was he who adjusted his Safavi style to fulfil the growing desire of the Mughal ruler for accurate portraiture and anecdotal reportage. One of the most famous Mughal painting, *‘The House of Timor’* is considered as a work of Abd Us-Samad. This picture on cotton is a major monument of early Mughal art and its grandness, magnificent colours reflect Humayun’s royal taste. It was brought up-to-date by the
later Mughals, with addition of portraits of three generations of Humayun’s heirs. The element of naturalism is apparent in this work.

The ruler with whom development of Indo-Sino-Persian art should actually be associated is Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605). Without Akbar, the Mughal art would have been known only to the specialists. Akbar’s project made Mughal painting amazingly Indian in character-reflecting his personal regard towards the culture of India. He was the first monarch to establish in India, an atelier under the supervision of two Persian masters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd Us-Samad. There were about two hundred and twenty five artists in Akbar’s atelier, majority amongst whom were Hindus. The system of working, initially, was collaborative but later artists also began to work at individual level. Akbar’s inclination towards painting is reflected in Abul Fazal’s Ain-i-Akbari, which has a separate section on the art of painting. A large number of artists thronged his court, such as, Mir Sayyid Ali, Abd Us-Samad, Farukh Beg, Khusrau Quli, Jamshed, etc. Akbar had special admiration for Hindu artists, particularly, for Basawan, Lal, Kesu, Mukund, Daswanth and Haribans. Although illiterate, he had strong passion for books, particularly the illustrated ones. Tutinama or Tales of Parrots (a Persian book of fables) shows formative period of Akbar’s studios in about A.D. 1560, when the newly hired apprentices were being trained under Tabriz masters. Among its two hundred and fifteen miniatures, many show Persian and indigenous influence from various parts of India like Rajasthan, Deccan, etc. There was a clear synthesis of linear style of Persian painting with a dynamic, vibrant palette of indigenous painting. The most distinguished artistic project from Akbar’s reign is the Hamzanama, series of giant pictures on cotton, describing the fabulous adventure of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet. An important category of Akbar’s paintings is formed by illustrations to the volume of literary classics and historical manuscripts. The earliest surviving illustrated historical manuscript is a dispersed the Baburnama of about A.D. 1589. Another noteworthy manuscript of this sort is Akbar’s own copy of the Akbarnama. It contains details of contemporary history in its most illustrious form and the illustration of different event fully matches textual description. While Mughal manuscript painting is acclaimed as the work of art, it has much value also as a documentary evidence for the medieval period. Depiction of courtly and ordinary life, portrayal of men of different strata, illustrations of festivals, etc. bear testimony to social and cultural practices during the medieval period. The Akbarnama’s intricate compositions also show the European influence especially in treatment of space, light and shade. Apart from these illustrated manuscripts, there were also many independent compositions like landscapes, portraits, animals and other specific subjects in the form of Muraqqa (album) paintings. Akbar’s painters preferred highly polished, hard, creamy paper and were expert in making pigments from earth, animal matters, metals, minerals. For example, Basawan was admired for his use of golden pigment and Indian colours like Peacock blue, red, etc. Thus, replacement of flat effect of Persian style by roundedness of Indian brush and European principle of foreshortening in proper perspective changed the nature of the Mughal painting.

The Mughal painting reached its zenith, during the reign of Jahangir (A.D. 1605-1627). Soon after his accession, Jahangir greatly reduced the staff of royal studio and concentrated his attention on a small number of favourite artists. This step spread the Mughal style far and wide. Jahangir’s artists developed their own style, which was quite distinct from the artists of the early Mughal period. Akbar’s outgoing objectives; purposeful encouragement of painting was replaced by a more powerful vision. Use of harmonious designs, softer colours, and fine brushwork became important part of the style. A shift was seen, not only in techniques but also in themes. The school of Jahangir was noted for its love of nature. A number of subjects from animal and bird life were painted during this period. The emphasis was on naturalism but there was also a keen desire to reveal the innate beauty. He particularly encouraged paintings
depicting events of his own life, individual portraits. Every illustration showed Jahangir as a serene and untroubled ruler, enjoying full control over the empire. Divine nature of kingship was a popular theme, during Jahangir’s period and was projected through symbolic representation in which European motifs like globe and hourglass played an important role. Manuscript illustrations were almost given up but there are few exception like the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. The painting ‘Chain of Justice’ not only has a physical, political dimension but also a psychological dimension. It portrays Jahangir as a ‘just ruler’ having a firm belief in the secular tradition. In many of the paintings of Jahangir era, the ruler is seen sitting near a Jharokha. This is an example of adaptation of local Rajput practice. Muhammed Nadir, Muhammad Murad, Abul Hasan, Mansur, Bishandas, Manohar, Govardhan were some of the important artists of Jahangir’s age. Govardhan was noted for portrait of saints, musicians where as Mansur was famous for painting birds and animals. Jahangir’s passionate and connoisscurly interest in painting, however, was not pursued by the later Mughal rulers.

Tradition continued under Shah Jahan (1628-58 AD) but on a limited scale as he was more inclined towards architecture. Harmonious blend of colours, aesthetic sense, realism which were traits of Jahangir’s style was replaced by the decorative style. Special attention was given to the art of border making and lavish use of golden and other rich pigments.

Although, Mughal painting continued to develop technically, it however became static, cold and stereotyped. Painting lost its liveliness and was confined to the durbar (court). Themes like musical parties, lovers on the terrace and garden, etc. abound in the Mughal paintings of this period. Even in the illustrated copy of the Padshahnama, preference was given to the durbar scenes, while in a few outdoor scenes the expressions were weak and dull. Bichitr, Balchand, Payag, Muhammad Nadir, etc. were some of the important artists at the court of Shah Jahan.

The decline of painting, which began in the period of Shah Jahan, became distinct in the reign of Aurangzeb (A.D. 1658-1707). Painting was essentially a court art-loss of royal patronage, closing of the royal ateliers did contribute further to its decline but at the same time it did not stop altogether. It became confined to the studios of nobles, princes of royal blood and was less naturalistic in comparison to the court paintings. Being closely based on the Mughal style, these are often termed as sub-imperial paintings or bazaar paintings. This form of painting was inexpensive, less time consuming and meant largely for common man who used it for decorative purpose. However, the technical qualities of the Mughal style were sustained. Aurangzeb’s portrait with Shaista khan and a hunting scene are among the finest Mughal paintings of this period.

Later Mughals did not possess the spirit of Jahangir. A brief revival was noticed during the reign of Mohammad Shah (A.D. 1719-48). By the time of Shah Alam (A.D. 1759-1806 ), the art of Mughal painting had lost its glory.
AKBAR HUNTING IN AN ENCLOSURE
Successor Schools of Miniature painting

As the Mughal structure crumbled, strong nobles created their own domains in Bengal, Oudh and other parts of India. It was at these places that new schools of painting based on imperial traditions flourished. The schools of painting that developed in Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bundi were collectively came to be known as the Rajput school of painting. It was greatly influenced by the Mughal style. It had paintings on themes like seasons (barahmasa), melodies (ragas), mythology (depicting Radha and Krishna) in addition to prevalent themes. The Kangara School of painting and its off-shoot Tehri-Garhwal, however, developed independently. The Deccan paintings which were far removed from realism, represented delicate rhythms of Persia,
lush sensuality of south and exotic elements of Europe and Turkey. The theme of Deccan paintings were based on love, music, poetry rather than the realities of life. The glint of the Mughal art did not disappear completely even in the last phase of Mughal rule. Artists continued to paint but on a limited scale and this can be proved with an example of existing Mughal portrait of the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah II.

Modern Indian Painting

The decline of the Mughal Empire was accompanied by the control of English East India Company in A.D. 1757 over north-eastern region, thus laying the foundation of British Raj. The colonial era, not only had profound impact on the contemporary politics, society, economy but also on culture. In the realm of art, Indian art gave into new fashion brought by the English. The art was no longer confined to court but began to be taught and patronized by art schools, art societies, etc. With the introduction of academic art, there was more emphasis on Victorian illusionistic art, oil portraits, naturalistic landscapes, etc. In place of courtly patronage, artistic individualism was encouraged. The new breed of colonial artists enjoyed high social status and were in contrast to humble court artists of the Mughal period.

The Company School

As the English East India Company expanded its purview during the late 1700’s, large number of its employees moved from England to India in search of new opportunities. The new landscape, unusual flora and fauna, stunning monuments, exotic new people caught the attention of English travellers, Company Sahibs and Mem Sahibs. They began to hire Indian painters in 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D. to capture the quaint oriental images. Thus in the cities ruled by the English East India company, the Company School of painting emerged under western influence. It introduced the idea of India to Europe on one hand and European Academy style of painting in India, on the other. The Company paintings were characterized in medium by the use of water colours and in technique by the appearance of linear perspective, shading, etc. Aesthetically, they were descendents of the picturesque scenes of India created by the artists like Thomas Daniel and William Daniel. The English East India Company not only engaged artists for economic surveys and documentation of natural history but also to produce ethnographic subjects like, castes, professions, etc. The hub of Company paintings were centres like Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Varanasi and Patna, where either the English had a factory or commercial interest. Calcutta was among the early major centre of Company paintings. The patrons like Lord Impy and M.Wellesley hired the artists to paint birds, animals, plants, etc. Sheikh Mohammad Amir of Karraya was in great demand for his elegant renderings of themes related to the British life in Calcutta. In comparison to Calcutta, the development of Company painting was late in Delhi. Its painting market expanded after British occupation of city in A.D.1803. The magnificent Mughal monuments of Delhi were the most popular subject. Among the famous artists of Delhi, Ghulam Ali Khan was known for his scenes of village life and portraiture. Delhi’s artists were unique in using ivory as a base for painting. At Patna, Sewak Ram was known for his large scale paintings of festivals and ceremonies.

The Company styles of painting of different cities were distinguishable by style, which grew out of and heavily influenced by earlier local tradition. In the early phase of the Company School of painting i.e., the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the artists depended on few key patrons but by the beginning of 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the enterprising artists had begun to create paintings for bazaar on subjects like festival, costumes, castes, etc. However, the Company style of painting did not develop throughout the country. Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Punjab continued to patronize traditional art form but on a limited scale. With the introduction of photography in early 1840’s, the School lost it momentum but at the same time created an environment in which Art Schools and
societies were used as an instrument for disseminating academic art by the English East India Company. It was also an attempt to improve Indian taste as a part of its moral amelioration.

The reaction to the Company School in the mid 19th century was two-fold. On one hand Raja Ravi Varma adapted a distinct method to evolve a new style of painting of Indian subjects whereas on the other hand the ‘Nationalist school’ represented by the nationalist painter preferred to look at Indian themes and manifested it in the works of the famous ‘Bengal School’.

**Raja Ravi Varma (A.D. 1848-1906)**

Raja Ravi Varma of royal family of Travancore received formal training in painting, before entering the ‘low’ profession of paintings against his family’s objections. His paintings were inspired by the Victorian art but were more akin to art form of the royal court. Raja Ravi Varma achieved recognition for his depiction of the scenes from the epics of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and thus rose to be a remarkable portrait painter, prized by both, the Raj and the Indian elite. He attained widespread acclaim after he won an award for an exhibition of his paintings at Vienna in A.D. 1873. His fusion of Indian tradition with the technique of European Academic art, created a new cannon of beauty in which characters like Shakuntala, Damyanti, etc. were portrayed shapely and gracefully. The Indian nationalists initially hailed his depiction of past, in spite of being unfamiliar with his philosophical outlook, but during the second half of the 19th century, his works began to be criticized as hybrid, undignified, unspiritual expressions. According to the critiques, “The mythical characters of glorious past were reduced to the level of ordinary human”. He was also criticized for the fact, that his paintings overshadowed traditional art form because of their widespread reproduction as Oleographs flooding Indian culture with his version of Indian myths, portrayed with static realism. In spite of the criticism that he was too showy, sentimental in his style, his paintings appealed all segments of the society and remains very popular even today.

**The Bengal School**

The belief in India’s glorious past and spirituality was responsible for upsurge of a new kind of nationalist sentiment, which questioned the academic art style promoted by Indian artists like Raja Ravi Varma and the British Art School. The ‘Bengal School of Art’, the first art movement in India was associated with Indian Nationalism promoted by people like Ernest Benfield, Havell, and Abindranath Tagore, etc. The Bengal School emphasized on the depiction of art that would be Indian in soul and content. In other words, the emphasis was on indigenous and nationalist ideology of art.

The English Art teacher E.B. Havell, in A.D. 1896 made Indian art students aware of their heritage, culture and encouraged them to imitate the Mughal miniatures. Havell, like the nationalists criticized Raja Ravi Varma’s paintings for its academic naturalism and believed that India’s spirituality was reflected in its art. He was against Renaissance naturalism as well as materialist conception of art. For the students at Art School in Calcutta, he introduced Indian way of training. However, Havell’s attempt was not welcomed by the nationalists, as they considered his way to be retrogressive. It was also seen as an attempt to deprive the Bengalis of western art education, which had become part of contemporary Bengali culture.

The torchbearers of ‘Cultural Nationalism’ in Bengal were the Tagores - an important representative of the Bengal School, Abindranath Tagore (A.D. 1871-1951) belonged to this family. He created his own indigenous style, expressing India’s distinct spiritual qualities. Though trained in Academic Art, his works were also influenced by the Mughal art, especially ‘The Last moments of Shah Jahan’. Abindranath’s association with Japanese artist Kakuzo Okakura Tenshin, around A.D. 1900 in Calcutta, made him aware of the spirit of Far Eastern Art. He adopted wash technique, light brush stroke and delicate lines of Japanese art. Tenshin
regarded India as a source of Buddhist art of Japan. With an aim to challenge western values, Tenshin developed a link with Abindranath Tagore to construct Pan-Asianists model of art, assimilating different Asian Cultural tradition. This cultural movement on one hand represented differences between the Asian spirituality and European materialism and on the other hand Asian resistance to European Colonialism. One of the best paintings associated with the Bengal School is Abindranath’s ‘Bharat Mata’. Painted in the background of A.D. 1905 nationalist unrest, the portrait of Mother India is depicted as a young woman, holding objects symbolic of Indian nationalist aspiration in the manner of Hindu deities. The Bengal School influence declined with the spread of modernist ideas in the 1920s. However, in spite of strong attack on the academic art, on pretext of being opposed to Indian Cultural tradition, the Western influence continued.

In the post-Bengal School period especially between A.D.1920-47, significant contributions were made by Rabindranath Tagore (A.D. 1861-1941), Jamini Roy (A.D. 1887-1974) and Amrita Sher-Gil (A.D. 1913-41). They responded to the different issue of Modernism in their own way. In the first phase of the Bengal School of art, nationalism had identified the nation with past but in the post -Bengal School phase; it began to be identified with soil. Depiction of the Santhals, represented timeless purity of the primitives. Rabindranath Tagore made primitivism, a means of his artistic expression. Jamini Roy also revitalized primitivism by consciously drawing inspirations from the folk art. This quest for the tribal art was also a form of resistance to colonialism.

Amrita Sher-Gil (A.D. 1913-41)

One of the most important figures in Indian modernism was Amrita Sher-Gil. She was many year ahead of her time in mid-1930s. Her training in art at Paris and Italy made her technically accomplished. Her early paintings display western influence but after her return to India, there was complete transformation in her work. She rediscovered originality, freshness of ancient Ajanta, Ellora and the value of Indian miniature. Her main mission was to express the naive life of Indian people. She gave her subject’s large, doleful eyes, vacant stares and expression of submission. Her paintings, the ‘Bride’s Toilet’, the ‘Brahmachari’, and ‘The South Indian Village’ reveal her passion for India. Sher-Gil has been criticized for not identifying with the national struggle, which was in its final phase during her last years. In spite of criticism, one can not ignore this fact that, her paintings also became her voice against domination of the British in India.

The Progressive Artists Group

On the eve of independence in A.D. 1947, the Progressive Artists Group was established with an aim to express post colonial India in a new way. The founders were six eminent artists – K. H. Aria, S. K. Bakra, H. A. Gate, M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza and F. N. Souza. This was also a period of widening of social horizon of artists as they joined modernist artistic milieu. The progressive Artists Group was in favour of social justice and equality. They rejected artistic nationalism. They also had link with the Marxist intellectuals in changing idiom of Indian art. F. M. Souza’s visions were based on Hindu erotic sculpture and Christian iconography whereas S. H. Raza was inspired was mysterious Indian forests and tantric cult. M. F. Husain used bold colours, outlines and fragmentary images in order to make political and cultural statements. Almost all India’s major artist in 1950s like Bal Chabda, V. S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, Tayeb Mehta, etc. were associated with the Progressive Artists Group. Though the group was dissolved in A.D. 1956 still they enriched art culture of India by moving towards greater social commitment. They were in fact self- confessed modernists pitted against the ‘dead tradition’.

Conclusion
To conclude, the paintings of Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods of Indian history were intense essence of their culture. Its grandeur left strong visual impacts on the viewers. The Cave paintings expressed the aesthetic sense of the cave dwellers where as the mural and frescoes of ancient and early medieval period depicted the aspects related to religion, day-to-day life and imperial authority. The Mughals reflected high cultural tradition, synthesizing Chinese, Turkish, European and Indian features in it. The Mughal paintings were not simple works of art but valuable documentary evidence for cultural life of Medieval India---courtly as well as ordinary life. The Modern Indian painting schools, like the Bengal School reflected nationalist fervours in the paintings and resistance to British rule in their own way. Thus, the nature of Indian painting changed with the times and represented the age significantly and elegantly.

**Long Questions:**

5. Write a brief essay on the Indian Painting.
6. Assess the significance of the Ajanta and Ellora frescoes in the Ancient India.
7. Trace the origin and development of the Mughal Painting during the 16th and 17th centuries.
8. Write short notes on any two of the following:
   - The Company School
   - Raja Ravi Varma
   - Amrita Sher-Gil
   - The Progressive Artists Group

**Suggested Readings:**

Introduction

In this unit of the study material, the student will learn about the concept and meaning of popular culture and its various aspects in the context of Indian subcontinent, especially India. The student would also know about the sanctified places or pilgrimage centers (tirthas) and the traditions of pilgrimage (tirtha-yatras) associated with those destinations. The content would further enable the reader to get acquainted with the nature and importance of different kinds of festivals, fairs, arts, crafts, dress patterns and food behaviour in our cultures. This would help the student to understand the meaning of the cultural practices popular in different parts of the Indian subcontinent.

(I)

1. Popular Culture

1.1 The Concept – What is Popular Culture?

Popular culture may be defined as the culture of the masses. This refers to a shared set of customary practices, beliefs, social forms and material traits of the racial, religious or social groups, which have gained popular acceptance. In other words, popular culture is commonly practiced or approved by social groups of succeeding generations. In popular culture, the culture and knowledge is passed on through folklores, mass media, magazines, television, radio, internet, etc.

Popular culture has been defined differently in different contexts by various scholars. Some scholars equate the “popular culture”, with “Pop culture”, and “Mass Culture”. In this context, this concept relates to the culture-patterns of human activity and symbolic structures, that give such activities significance and importance – which are popular or common. This is often defined or determined by the mass media. Popular culture is also suggested to be the widespread cultural elements in any given society that are perpetuated through the vernacular language or lingua franca of that society. It comprises the daily interactions, needs and desires, that make up the everyday life of the masses. This prevailing vernacular culture in any given society may include any number of practices related to the activities such as cooking, clothing, consumption, mass media and the many facets of the entertainment like the sports, music, fashion, photography, literature, etc. Thus, the pop culture or the mass culture is seen as a commercial culture, which is produced for mass consumption.

In yet another perspective, John Storey distinguishes “popular” culture from the “high” culture. According to him, the popular culture or the “pop culture” can also be defined as the culture, that is “left over” when we have decided what “high culture” is. This is to say that the popular culture is contrary to the more exclusive and even elitist “high culture”, that is, the culture of the ruling social group or sometimes the intellectual class. In other words, the popular
culture is the opposite of the high cultural art forms such as the opera, historic art, classical music, traditional theatre or literature, etc. It includes many forms of cultural communication including newspapers, television, advertising, comics, pop music, radio, cheap novels, movies, jazz, etc.

The earliest use of the word “popular” in English was during the 15th century in law and politics, meaning “low”, “base”, “vulgar”, and “of the common people”. These meanings were carried till the late 18th century by when it began to mean “widespread” and gained in positive connotation. The world of pop culture cast a particular influence on art from the early 1960s onwards, through Pop Art. When the modern pop culture began during the early 1950s, it made it harder for adults to participate. Today, most adults, their children and succeeding generations participate in pop culture directly or indirectly.

1.2 Folklore

What is meant by “Folklore”?

The term ‘Folklore’ has been derived from the German term ‘Volklehre’ meaning ‘people’s customs’. It has been used differently in different countries and in different times. In anthropological usage the term ‘Folklore’ has come to mean myths, legends, folktales, folksongs, chants, formula, speeches, prayers, puns, proverbs, riddles and a variety of forms of artistic expression whose medium is the spoken word. In other words, folklore includes all types of verbal art.

By folklore we mean the art of the lower social strata of all people, irrespective of the stage of their strata of all people, irrespective of the stage of their development. In the case of the phase before the formation of classes it is their entire art taken together. In a classless society, under socialism, folklore would disappear as it is a class phenomenon. However, literature is also a class phenomenon, but it does not disappear. Under socialism, folklore loses its specific features as a product of the lower strata, since in a socialist society there are neither upper nor lower strata, just the people. Folklore indeed becomes national property. In other words, what is not in harmony with the people dies out and what remains is subjected to profound qualitative changes and comes closer to literature. Thus, folklore under capitalism and under socialism are perceived differently.

The problems of folklores have assumed great importance in modern times. None of the humanities, be it ethnography, history, linguistics, or the history of literature, can do without folklore. Folklore is the product of a special form of verbal art. Literature is also a verbal art and therefore the closest connection exists between folklore and literature. Folklore is an ideological discipline with hidden solutions to many diverse phenomena of spiritual culture. Its methods and aims are determined by and reflect the outlook of the age. In its beginnings folklore can be an integral part of ritual. With the degeneration or decline of a ritual, folklore becomes detached from it and continues to live an independent life.

Folklore as an independent discipline has yet to establish its status. In India till recently folklore was recognised as a part of Indology. The term ‘Folklore’ was introduced and systematically used by W.J. Thomas in 1846. Though sporadic publications of folksongs and folktales, as an example of the ancient and oral literature, found place to the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal established by Sir William Jones in 1784, the output was very meagre.

1.2a Folktales and Folksongs
Now, let us discuss the important folklore tradition of the subcontinent in the ancient past. The *Rigveda* is considered to be the oldest treatise of the world in which we find the specimens of the earliest folksongs and ballads. Folktales can be traced back to the Vedic *akhayyanas* (stories). The *Atharvaveda* is the storehouse of charms, superstitions, rites, and rituals practised by the people. In the *Grihyasutras*, we come across many folksongs sung on auspicious occasions like marriage, child-birth and other ceremonies.

It is to be noted that right from the Vedic age, side by side with the highest doctrines of religion and philosophy, abundant sources are available in the form of myths, fables and legends of various kinds, meant for amusement and instruction. The *Panchatantra* ("Five Treatises") is the oldest book on fables. However, the traits of Indian folktales appear in the Vedic literature, well before the origin of the *Panchatantra*. Many *akhayyanas* in the *Rigveda* may be regarded as the precursors of the *Panchatantra*. The *Upanishad* also records the story of Nachiketa and Yama, the philosophic discussion between Yagnavalkya with his learned wife Maitreyi and other interesting tales. The *Jatakas* include the legends or stories of various incarnations of Lord Buddha before he attained enlightenment. These instructive stories have various beasts and birds as characters, teaching a moral which has much ethical value. Nevertheless, these legends are important sources which help us to reconstruct the social, economic, political and religious conditions of our ancient past.

The two great epics – the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are inexhaustible sources of folktales and legends. These contain the skillful narration of the stories of many legendary kinds and heroes who were famous for their achievements.

The *Puranas*, which are 18 in number, may rightly be regarded as the storehouse of Indian mythology, legend, popular religion, belief and superstition. According to Pargiter, the *Puranas* are the “Encyclopaedia of Indian religion and mythology”.

The classical Sanskrit literature is the storehouse of folktales, fables and legends. The *Hitopadesa* ("Salutary Instruction") composed by Narayan Pandit of Bengal in the 14th century is the most popular of these. The author explains that this book was meant to instruct the royal princes in the art of politics, morality and worldly wisdom.

The *Brihatkatha* ("Great Story") of Gunadhya is a great contribution to the folktales and fables in Indian tradition. Unfortunately, the originally composed *Brihatkatha* is now lost altogether, but fortunately, we have three Sanskrit translations of this great work. These are *Brihatkatha-slokasangraha* of Buddaswami, *Brihatkathamanjari* of Kshemendra and *Kathasaritasagar* ("Ocean of Story") of Somadev. Of these, the *Kathasaritasagar* is the most important, which was composed by a Kashmiri Brahmin between 1063 and 1081 A.D. in order to divert the troubled mind of Suryamati, the princess of Jalandar and wife of Ananta.

The *Vetal Panchavimshatika* was written by Shyamlal Das. It has a collection of 25 folktales, which are related to King Vikramaditya, the legendary king credited with starting of the Vikram Era (58 B.C.). The title ‘Vikramaditya’ was later adopted by Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty. *Shuka-Saptati* is another book of folktales, which has a collection of 70 folktales told by a parrot. Its translation into Persian is called *Tutinama*. *Singhasan-Dwarinishta* is another popular book on Indian oral tales. It has been translated into Hindi as *Singhasan-Battisi* and in other regional languages with different titles.

The folksongs or folk ballads and folktales has been moving side by side since our ancient past. The origin of folksongs can be traced back to the hymns of the *Rigveda*. The
gathas (ballads) mentioned in the Vedic literature may be regarded as the oldest representative of folk ballads. Many hymns of the Rigveda refer to a singer as gathin. In other words, the gathas were the laudatory hymns sung in the praise of a particular king or hero in ancient India. In the Aitreya Brahmana, the gathas have been termed as Yajnagatha (sacrificial hymns). Sometimes these gathas are also mentioned as slokas (verses). In the Aitreya Brahmana, a number of verses were sung in praise of Bharat, the son of Dushyant.

In the Grihyasutras, there are many folksongs meant for the auspicious occasions such as the marriage ceremony. Some Grihyasutras mention the gathas sung in the praise of divinities. A notable example can be that of a gatha sung in the praise of Soma in the Ashvalayana Grihyasutra.

The Jatakas also include many gathas, which may be regarded as the ancient folksongs. Many plays and other literary works of ancient period also record the heroic gathas or songs. For example, the Raghuvamsham of Kalidasa mentions the singing of the glorious deeds of Raghu by the maidens, who were guarding the rice-fields sitting under the shadow of sugarcanes. The historical tradition of these gathas may be traced upto the Mahabharata. However, these gathas can be differentiated from narashansi. The gathas were regarded as human whereas the other forms were divine.

The tradition of folktales and folksongs continued in the later periods of our history. These were written in various regional languages in different parts of the subcontinent. However, the history of folkloristic study in India is still young. The establishment of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta in 1784 by Sir William Jones was a landmark in this direction. This institution, besides many other subjects of Indology, undertook the publication of folklore and encouraged the study of folklore. With the dawn of the 20th century, there arose a new inspiration to collect, preserve and publish the valuable folkloristic treasure of our past. The efforts of the scholars resulted in the compilation and translation of the folklores and folktales of different regions. Many folktales and folksongs were composed during the National Movement, which helped in awakening the masses. It is interesting to observe that now-a-days during the general elections, various political parties adopt folklore as medium of their party propaganda. A number of folksongs are composed by different parties to attract the voters. Thus, folklore plays a significant role in the political sphere too. In this respect, folklore can be used as the best medium for emotional and national integration. Nevertheless, this continuing tradition would help in the preservation of the oral literature of any region.

**Intext Questions:**

6. Define 'Popular Culture'.

7. The specimens of the earliest folksongs are found in________.

8. Which category of texts are regarded as the storehouse of Indian mythology, legend, belief and superstition?

9. Name the authors of the following texts.
   (a) *Kathasaritasagar*  (b) *Vetal Panchavimshatika*  (c) *Raghuvamsham*

10. Name the institution established in the 18th century, which initiated the publication of folklore and encouraged the study of folklore?
2. **The concept of Tirtha (Pilgrimage centre) and Tirtha-yatra (Pilgrimage)**

The origin of the institution of pilgrimage can be traced back to the early phase of our cultural traditions. The Brahmancial and Buddhist literature of ancient period refer to the tirthas (centres of pilgrimage). The Nadi-stuti in the Vedas describe the mahatma (religious importance) of the rivers. Similarly, the smritis mention about the sanctity of the rivers, particularly the Ganges, the Jamuna (Yamuna) and the Saraswati. These rivers have been endowed with special merit and are regarded as the tirthas. The term tirtha-yatra (pilgrimage) has been associated with the sacred visits to these spots to get rid of the sins committed in one’s life. For example, the Visnu-Smriti refers to a number of tirthas spread over whole of ancient India. It also recommends tirtha-yatra and equates it with the Asvamedha-yajna (the horse-sacrifice). The Manu-Smriti also gives great importance to pilgrimage to the river Ganges and the site Kurukshetra.

In Mauryan period also the pilgrims in large number used to visit the holy places as mentioned by the Arthasastra of Kautilya. In the Mahabharata, a section of the Vanaparva entitled Tirtha-yatra-Parva is specially devoted to pilgrimage. The Puranas also provide significant information about pilgrimage. The Tirtha-sthali (places of pilgrimage) and the Kshetra-mahatma (importance of the pilgrimage centres) are the important parts of the Puranas. These also deal about the merits of pilgrimage and the righteous way of life a pilgrim is required to lead during tirtha-yatra.

Besides the epics and the Puranas, the Nibandhas (digests and commentaries) also emphasize on the types, nature and importance of the tirtha-yatra. These Nibandhas mention about the Hindu pilgrimage of medieval India. The notable among these are the Tirtha-Kalpataru of Lakshmidhar, Tirtha-Slisetu of Narayan Bhatt, Chatur-varna-chintamani of Hemadri, Tirtha-Prakash of Mitra Mishra, etc.

The accounts of the foreign visitors during the ancient period also record the various places of pilgrimage. For example, the Indica of Megasthenese (3rd century B.C.), the Fu-Kuo-ki of Fa-Hsien (5th century A.D.), the Si-yu-ki of Hiuen-Tsang (7th century A.D.) and others have also mentioned many pilgrimage centres in different regions.

### 2.1 Some important tirthas or pilgrimage centers of different faiths

According to the Hindu traditions, there are 35 millions of tirthas, which exist in three worlds viz. Prithvi (earth), Patal (underground world) and Antariksha (sky and space). However, some Puranas categorically mention the number of Hindu tirthas. The various Puranas and epics provide a list of 264 pauranic tirthas.

The Brahma-purana classifies the ancient tirthas on the basis of their origin. These are – the Daiva (gods), Asura (demons), Rishi (ascetics) and Manushya (man). The daiva tirthas are those which are revealed by the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and are endowed with high degree of sanctity. These include tirthas such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Kashi, Dwarka, Pushkar, etc. The asura tirthas are associated with the demons. For example, Gaya in Bihar belongs to this category because the demon Gayasur was killed by god Vishnu at this place and so this place became sacred. The rishi tirthas derived their origin from the ancient sages. This category of the tirthas include the sites of the ashramas founded by the Vedic rishis (ascetics/sages). In course of time, these became important pilgrim centres. For example, Vyas
gupha (cave) near Badrinath, the Kanava ashrama and the Narad ashrama near Rudra Prayag on
the bank of river Alaknanda, the Atri ashrama and the Bhardwaj ashrama in Central India, the
Ahilya-sthan and Kapileshwar-sthan of North Bihar, the Vishwamitra-kup and the Yagnavalkya-
kup in the Terai region of Nepal, etc. The manushyta-tirthas are those centres, which were made
holy by the rulers of the Solar, the Lunar and the Janak dynasties of ancient India.

There are numerous sects in Hinduism, but of these the more dominant are the
Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shakta. Therefore, we have a large number of tirthas associated with
these three sects. However, the pilgrimage centres of Buddhism, Jainism and other faiths are
also spread all over the subcontinent.

It is important to note that some of these centres are visited and patronised by one
particular sect whereas some others owe their sanctity to the visits by multiple sects. For
example, centres like Prayag, Kashi, and Kanchi are sacred to both orthodox and heterodox sects
while Haridwar, Rajagrih, etc. are patronised by many sects. The pilgrimage centres like Puri,
Ayodhya, Mathura, Ujjain, Dwarka, Nasik, Kamakhya, etc. are generally patronised by almost
all sections of the Hindus. Nevertheless, there emerges an interesting feature of Buddhism-
Hinduism continuum in Nepal where both, the Hindus and Buddhists, go together to worship
Swembhu at the hill-top and patronise the deities enshrined there.

The concept of four dhams or the four cardinal points is popular among the Hindus.
These include: Badrinath (north in the Himalayas), Puri (in east), Rameshwaram (in south) and
Dwarika (in west). In or around them are located the four sacred seats of the Adi Shankara (788-
820 A.D.), which every pious Hindu aspires to visit at least once in life-time.

There are 51 places of pilgrimage in Shakta tradition. These are spread from Hinglaj (in
Baluchistan) to Kamakhya (in India) and from Kashmir (in India) to Sri Lanka. Likewise, for a
Shaiva the sacred Mount Kailash (now in China) and temple of Pashupatinath (in Nepal) are
located beyond the Indian boundaries. In India the Shaiva-tirtha are located at Amarnath and
Kedarnath in the north, Rameshwaran in the south, Somanath in the west and Lingaraj in the
east.

As India is the land of many religious faiths, we also have a number of pilgrimage centres
associated with various other religious communities besides that of the Hindus. These include
the sacred places of visit by the Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other faiths.

The birth of Buddhism and Jainism also took place in India. For the Buddhists, there are
many pilgrimage centres associated with Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, preaching and
mahaparinirvana (death). The monuments such as stupas, viharas, chaityas, etc. were erected on
these sites. The famous Buddhist pilgrimage centres are located at Vaisali, Bodh Gaya, Rajagriha in
Bihar and Kushinagar and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh. It is important to note that Buddhism was
carried to many countries of Asia by the monks and merchants. So, the Buddhist shrines in India
also attracts devotees from other countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Jain religious centres related with the birth and activities of Vardhaman Mahavira and
other Jain Tirthankaras are visited by Jain pilgrims. The chief Jain holy centres are at Pavapuri in
Bihar; Sravasti, Kaushambi and Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh; Udaygiri and Khandgiri in Orissa;
Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, and Dilwara temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan. A periodic
festival organised after every twelve years for the mastakabhisek ceremony of the lord Bahubali at
Sravana Belagola in Karnataka is very popular among the Jains.
Islam after entering the Indian soil interacted with the existing culture and influenced many regions of the Indian subcontinent. We have a number of Sufi shrines scattered in different parts of the country. These include the tombs of saints and mosques. The popular sacred spots of Muslims are the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer in Rajasthan, Khwaja Bande Nawaj at Gulbarga in Karnataka, Shah Sharaf Bin Ali at Panipat in Haryana, and Sheikh Nizammudin Aulia at Delhi. The Jama Masjid at Delhi and Hazarat Bal shrine at Srinagar are also visited by pilgrims.

Sikhism, though is popular in the Panjab region and Delhi, has pilgrimage centres scattered in different parts of the subcontinent. Its extent can be observed in the fact that while Guru Nanak was born in Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, was born at Patna in Bihar. The main sacred shrines of the Sikhs are located at Hemkunt Sahib in Garhwal, Golden Temple in Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib in Taran Taaran, and Patna Sahib in Patna.

Christianity is also followed by people in almost all parts of the country. However, the concentration of Christians is found in Kerala, North-eastern states and Goa. There are many churches and sacred spots visited by the Christians. Of all these, the churches in Goa are the most popular. The Santhome Cathedral (St. Thomas Church) at Mylapore and his burial at a hill in Chennai are other places of worship. Very recently, in 2008 Sister Alphonsa of Kerala was canonised and given the status of a saint by the Pope at Vatican. Worshipping her burial spot (grave) has resulted in miracles and today the place has become a sacred destination for the devotees.

These traditions of pilgrimage and pilgrimage centres or tirthas are very much linked with the different kinds of fairs and festivals observed in various parts of the subcontinent. The next section of this chapter deals with the practice of fairs and festivals in Indian tradition. However, it can be said with certainty that the unity of India was strengthened through the distribution and spread of these tirthas by eliminating all the geographical, linguistic and ecological barriers. A pilgrimage to holy places provides not only a fresh stimulus to pilgrims, but it also leads to interaction between people from different linguistic, geographical and socio-economic groups.

Intext Questions:
10. Which are the important types of tirthas mentioned in the Brahma-purana?
11. Mention a few examples of important tirthas in Indian subcontinent.
12. The four dhams popular among the Hindus include, (a)__________, (b)__________, (c)__________, and (d)__________.
13. Name the Hindu tirthas located in the following regions.
   (a) Baluchistan   (b) Nepal      (c) China
14. Name any three pilgrimage centres of Buddhists.
15. Sravana Belagola is located in the state of __________.
16. Name the saints associated with the following sacred spots of Muslims.
   (a) Ajmer   (b) Gulbarga   (C) Delhi
17. Name any three pilgrimage centres associated with Sikhism.
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18. **Name the first women saint of India, who was canonised by the Vatican?**

3. **Festivals and Fairs**

It is difficult to talk about the cultures of the Indian subcontinent without reference to the festivals and fairs, which have their origin in our ancient past and remain in practice till today. Nevertheless, in many cases we may find the merging of tradition and modernity.

3.1 **Festivals and their classification**

Since religion dominates the life of individuals, religious festivals have dominated the cultural life of the people. We can draw a long list of religious festivals associated with various gods and goddesses, regions and traditions. These include festivals such as Holi, Dashehra, Diwali, Christmas, Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Zuha, Gur Parab, etc. The cultural and regional diversities have led to the practice of multi-faceted festivals.

The festivals can be broadly divided into the following categories: (i) Religious festivals, (ii) Seasonal festivals, (iii) Cultural festivals, and (iv) Tribal festivals.

(i) **Religious Festivals**

The common religious festivals are: Holi, Diwali, Id, Christmas, Nauroz, etc.

Holi, the festival of colours, is celebrated in the *Phalguna* (February/March) month of the Indian calendar. It marks the end of the Lunar year’s end. This is the end of the cold season and the start of the hot season.

Dashehra or Vijayadashami is one of India largest festivals. This marks the culmination of the *Navaratra* (nine nights) and is observed on the tenth day. Depending on where one lives in India, *Navaratra* emphasizes Durga Puja or Ramalila, and sometimes the celebration of both. Durga Puja focuses on the worship of the goddess Durga and her victory of the buffalo demon Mahishasura. Ramalila is presented as the drama celebrating Rama’s exploits in the epic Ramayana. The climax on Dashehra depicts Rama’s victory over Ravana. This symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. Dashehra often ends with the torching of huge Ravana effigies. Ramalila is very fast emerging as the national drama of India.

Diwali, the festival of light, comes in the month of *Kartik* (October/November). This is celebrated on the new moon day (*amavasya*). Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is worshipped on this day. This festival is associated with the cleanliness and lightening of homes, and fireworks.

The festivals of Muslims such as Ramzan (Ramadan), Id-ul-Fitr, Muharram, Bakr-id (the Feast of Sacrifice), etc. cycle according to Muslim calendar. The ritual year begins with the month of Muharram. This marks the practice of Muharram festival that commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein venerated by Shia Muslims, as the third Imam (leader) of Islam after the Prophet Muhammad. On this occasion, a large procession with Tazia is taken out. The participants cry out Hussein’s name. Some devotees even torture themselves with knives, leashes and chains etc. to feel Hussein’s travail. A small fair is organised. In late afternoon, the Tazia is buried.

The Prophet’s birthday is celebrated in the month of Ramzan (Ramadan). The fast of Ramzan lasts the entire month. Everyone except the very young or infirm observe fast between dawn and sunset. The last day of the fast ends with the sighting of the moon, which marks Id-ul-
Fitr. On this day, besides observing the fast, alms is given to poor and sweets are distributed. The end of Ramzan is also the time of departure for Muslims for the Haj or the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*Bakr-id* or the Feast of sacrifice celebrates Abraham’s sacrifice of his son. The goats (*bakr*) are sacrificed on this day and meat is shared with friends and the poor.

*Urs* or the “death anniversary” is an important aspect of the religious faith of the Muslims. These are organised as festivals and pilgrims visit the tombs of saints. Committees are formed to organise *Urs*. On the anniversary day, the shrine is bathed and the tomb of the saint is decorated. The committee plans readings from the *Quran*, traditional song sessions, food distributions, and poetry readings. The biggest *Urs* in India is at the Ajmer shrine of the saint Muin-ud-din Chisti. It is visited by thousand of pilgrims and a big fair is organised.

In Christianity too we have many religious festivals and ceremonies. The popular Christian celebration is that of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Christmas. The name is English in origin, which means “Christ’s Mass” or the mass celebrating the feast of Christ’s nativity. It is observed every year on 25th December. In this, the children wait for the legendary Santa Claus, the popular gift bringer. Other customs of the Christmas season includes the baking of special foods and singing of special songs called carols, which have mass appeal.

Easter is the most important of all Christian feast. It celebrates the passion, the death, and especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. Easter was fundamentally a nocturnal feast preceded by a fast of at least one day. The celebration took place from Saturday evening until the early morning hours of Sunday. The symbolism of light became a significant feature of this festival. In Northern Europe the use of special lights at Easter coincided with the custom of lighting bonfires on hilltops to celebrate the coming of spring. The main Easter foods include the Easter lamb, which is in many places the main dish of the Easter Sunday meal. Ham is also popular among the Europeans and Americans on the occasion of Easter. This is because the pig was considered a symbol of luck in pre-Christian European culture.

The Parsis (Zoroastrians) of India celebrate Nauroz (Nawruz) as their most popular festival. It is a festival of renewal, hope and happiness. The origins of Nauroz are obscure. According to legends, its institution is associated mostly with Jamshed, the mythical Iranian king. Nevertheless, till today it is observed as the Iranian national festival celebrating the arrival of spring. Zoroaster, the ancient prophet of Iran, probably reconsecrated Nauroz to his religion. Nauroz survived the advent of Islam and continued as the Iranian national festival. The Shia Muslims of Iran came to associate important religious events with Nauroz such as that the prophet Muhammad took his young son-in-law Ali on his shoulders to smash the idols at Mecca and he chose Ali as his rightful successor. The Muslim rulers of Iran, continuing the Sasanid tradition, celebrated this festival with pomp and show. The Parsis of India who left Iran in the 10th century in order to preserve their Zoroastrian faith also continue to celebrate Nauroz (*Jamshed Nauroz*) as a major feast. The ceremonies include recitation of religious verses, visiting of relatives and friends, the exchange of gifts, organising music and dance, etc.

(ii) **Seasonal Festivals**

Most of the festivals in India mark the beginning of a new season and the new harvest. This is rooted in the fact that India is predominantly an agricultural economy and so the festivals are more associated with the agrarian society. The festivals such as Makar Sankranti, Pongal,
Holi, Baisakhi, Onam, etc. herald the advent of a new season and new crops. Besides these traditional festivals being celebrated through the ages, some very new festivals are also becoming popular and attract people. In this respect, we can include festivals like Boat Race Festival, Mango Festival, Garden Festival, Kite Festival, etc. But these festivals should not be treated in isolated manner as these too are organised in appropriate regions and seasons.

As mentioned before, many of the religious festivals too are based on different calendars and so are seasonal in nature. So, there is a thin line of difference between the festivals of religious nature and seasonal ones. The worship of divinities is an important feature of all these. Thus, sometimes the seasonal celebrations are also counted as the religious festivals. However, some recent festivals based on different kinds of entertainment and popular products differ in nature from the traditional seasonal/religious festivals.

Makar Sankranti (winter solstice) falls in the month of January. On this day, a bath in Ganga is considered sacred whereas in South India the devotees bath in the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Godavari and make offerings. Makar Sakrant i is the only Hindu festival celebrated according to the Solar calendar for it marks the transition of the sun from one Zodiac sign to another. This is called sankraman and the day is called Sankranti. Thus, there are 12 Sankrantis in an year. But the most important are those occurring in the months of Asadh and Paush. In the month of Paush (14 January), the sun appears against the constellation that represents the Zodiac sign of Makar. This is the beginning of uttarayan, the auspicious half of the year, when sun appears to move northwards. This cosmic phenomenon is celebrated with preparation of items using sesame seeds, sugarcane jaggery and sugar all over India with minor variations. In South India this festival is celebrated as the ‘Pongal’, which takes its name from the sweet dish prepared by boiling rice in a pot of milk. In Panjab, where December and January are the coldest months of the year, huge bonfires are lit on the eve of Sankrant and is celebrated as ‘Lohari’. Sweets, sugarcane and rice are offered to the fire. Fairs and regional dances are organised in different parts of India and ritualistic bath in sacred rivers is considered auspicious on this day.

Baisakhi is celebrated on the first day of the Baisakh month (April and May). This month also marks the seasonal change. In northern India the cultivators adjust the obligations incurred to provide for the rabi crop. In other words, on this day the sacred offerings of the rabi crops are made and these are eaten. In a way, what this festival is to rabi crops, the Diwali is to the Kharif crops. The Hindus take the ceremonial dip in the sacred rivers and worship cattle. Fairs or melas are organised and there begins the manufacture of new agricultural implements for the cultivation of new crops.

Onam, the harvest festival, is the most popular festival of Kerala. Onam is part of the cultural identity of every Malayalee. The ten-day Onam festival is celebrated in August-September, which coincides with the beginning of the harvest season. It celebrates a happy blend of myth and reality. It brings back memories of the folkloristic tradition since the ages centred around the king Mahabali, whose reign was famous for prosperity, equality and righteousness. According to the tradition, every year, the people of Kerala, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, join together to welcome back their legendary king. Preparation of a floral carpet called Athappookkalam in front of the houses, from the first day of Atham to the tenth day of Thiruvonam is part of the festivities. This symbolic gesture is to welcome king Mahabali. Carnivals, Boat Races, Dance, Music and Feasts are organised during this festive period. The meals with the traditional sweet dish called payasam, etc. is served in every house on plantain leaves. It would be significant to mention here that this festival in recent times has become a great source of tourist attraction.
As mentioned earlier some newly created seasonal festivals have also become popular in recent times. The Boat Race Festival associated with Onam is among the most popular of these. It is a part of the celebration of the new paddy harvest in Kerala. On this day various boat race competitions are organised in the backwaters of Kerala at places such as Alleppey. The boats are very long in different shapes. These are decorated and sailed by scores of boatmen.

Mango festival is another such kind of festival. In fact, it is a brain child of the Tourism Department and is a recent entry. It helps in the promotion of mango cultivation as well as becomes a great centre of attraction for domestic and foreign visitors. This is celebrated at popular centres in almost all the major mango producing states such as Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Panipat in Haryana, Delhi, etc. Generally, it is organised in early July. In this, mango eating competitions are held, fairs (melas) with cultural evenings are organised, and mangoes and its plants are also sold to attract commercial visitors.

Garden festival is also gaining popularity these days. This newly created festival is organised at Delhi by the Delhi Tourism and Transport Development Corporation. It is organised at various centres and the entries have increased year by year. This festival is organised every year in the month of February. The festival aims mainly to highlight the importance of horticulture and enhancing the knowledge of the visitors in this field as well as to make the participants aware of the new discoveries in the field. In this, competitions of the flowers and plants of various species such as potted house plants, vegetables, fruits, foliage plants, etc. are held. These competitions are open to individuals and organisations like nurseries, horticulture departments, etc. The prizes are awarded for the best in the show. These activities are also accompanied by on-the-spot painting competition for school children, cultural programmes, sale of rare plants, organising seminars to discuss the problems related with gardening, etc. This festival is gradually assuming the status of a big carnival. Similar to the garden festival at Delhi an international flower festival is organised in the month of April at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

Tea festival, like the Mango festival, is celebrated in the major tea producing states like Assam, Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tamilnadu, etc. In Himachal Pradesh, the Kangra Valley tea festival is organised in June whereas another important tea carnival is celebrated at Darjeeling in West Bengal. In Tamilnadu the tea festival and tourism festival is organised together in January. This festival aims to benefit the tea planters as well as those related with this industry. Nevertheless, tourists in large numbers also visit to watch the events. International planters as well as Indian planters are offered packaged tour to acquaint themselves with the condition in different regions and encourage the planters to grow the varieties of other regions. An important fact to mention in this connection is that, this festival is not merely confined to the planters and the tea industry but it also promotes tourism to these hilly areas as the visitors may also be attracted to other destinations in that region.

Kite festival, though traced to the medieval period, has become a very popular entertainment not only among the children but also among the elders. This festival is organised at cities such as Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, etc. However, this is the most popular show at Ahmedabad on the Makar Sankranti day (January 14). Besides Ahmedabad, other cities of Gujarat also celebrate this festival with kite flying, feasting and cultural programmes including folk dances like garba. With its growing popularity International kite festival is celebrated every year in different cities like Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, etc. It is interesting to note that in this festival not only people belonging to different parts of India but also from countries like Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Canada and USA participate. Ahmedabad, also known as the
city of kites, has an International Kite Museum with kites of various sizes, colours and shapes from different countries. The exhibition of kites and contemporary Indian handicrafts are also organised. Kite flying has also developed as a popular sport in other countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, etc. where Kite Flying competitions are encouraged by the government. Gujarat Tourism Department is paying special attention to explore this popular event and make it colourful and attractive for tourists.

(iii) Cultural Festivals

The festivals belonging to this category highlight the cultural tradition of our country. These reflect the traditional art of India. Recently, State Tourism Departments have also taken initiative to highlight the unique culture and tradition of the region. Such festivals include the Phool Walon Ki Sair (a Flower Festival), Elephant Festival of Kerala, Desert Festival of Rajasthan, Music and Dance festival in different parts of India, etc.

Phool Walon Ki Sair is a three-day festival celebrated every year in the month of October at Mehrauli in Delhi. Although this is popular as a flower fest, the unique feature of this festival is the inter-religious bonding. Hindus and Muslims both celebrate this. This involves a procession decorated with flowers to the shrine of Devi Jog Maya and the dargah of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki. Hindus offer a chaddar (spread) decorated with flowers to the shrine of Bakhtiyar Kaki, while Muslims offer a floral pankha (fan) at the Jog Maya Temple. Cultural programmes including singing and dancing activities such as qawwalis and kathak are organised. Recent years have also seen the increased participation of youth in this festival.

Elephant festival was a novel idea initiated by Kerala Tourism Development Corporation in 1990. It was basically aimed to attract foreign tourists and since then it has become very popular among, both foreign and domestic visitors. It is celebrated every year for four days in the month of January. The march with elephants start at Trichur and ends at Kovalam, the famous beach. Each elephant is adorned with decorated headgear and mahouts bear colourful dress. The procession is live with the drum beats and playing of other musical instruments. During the journey, elephant rides are arranged for the tourists and traditional folkdances are organised at different places. Other attractions enroute include setting-up of handicraft stalls for shopping, facility of backwater cruise, boat racing, provision of Kerala style food, display of fireworks, etc.

Desert festival of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan is another such creation by Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation. It was started in 1979 and attracts a large number of visitors every year. It is celebrated during the full moon in the month of February. The highlights of the festival are the desert folk music and Rajasthani dances like Dhap, Ghormar, Moria, Chari, Gangane, etc. Camel acrobatics, camel races, camel decor competitions, polo, camel safaris, etc. are other attractions. The competitions such as the turban tying contests, moustache contest, etc. with grand finale ending with the selection of Maru-Shri – Mr. Desert, are the significant features of the festival.

Music and Dance festivals organised at different places also reflect the traits of Indian culture. Some of the popular music and dance festivals are – Mahabalipuram Dance Festival at Mahabalipuram, Bijapur Music Festival at Bijapur, Khajuraho Festival at Khajuraho, Dhrupad Mela at Varanasi, Konark Dance Festival at Konark and Tansen Festival at Gwalior. Of these the festivals at Mahabalipuram, Khajuraho and Konark are the dance festivals where the performances by the leading exponents of various dance forms such as Bharat Natyam (Tamilnadu), Kuchipudi (Orissa), Kathakali (Kerala), Kathak (Uttar Pradesh), Manipuri
(Manipur) and even foreign dance like Balinese (Indonesia) are organised in the open space or mandap in the architectural setting of the temple complexes at the above mentioned sites. These festivals draw large crowds. The craft fairs are also organised at these centres. Music festivals of Varanasi, Gwalior and Bijapur are also becoming popular. The skilled musicians perform with instruments like shehnai, sitar, veena, etc. The classical music concerts are also organised.

Off late the film festivals organised at different places in India have also become popular. As we know, India is the largest producer of films. Due to linguistic variations, a large number of films are produced in various language. As a result, the film festivals are held at different places to screen the films in different languages. These films reflect the cultural traits of our society. The Annual Film Festival is held every year at Delhi. Besides this, the Film Festival of the films made in foreign languages, is also organised annually.

(iv) Tribal Festivals

Tribal festivals are organised in the regions inhabited by different tribes. These reflects the tribal culture and help to revive and preserve the traditional art forms. These have potential of attracting large number of tourists and enable them to watch and learn the tribal culture. Off late, the Tourism Development Corporations of various states also have started organising these festivals on wider scale.

In Maharashtra, a tribal festival in Gavilgarh fort of Vidarbha at Chikhaldara is organised every year. This area in Maharasthra is popular for its wildlife. A tribal museum and a botanical garden have been set-up at this place. The tribes of this region include Korku, Gaivalis, Basodes, Gonds, Madias, etc. Various tribal dances such as the Bihawoo and Pola by Korkus, Ghorpad by Gonds, etc. on the tunes of the musical instruments prepared by these tribes are performed in this festival.

Similarly, the Banjara dance of the nomads is performed using bright costumes ornaments, scarves and vocal music.

In Chootanagpur area, especially Ranchi in Jharkhand a tribal festival popularly known as the Adivasi Mela is held every year. The Santhals of this region celebrate their festival Sarhul adhering to their traditional practices.

In Gujarat, the tribal dances, drama and music are organised at Saputara. Gujarat Tourism highlights the rich tribal culture of the Dangi adivasis (tribals).

**Intext Questions:**

8. Name some popular festivals of different faiths.
9. Which regions of India celebrates the following festivals?
   
   (a) Onam  (b) Pongal (c) Baisakhi

10. The Mango festival in organised at,

    (a) ________, (b) ________, (c) ________.

11. The Kite festival is one of the most popular show at __________.

12. Briefly discuss about some popular cultural festivals.
13. What does 'Phool Walon Ki Sair' signify?

14. Name some popular tribal festivals and the regions associated with those.

3.2 Fairs and their classification

In Indian tradition, the fairs are generally referred to as the ‘melas’. Most of these fairs are linked with the religious faiths, festivals, rituals, pilgrimage (tirtha) and destinations/places (localities) with specific significance. Some of these have been continuing since a long period. In other words, fairs are part of our traditional customs carried on since ages, of trading activities of the past or part of local cultural patterns.

Though most of these fairs are linked with the festivals, in recent times we find the emergence of new activity or theme-based fairs which also command huge popularity. Such fairs include the fairs for specific purpose or for certain products like the cattle fair, book fair, craft fair, textile fair, etc. On this basis, the fairs can be broadly classified into two: (i) Religious fairs (melas) (ii) Theme/Activity/ Product-based fairs.

(i) Religious Fairs (melas)

Of the religious fairs, the Kumbh mela is the greatest and most important. It is held periodically every twelve years at Nasik, Ujjain, Prayag and Haridwar. This also provides an occasion for the meeting of the religious heads of different sects in Hinduism and promotes the exchange of ideas. Millions of people visit these melas. They include the Indian pilgrims as well as the foreign tourists.

The Ganga Sagar mela in Bengal has become so popular now that it is attended by the Indians as well as the foreigners. At Kolkata (Calcutta), the river Hoogly (a distributary of Ganges) joins the Bay of Bengal. According to the tradition, the devotees bath in the river to wash away the sins and earn merits.

The Magh mela is another popular fair, which is held at Prayag (Allahabad) in the month of Magha (January-February). It is believed that the ritual bath and offerings at Prayag brings religious merits.

Pushkar mela is held annually in the month of Kartika on the banks of the lake Pushkar near Ajmer in Rajasthan. The only Brahma temple in India is at Pushkar. A large number of Indian and foreign visitors attend this fair. This is a popular cattle fair. It is believed that the bath in the holy lake at Pushkar cures the diseases and adds to religious merits.

Besides the above mentioned important religious fairs, there are many other fairs held on occasions of eclipses (grahan), full moon (purnima) and other astronomical occurrences.

(ii) Theme/Activity/Product-based Fairs (melas)

Since our ancient past cattle has been an important means used in agriculture. Thus, the cattle and other animals were either exchanged, sold or bought in fairs held in different parts of the subcontinent. This also provided an occasion for the exchange of other commodities. As the cattle trade dominated over the sale of other items in these melas, these were referred to as the cattle fairs or animal fairs. Many of these fairs continue till today. The popular cattle fairs include Pushkar fair of Rajasthan, Nagaur fair of Rajasthan, Sonepur fair of Bihar.
A number of book fairs are also held throughout the year. International Book Fair is held at Pragati Maidan in Delhi every year. In these fairs, the Indian and foreign publishers set-up their stalls. The aim of such activities is to make the readers aware of the recent publications on various subjects and also to bring the sources in various languages under one umbrella.

The India International Trade Fair (IITF), held every year from 14th to 27th November at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, is noteworthy in this context. The products manufactured by various countries as well as states in India, are displayed and sold in respective pavilions. The products include the items of everyday use to highly technical goods. Some of the halls in the fair are meant for exhibition of equipments used by the Defence Forces, Telecommunication wings, etc. Ethnic good of various regions, cultural programmes and other from of entertainment are arranged for the visitors to present them the picture of India. This fair attracts huge crowds every year.

Craft and Textile fairs or melas are also gaining popularity day-by-day. In the last quarter of the 20th century many private and public institutions were set-up to collect, nurture and display artefacts from different sections of our living cultures. They also organise festivals and fairs in order to bring together various cross cultural elements to reflect unity in diversity. The Surajkund (the Pool of the Sun) Crafts Mela in Haryana is the best known of these modern day fairs. It started in 1987 and is celebrated from the 1st to 15th February every year. Its primary focus is on the handicrafts and handlooms of India, which are projected statewise every year with food, music, dance and other folk entertainments of the selected state to add to the particular cultural atmosphere. In other words, each year a different state demonstrates a new cultural facet of the country. Many such fairs are held at local and regional levels.

In the context of popular culture, some newly created fairs related to various artistic activities are also successful in drawing crowds towards them. An example cited in this respect may be that of the fairs/festivals organised by schools, colleges or other institutions. These are generally organised annually with pomp and show. These help to encourage the youth to reflect their talents in various activities such as dance, music, plays, theatre, etc.

**Intext Questions:**
6. Explain religious fairs with some popular examples.
7. The International Book Fair in India is held at ________.
8. Which is the venue of India International Trade Fair?
9. Which state organises the Surajkund Crafts Mela every year?
10. Name any two popular Cattle fairs of India.

(III)

4. **Textile and Crafts**

4.1 **Textile and Trends**

When we see a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi on the famous Salt March, we are reminded of him leading towards his goal with the *Khadi* loincloth wrapped around his waist and
the staff in his hand. Secondly, his march to the sea to make salt, a food item, was in protest to the British tax imposed on a commodity used in every household. In a way, this picture reflects the importance of dress and food in everyday’s life. On one hand, Khadi symbolized the efforts of Indian weavers or craftsmen, who were reduced to the state of impoverishment by the attack by the product of the British mills, while on the other British tax on an item of daily necessity meant causing pains to the masses.

The above mentioned example attest that textile and crafts should not be viewed in isolation from each other. The craft of weaving has been continuing in the subcontinent since ancient times. In early periods, mainly household women were engaged in this. Cotton, silk and wool were the best-known natural fibres. The use of cotton was prevalent in the Harappan civilization. The Vedic Literature and the texts of later periods also mention the use of cotton. The Sangam literature of South India also refer to the use of cotton and silk. Though silk was used in different parts of the subcontinent, its production was confined to eastern, north-eastern and southern regions. Silk also was an important item of import from China in ancient period. In medieval period the dress pattern was influenced by Islamic culture. Dresses such as salwar-kamiz, burqa, etc. were introduced.

Till today the traditional dress patterns are followed by a large number of population. In addition to this, however, the modern dress styles have been shaped up by three major trends – technological change, the independence movement and changing social identities.

Technological developments influenced the textiles to a great extent. In the 19th century, imported mill-made clothes replaced most produced on handlooms. Only a few entrepreneurs like Jamshedji N. Tata and Birla family were given permission to build textile mills at Bombay and Delhi respectively. Though the British relaxed the restrictions during the two World wars, it was not until after 1947 that the textile industry witnessed its expansion. As a result of the policy of economic liberalization there was tremendous growth in the synthetic textile industry. The synthetics, which were relatively expensive in the early 1980s became within the reach of all social classes at cheaper prices.

The independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, focused on the revival of handloomed textiles. Attempts were made to bring the Indian handicrafts and other industries out of the grip of deindustrialization caused by the economic policies of the British. There was a call on Indians to buy and use Indian products (Swadeshi), especially Khadi. Gandhi and many other leaders discarded western dress and experimented with varieties of Indian traditional clothing including those of Khadi. Soon the revived interest in hand-spun and loomed cloth led to diversification of colour, pattern and design. This included production of labour-intensive finer fabrics like silk. Today, synthetic yarn is also used in Khadi textiles to produce new quality of cloth. After 1947, the Government of India subsidized Khadi producers through institutions such as the Khadi and Village Industries Board and the All-India Handicrafts Board.

Changing social identities also affected the dressing style. A section of fashion-conscious population favoured the rural dress pattern such as hand embroideries, old fabrics and jewellery. For them, this represented a chance to revive arts that were being lost. On the other hand, local designs were often reworked in new ways and forms to attract the urban customers. However, though the traditional associations in this regard symbolized authenticity much liked by the westernized elites, it meant little to the urban population. Traditional prints in many cases marked the wearer as belonging to a low-status group. Modern fashion designers are consumer-
conscious and focus on prints in abstract and floral designs. Even the *Khadi* prints, designs and texture have undergone significant changes to satisfy the needs of consumers.

Let us now discuss about the techniques of dyeing, printing and embroidery in brief. Indian weavers had access to plant-based dyes since ancient times. With passage of time they also developed many other techniques of dyeing with the use of wax, mud or other substances to keep dye from bonding with the fiber. Specific techniques include *ikat*, *bandhej* or tie-and-dye, *batik*, and *kalamkari* (pen work). In *ikat*, the yarn is tied up along its length and dyed in different colours. In *bandhej* (tie-and-dye), little bundles of cloth are tied up to prevent the dye from penetrating. This produces pattern of spots or wavy striped patterns. In *batik*, wax covers the areas of the fabric that are not to be dyed. In *Kalamkari*, designs are made by painting on the design by hand with a thick brush, which holds a dye.

Hand block printing is one of the oldest industries of the subcontinent. In this, a master carver produces the block and creates the patterns. The printer lays on the design, directly stamping the pattern and using resist stamps to produce intricate effects. Printers create designs by stamping glue on the fabric in a pattern, then rubbing glitter over the fabric. Today, block-printing centres located near Jaipur in Rajasthan produce multicoloured cottons and silks.

Embroidery includes the *zari* work and *chikan* work. The *zari* work uses gold and silver threads. This kind of embroidery includes the Mughal-inspired designs such as flowers, vines and repeated geometric shapes on the borders of the garment. The *chikan* (white-on-white) embroidery produces garments with skilled stitches by master embroiderers. Lucknow is famous for its *chikan* industry, which produces lengths for women’s *salwar*, *kamiz*, and saris.

### 4.1a Regional Dress

Each region of the subcontinent produces distinctive fabrics and designs. The most common unstitched garment used is the shawl. A shawl roughly measures two to three yards in length and about a yard in width. It is wrapped around the body in different styles in various regions. It has fancy borders and sometimes decorated with embroidery. It is very common in the colder regions. The fabrics used range from coarse wool to the finest cashmere.

The *dhoti*, unstitched clothing, is popular among the men of rural areas today. It is a man’s lower garment wrapped around legs. A *dhoti* can be wrapped in different ways. In South India, a similar unstitched lower garment called *mundu* is worn by men. The *lungi* is another sarong-like garment worn by men of all regions.

The turban is the most distinctive unstitched male dress. This is wrapped around the head in different regional patterns. The turban tied by the Rajasthani appears as big coils whereas the Rajputs tie it in such a way that a plume of fabric hangs down the back. For Sikh males, the turbans are integral part of their religious tradition. It is tightly wrapped, angular and almost geometric.

*Kurta-Pajama* is another set of traditional upper and lower garment worn by Indian men. The common fabrics used for this are cotton, silk and muslin. *Kurtas*, either long or short, can be stitched in various printed designs or embroidery work. *Pajamas* too can be of different styles such as *Pathani*, *Churidaar*, etc. One can clearly make out the differences in the *dhoti-kurta* worn by the men of Bengal region and the *lungi-kurta* worn by the men of Panjab. Today, even synthetic fabrics are use for stitching these dresses.
Women of Indian subcontinent are fond of decorative garments and ornamentation. The dress of women reflects ethnicity and region much more than the men’s dress.

The sari is the most distinctive unstitched women’s garment. This is practically worn by women of all regions. The fabrics range from that for everyday use to expensive special occasion wear. Different ways of wrapping the sari and different fabrics and designs reflect regional differences. For example, in Maharashtra, women wrap the sari to the legs in the fashion of man’s dhoti, whereas tribal women in Orissa wear a short, thick, knee-length sari. A typical sari measures 13-26 feet in length and about 4 feet in width. A sari has three distinct sections – the borders along the length of the top and bottom, the interior or field between the borders, and the pallu or the end piece. The borders may be wide or narrow with decorations. Pale and light coloured with simple pallu worn in Bengal and Eastern India can be easily distinguished from heavy Kanjeevaram silk saris of Tamilnadu.

The Salwar-Kamiz is a popular stitched dress among women of almost all regions. However, this dress predominates in the northern regions including Kashmir, Panjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The salwar is a type of pant and kamiz is the upper garment similar to the kurta. A wide scarf (chunni) to drape over the head and shoulders is used with this garment. The kamiz may be stitched in different styles such as long or short, fitted or loose, long or short-sleeved.

Other stitched garments of women include skirt-and-blouse outfits, the burqa, etc. The traditional skirt is long or full ankle-length with pleats and matching border. It is worn with a matching short bodice with sleeves. Today, the influence of western countries can be seen in the use of knee-length or even shorter skirts with modern designs. The burqa is worn by Muslim women. It is a loose cotton or synthetic overcoat with an attached veil.

The contemporary dress pattern of youth, especially urban, is greatly influenced by the foreign elements. The fashion shows and other forms of media have attracted people to experiment with the new patterns of clothing. Garments such as jeans, T-shirts, cargo pants, etc., liked by both the sexes, have flooded the Indian markets. Nevertheless, a synthesis of tradition and modernity can be observed in the works of designers reflecting indigenous features in combination with industrial technologies. In today’s competitive market machine textiles compete with handwork and sometimes hand workers copy machine technology. But the vitality of the traditional style continues till today.

**Intext Questions:**

5. Which were the popular natural fibers used for making clothes in ancient India?

6. Name the important dyeing techniques practiced in India.

7. Differentiate between the zari and chikan embroidery works.

8. Define the terms: (a) pallu, (b) chunni, and (c) burqa.

**4.2 Crafts and their classification**

Craft can be defined as an art, trade or profession requiring special skill and knowledge by which a livelihood is earned. As India lives in its villages, it is mostly the traditions and customs of these people which constitute the rich cultural heritage of folkarts and crafts. Thus, the local cultures are well reflected in these arts and crafts. Their origin can be traced in the folklore, history, myth, superstition, science, religion or simple day-to-day practices. However,
their commercialization by making them objects of exhibition in a museum or fairs today may have adverse effects on their originality. Therefore, a balance should be retained so that the visitors, especially foreigners, to these places understand Indian culture without imposing their distant and alien culture and invading the privacy of the other. These artefacts help us to know about the identities of different societies as reflected in their dress, household articles, agricultural and hunting implements, musical instruments, baskets, furniture, cooking vessels, terracottas, etc.

Outside their zones of production, folkarts and crafts are found either in marketplace or in specialized museums. These can be broadly divided into three categories – (i) the living crafts, (ii) the languishing crafts, and (iii) the extinct or museum category of arts and crafts.

The ‘living’ crafts include all those objects, which are still being manufactured for local and personal use as well as for sale by the craftsmen in their respective regions.

The ‘languishing’ arts and crafts are those which have shown trends of decline in recent times due to the onslaught of modern life with its mechanization and mass media culture. These include those skills and arts forms, which are still known and practiced but are fast losing their relevance and popularity. Their revival or regeneration requires special design, technical or marketing strategies, which in some cases are being taken care of.

In the ‘extinct’ or museum category of arts and crafts, the manufacture and designs of those may be extinct but not necessarily the skill. This is because the artisan communities maintain traditional knowledge and often pass it on orally. In other words, no craftsmanship or skill can be considered as completely extinct as long as the traditional knowledge remains with the artisan community. However, many objects have gone out of use, and many traditional skills today either require high level of effort for manufacture or are not cost-effective. Such objects are displayed in the National Museum at Delhi, in State museums and specialized Crafts Museums.

4.2a Crafts and their historical past

Looking at the history of crafts in the subcontinent, we are reminded of the technology used for making simple stone tools by the prehistoric man in Stone Ages. The earliest literary references in the Rigveda mention the craftsmen such as the jewellers, goldsmith, metal-workers, basket-makers, rope-makers, weavers, dyers, carpenters and potters. The sophistication can be observed in the discoveries such as bronze dancing girl, seals with figures such as a seated yogi, terracotta figurines of man, women, animals, etc. from various sites of the Harappan civilization. Almost all archaeological sites in the subcontinent, from Harappan period onwards, have yielded many of the terracotta objects. However, most of these were produced from the Mauryan to the Gupta period. The craft of Bead-making or lapidary also has been continuing since ancient times.

The masterly skill of the craftsmen is well reflected in the Ashokan pillars of the Mauryan period. These pillars are mounted with the animal capitals such as the bull, elephant or lion. The most famous pillar with four lions seated back to back, has become our national emblem.

The art of building in stones seems to have been learnt slowly from the Mauryan period onwards. The earliest sculpture of historical period show certain features common to the Harappan terracottas or clay figures. Most of the art pieces produced by the craftsmen of ancient times were associated with religious use. The ancient sculptors produced beautiful Buddha
images in various *mudras* (postures). In the early centuries of the Christian era, these developed three major schools of art – the Gandhara School influenced by the Indo-Greek art in northwestern part, the Mathura School in the Gangetic plain and the Amaravati School in Andhra region. The images/sculptures produced by the craftsmen of these schools attest their level of excellence which can be seen in the *stupas* at Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi.

Gupta period witnessed the development in the field of iconography related to Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Images of deities like Vishnu in his boar (*Varaha*) incarnation, sun and others still look attractive in museums. The craftsmen also created the sculptures of Buddha and Jain *tirthankaras*. However, the most noticeable example of Gupta metal-work can be seen in the famous Iron pillar near Qutab Minar at Delhi. This is made of single piece of iron and reflects great metallurgical skill of Gupta craftsmen.

The period 6th-12th centuries A.D. (Post-Gupta period) marked advancement in the sphere of art and architecture. Most of the paintings of Ajanta date back to the 6th century A.D. One is also reminded of the sculptures of Mahabalipuram, adorning the rock-cut temples built by the Pallava kings. The influence of the Pallava school of sculpture was also felt in ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Western Deccan. The most remarkable development was the construction of magnificent temples between 10th-12th centuries A.D. Their structures varied according to the style followed in the construction. The three prominent styles or architecture were – the Nagara style, the Dravida style, and the Vesara style. These walls of these temples were adorned with well carved images. The famous temples of the period include the Thanjavur (Tanjore) temple built by the Cholas, Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho, Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneshwar, Jain temple at Mount Abu, etc. Nevertheless, the Chola craftsmen produced bronze figures with great skills. The most popular is the image of dancing Shiva or *Nataraja*, captured in the frenzy of the dance that creates the universe. During the Palas of Bengal, the bronze images, mostly Buddhist, were produced on mass scale. These were also exported to Southeast Asia, Nepal and Tibet.

During 13th-18th centuries A.D., the workshops of artists and craftsmen produced noticeable paintings and other creations. In the Mughal period, the artists developed a highly realistic style of miniature painting. The rulers, especially Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir, encouraged the artists. Humayun even recruited Persian artists for a workshop at his court. The paintings were influenced by Persian, European, Chinese and Southeast Asian features. The subjects of paintings included historical events, city scenes, rural life, portraits, animal and plant life, etc. Rajasthan and the Punjab hills also emerged as important centres of miniature painting. After the arrival of the Europeans, the influence of European art was very evident.

The period between 19th and mid-20th century saw the beginning of the modern art in India. There emerged new patrons of art and the new techniques were experimented. The introduction of photography in 1840s displaced portrait painters. The development in the print technology resulted in mass production. The spirit of nationalism encouraged interest in the folkart and pre-Islamic art.

Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) became the first Indian painter to achieve international fame. His naturalistic paintings of Hindu deities in oil on canvas became popular. Western art colleges were established at Chennai in 1850, Calcutta in 1854, and Mumbai in 1857. The artists trained here discovered that the images of deities and scenes from folktales had mass appeal. The archeological discoveries at Ajanta brought to light the glory of our past.
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Tagore brothers, Abanindranath (1871-1951) and Rabindranath (1861-1942) emerged as India’s most popular figure in the arts. Abanindranath Tagore was very much influenced by the foreign elements. He attempted synthesis of various features to create new aesthetic modes. His most popular paintings is the *Bharat Mata* produced in 1905, which depicted India as a young sari-clad woman. This became iconic for the nationalists. Rabindranath Tagore formed a club for the artists’ gatherings. He founded the school at Santiniketan, which focussed upon the artistic developments. These led to the emergence of the Bengal School of art with blend of modern and folkart motifs. Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941) and Jamini Roy (1887-1972) were popular artists of this movement.

By the middle of the 20th century, a group of artists in Mumbai were influenced by the French and German arts. In 1940s they formed the Progressive Artists Group. Francis Newton Souza (born 1924) of Goa became known for his paintings of Catholics and the upper classes. However, Maqbool Fida Husain (born 1915) emerged as the most successful pointer from this group. His canvases were inspired by the paintings of Pablo Picasso of Italy.

Since the mid-20th century several new trends have been observed in this field. The elite as well as non-elite artists played important role in different forms of art and craft. The elite art forms are exhibited in the galleries which cater to the upper-class audiences. Nevertheless, the non-elite local art forms are not able to compete with the industrially produced specimen. This, in many cases, has led to the traditional artists embracing other occupations.

Regional specialities can be seen in the local arts and crafts produced by skilled workers. The following examples would reflect the diverse creations of various regions:

(v) the painters of Bengal painting scroll (*patachitra*) used by Bengali storytellers,

(vi) the painters at Udaipur in Rajasthan decorating house facades with bright images of elephants, warriors, etc.; and the potters of the same region making red or black fired clay plagues depicting deities, which are painted and installed in temples,

(vii) the craftsmen in Tamilnadu producing the popular horse image to be installed in shrines; the craftsmen of Mahabalipuram carving the stone images with great skill, and

(viii) the women of Madhubani district in Bihar creating beautiful paintings on the canvas.

The national and state governments have taken measures for the conservation of our arts heritage. In 1953, the Crafts Museum was established in New Delhi with this objective. In the last quarter of the 20th century many private and public institutions have been set-up to collect, nurture and display artefacts from different sections of our cultures. The non-elite artist are also encouraged and supported in various ways. There are museums that also have live displays and demonstrations of folk skills.

Tourism, in recent times, has provided an important market through state-sponsored institutions and private dealers. Most recently, a fruitful effort has been to construct ‘artists’ villages’ affiliated with museums or institutional cultural centres for the propagation of folkarts and crafts, and offer as a tourist destination. Here, the artists demonstrate and sell their work. The most notable step in this direction is the creation of the Shilpgram, the west zone cultural centre at Udaipur in Rajasthan. **Shilpgram** is a model of traditional village life, which is to a considerable extent self-contained with the farmer, the potter, the carpenter, the blacksmith and weaver living in harmony and mutual interdependence. The sanctuaries, folk shrines, tribal totems, etc. are recreated with authencity nearby the **Shilpgram**.
Other institutions at zonal level include the Bharat Bhavan at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, North Zone Cultural Centre at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, East Zone Cultural Centre at Kolkata in West Bengal and South Zone Cultural Centre at Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. These institutions help in organising festivals and fairs, and also participate in these in order to bring together various cross cultural elements in a presentation of unity in diversity.

**Intext Questions:**

8. Differentiate between the 'living crafts', the 'languishing crafts', and the 'extinct or museum category crafts'.

9. Name any five crafts practiced by Rig Vedic people.

10. The three major schools of art in ancient India were,  
    (a) ________,  (b) ________, and  (c) ________.

11. Which periods or dynasties are associated with the following popular images?  
    (a) Bronze Dancing girl  (b) Bronze Natraja, and  (c) Bronze Buddha Figures.

12. **Patachitra** is popular in ________.

13. Which state is famous for the Madhubani paintings?

14. What is Shilpgram?

### 5. The Culture of Food

How important are food and clothes in our lives has been shown earlier in this chapter through an example. Food and dress link India to history, culture and identity. Since ancient period India has been famous as the source of exotic spices and its cuisine known for its variety and infinitely subtle blends of aromatic spices and seasoning, which flavour meat, pulses and vegetables. This is evident by the role of South Indian spices in the ancient Indo-Roman trade, which earned huge profits for the Indian merchants.

#### 5.1 History of food in our cultures

The Neolithic period is characterized by the domestication of plants and animals. The earliest example of the domestication of plants in the subcontinent comes from the archaeological site of Mehrgarh in Pakistan. In the earlier periods, the Paleolithic and Mesolithic, man depended on hunting animals and gathering plant products for his food as he had no knowledge of agriculture or domestication of animals. The early staple food included cereals like barley and species of beans and lentils. The diet of the Harappans consisted of barley as the staple food including finger millet, wild millets, pulses, oil seeds, dates, and jujube (a small round berry-like fruit). They domesticated cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goats and also obtained food from fishing and hunting.

The Vedic culture developed in the Gangetic region. The alluvial and rain-fed soil was suitable for the cultivation of rice. Other food items included honey, sugarcane, linseed, grapes, cucumber, dates, etc. The dairy products such as yoghurt, butter, and ghee were also consumed. However, one of the most mysterious of these ancient foods was the *soma*, a sacred drink used in sacrifices. This produced altered states of consciousness. There have been many attempts by scholars to identify the plant source for *soma*. The studies have indicated a possibility that the
fly agaric mushroom \((Amanita muscarita)\) could have been the source for the same. The people also knew about other stimulants including marijuana \((Cannabis sativa)\), and distilled liquors that can be put in the category of \textit{sura}, the popular drink of the period.

Animal sacrifice was an important aspect of Vedic ritual. These animals included the horse, cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, chicken, etc. The meat of these animals were eaten after their offerings to deities. Due to the development of agriculture and ecological factors, the economical use of animals for dairy products and other purposes became more important. Later, the heterodox sects like Buddhism and Jainism preached non-killing of animals in sacrifices. Thus, vegetarianism became associated with value systems. The transformation of Vedic religion into Hinduism in later periods, also brought in the plant products like coconuts, fruits, vegetables, etc. for offerings to deities rather than meat. However, the practice of animal sacrifices continued in \textit{tantric} practices. Nevertheless, according to an estimate about 75\% of the population of the subcontinent is non-vegetarian. In India, the popular vegetarian belts are Gujarat and Rajasthan were majority of the population in vegetarian.

By the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, the contacts with the West Asia added new elements to the Food culture. The Muslim rulers, especially the Tughlaqs (14\textsuperscript{th} century), introduced \textit{Kebabs}, items stuffed with vegetables or meat, and other eatables to the existing traditions.

In the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Mughal emperor Babur brought Central Asian melons, cherries, peaches, and apricots to India. Trade brought the New world crops or plants to the subcontinent. The potato and tomato were commonly used for the vegetarian food during the Mughal period. The use of these New world plants in Mughal cooking such as the \textit{dum aloo} (potatoes cooked in rich curry) became much liked by the elites. However, the most prominent of the New world plants was the \textit{capsicum} chili which became an integral part of Indian cuisine. Other important New world plants include the pineapple, papaya, maize, custard apple, peanut, sunflower, tapioca, cashew nuts, tobacco, etc. The Hindi name for cashew, \textit{kaju}, is from the Brazilian \textit{acaju} and the Brazilian \textit{nana} for pineapple became \textit{ananas} in Hindi.

British influence promoted the habit of tea drinking and western habits of wine and dine. In the 1970s, Soviet agricultural advisors introduced Russian varieties of sunflower. By the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the urban snacks market was flooded with Chinese food, pizza, chips, and burgars, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The economic liberalization in the 1980s resulted in the agreements with foreign companies to manufacture popular western brands of food and beverages.

### 5.2 Food Behaviour

Food in our culture, represents ritual purity and group membership. For example, Jain temple complexes include a dining hall, which serves vegetarian food. Sikhs follow religious services with a communal meal called the \textit{langar}. Hindus do not eat beef and for the Muslims pork and alcohol is prohibited. Fasts are observed by both, the Hindus and Muslims. This ritual practice is generally observed by the women among the Hindus. The Muslims, on the other hand, may not eat anything between the dawn and sunset during the Ramadan (Ramazan) period.

### 5.3 Classification of Food

The food culture of the subcontinent has many similarities with that of the Middle East and Mediterranean region. On the basis of its quality, the food is generally classified into two – hot and cold. In Indian tradition, the concept of five basic substances \((panchatatva)\) is very popular. These include earth, water, fire, air (mind), and sky (ether). Their respective
combinations determine three special qualities – *kapha* (earth and water), *pitta* (fire), and *vatha* (air and sky). *Kapha* is characterized by courage since it is not linked to knowledge. Fire symbolizes excitement, energy, and passion. So, *pitta* type of food is associated with intelligence, disciplined knowledge, and pleasures. The heat promotes courage and excitement. The food such as pork, beef, fish, etc. and intoxicants enhances courage while bitter and salty food make a person excited and restless for taking action. The “cold” food promotes spirituality. These include dairy products, honey, chicken, eggs and wine. Human nature and quality is also determined by the food habit. So, one can balance too much heat with cold food or *vice versa*. Consuming a particular type of food is also related to the climatic conditions. For example, cold foods are suitable in the summer. In our culture, a particular food habit is also associated with the identity of a community in many cases. For instance, the Brahmans of many regions do not eat onion, garlic or non-vegetarian food because it causes much excitement, whereas the Rajputs prefer meat and drinks to maintain their vigour. However, at present this cannot be applied to all members of the community.

5.4 The Sanctity of Kitchen

The kitchen in Indian homes is a sacred place. The ritual purity is maintained in cooking and serving the food. The modern lifestyle, though, has brought about many changes in serving, etc., on special occasions the traditional practices are followed. A general traditional practice is to offer the cooked food to the fire and other divinities before serving it to the family members or guests. In our culture, one is uncomfortable with the idea of *jootha*, that is, if it is first eaten by someone else other than for whom it is served or is leftover by someone. Even many persons eating in one plate is not considered pure.

5.5 Regional Flavours or Cuisines

Now, we shall discuss about the popular flavours or cuisines of different regions.

Starting with the northwestern region, we find that the food culture has been influenced by the invaders or immigrants since long past. The Afghani dishes such as *naan*, *kebab*, etc. are popular. The Mughal rulers brought in the Turkish and Persian influence with certain refinement. In today’s Delhi and Punjab, the favourite foods include *tandoori* chicken, *keema* (minced meat), *chosle-bhature*, *paneer*, *raita* etc. The people prefer bread/chapati/roti made of wheat of maize flour more than the rice.

In the extreme north, Kashmiris use ingredients such as saffron, mushrooms, lotus roots, etc. for cooking. They prepare tea with cardamom, almonds, and sweeten it with a little sugar, which is called *kahva*. A *samovar*, a heated urn for making tea, is fired up throughout the day to keep the tea warm.

In the west, Rajasthani food consists of millet, dairy products, and lentils. The commonly used ingredients are onion, red chilli, garlic, etc. The Rajputs prefer meat. *Daal-baati* is a popular item in Rajasthan. Gujrati dishes are generally cooked without onion and garlic due to a strong Jain influence. The food items are sweetened with different agents. Other dishes include *kadhi*, spiced noodles, *papad*, *pakoras*, etc. The Maharashtra region was located away from the Mughal control. So, there was not much impact of Moghubflavours. The people prefer spiced vegetables of various types, though the fish is common in the coastal belt. In Goa, the food habit is very much influenced by the European habits, especially that of the Portuguese. This is because it was a colony of the Portuguese. The commonly used items include coconut milk,
tamarind, garlic, chilies, cinnamon, curry leaves, peanut, cashew nut, etc. Goanese are fond of meat.

In south, the food of Kerala is different from other southern states, though with a few common dishes. Coconut oil is a very common ingredient for cooking dishes. The flavours vary from sweet banana and coconut to sour lime, fresh green mango and yoghurt. The food is spicy with curry leaves. Rice is the common diet and seafood including fish features in many dishes. Rice products like idali, dosa, etc. with spicy sambhar are prepared in every home. Nevertheless, payasam is the sweet dish and rasam serves as a soup. The influence of the food habits of Syrian Christians is very much seen in Kerala. Of the meat of various animals, beef and lamb stew is much preferred.

The cuisine of Tamilnadu, in the far south on the east coast, include idli, dosa, vada, sambhar, appam, iddiappam, uttapam, rasam etc. A dosa is crisp pancake made from fermented rice and dal (pulse). It is often stuffed with potato or onion filling and is called masala dosa. Idli is steamed rice cake. UTTAPAM vaguely resembles a pizza. Sea fish is available in plenty in coastal areas.

Andhra Pradesh has spicy and sour dishes. The sour taste comes from the use of tamarind, lemon and unripe mangoes. This sour flavour has been probably inherited from pre-Mughal Persians, Turkish and Arab traders who were fond of vinegar and pomegranates.

In Orissa, rice is the staple diet. Special preparation of rice after its fermentation, is very much liked. Different varieties of fish in coastal areas are other important part of the diet.

West Bengal and other northeastern regions prefer rice, fish, prawns, milk-based sweets, etc. The people generally use mustard oil or paste for cooking. The Bengalis are known for their sweet tooth. Bengali sweets are famous, the rosogullahs being the most common. The sweets are made of milk, sugar, almond cream, etc. In the extreme northeastern states, the tribal culture has a great influence on the eating habits. They prefer non-vegetarian diet.

The areas covered by the fertile Gangetic valley including the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar produce many varieties of fruits and vegetables. The cultivation of the rabi and kharif crops on large scale significantly adds both wheat and rice to the menu. Many kinds of lentils are also included in the daily food. Besides the mango of many varieties being the favourite fruit, this region produces many species of fruit. Many forms of products such as sattu (roasted gram and barley flour), chiwda (rice flakes or flattened rice), mudhi (puffed rice), etc. are consumed as snacks. Litti with chokha or mutton is very popular in Bihar. Litti is the flour-cake stuffed with sattu, and the chokha is a spicy preparation of fried brinjal, peas, etc. The people are also fond of many sweets and dishes prepared using milk, butter, dry fruits, etc.

**Intext Questions:**

7. Which period is characterised by the beginning of food production?

8. Name any three fruits introduced by Babur in India.

9. Name any two Brazilian crops introduced in India.

10. Which are the three types of food in Indian tradition classified on the basis of their special qualities?

11. Name the regions associated with following food or drinks.
12. (a) kahva, (b) daal-baati, (c) rasam, (d) uttapam, (e) rosgullahs, (f) litti-chokha, and (g) sweet kadhi.

Conclusion

The discussion about various aspects of the cultures, especially popular cultures, in the subcontinent provides information about the various traditions in different spheres followed in different regions. These features link a particular region to its history and identity. The traditional folk literature, arts and crafts, etc. reflect the way of life. Many of these practices have been continuing since ancient period, though some modifications or refinement can be observed in many cases. Nevertheless, the development of tourism and modernization has affected the forms of cultures. Thus, to maintain their originality and sanctity, it is essential that tourism should take into account their preservation rather than distorting or destroying them. Our approach must be sensitive to the maintenance of our cultural essence and efflorescence.

Long Questions:

7. Discuss the concept of 'Popular Culture' and its usage in different contexts.
8. What is meant by 'Folklore'? Explain.
9. Discuss about the tradition of tirthas and tirtha-yatras in our cultures.
10. Discuss the dress pattern of males and females in any two regions in the Indian subcontinent.
11. Write an essay on the tradition of various crafts present in our cultures and their evolution since ancient period.
12. Distinguish between the food habits in North India and South India with suitable examples.

Suggested Readings:

CHAPTER 8 B

CULTURE AS COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

“Prolixity is not alien to us in India. We are able to talk at some length.” (Amartya Sen: The Argumentative Indian). It is our nature to communicate. And not just as Indians but all humans from the beginning of time to the present, and in every culture or geographical grouping and setting, have had the innate ability to communicate. Other living species and certain machines communicate, but they do not necessarily duplicate the quality of human communication. Among living species, we accept as basic that humans are the only genuine symbol building, - using, and – manipulating animals, and the only genuine tool-building, -using, and –manipulating animals. Only we can make tools which build tools. Despite recent dramatic scientific discoveries in studying other forms of animal communication, our ability to work with symbols and tools remain unique.

Several premises emerge. Communication and culture are both processes. Communication, like culture, is a human necessity. Communication always occurs at the human level, both intra-personally and inter-personally when human interaction is involved. Certain communicative acts are involuntary, causing the communicator never to exercise total control of the communication event. At the same time, culture itself makes it possible to every human being to exert partial control over his or her culture and communication. Often we seek to control or influence the attitudes or behaviour of others in a positive or negative way.

Communication and culture are inseparably linked. Both are of primary importance. They become linked through communication within our own cultural setting, and through inter-cultural communication. Thus, cultural communication occurs interpersonally and collectively.

Culture and Communication are process

Life, culture, and communication are ongoing, changing, and evolving processes without precise beginnings or endings. All such processes may be isolated artificially to study or analyses as processes. Still, such processes are essential part of the long term history of the individual, the culture, or human history. Most of us develop self concepts throughout our lives, in the context of the cultural environment around us. Somehow, the total development of our own individual culture and culture at the broadest human levels has played an important part in leading us to our own self-identity. As individuals, we are constantly changing. We constantly create our cultural traditions, norms, and values and pass them on to others through the ongoing process of communication and social discourse.

We act upon culture through communication

Culture is often defined as the traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, values, and thought-patterning which are passed down from generation to generation. Implicit, too, in a definition of culture is the ability to control one’s environment at least to a partial extent. As humans, we never can control our cultural setting entirely, but the very nature of culture is that in consists of
those characteristics which make us truly human within a specific social setting. Thus, although all humans are normally blessed with the same biological characteristics, it is our specific culture which allows us to determine partially how we will utilize normal biological functions. For example, all normal men and women have the innate ability to eat, sleep, move, and undertake other bodily functions. It is culture, however, that teaches us how to manipulate our biological environment to make it our cultural environment also. While animals react to culture, we act creatively upon it.

Communication and culture are so closely bound together that virtually all human social interaction is culturally linked. Even when we engage unconsciously or consciously in intra-or-interpersonal communication, our own cultural background affects all our actions and reactions. We have relatively little choice about much of our cultural heritage and background. In other words, we carry our cultural baggage with us and cannot isolate ourselves from our cultural roots. Still, it is possible either by accident or through design, for children to be moved entirely out of the culture into which they were born, and into a totally new culture. They may never recognize that they were once members of an alien culture. Biologically, such children inherit certain traits which will affect their cultural development, but the new cultural environment itself may be more important in such a case. The adult who seeks to drop old cultural habits to take new ones rarely do so completely, especially if culture penetrates to the entire roots of one’s nervous system. Since a major aspect of cultural transmittal does include the passing down of cultural traits, it is clear that many of these contributions affect the individual largely unconsciously.

It is a given fact that all humans possess a similar potential for complimentary communicative and cultural development. These developments are always affected by many factors. Culture transcends time and space. The age in which a person lives, the locality, the climate, the geography, and many other factors deeply influence the way he or she communicates as a cultural being.

The rich variety of the human character evolving in different time sequences and localities is a feature which both unites us and pulls us apart. Many studies have illustrated that the more that people have in common with each other, the less likely they are to suffer serious breakdowns in communication or cultural distortion. Unfortunately, despite the closest personal and cultural affinities, communication breakdowns and cultural distortion continue to be frequent. When the differences among members of distinct cultures become intensified, it is no wonder that greater tensions develop.

Our sophisticated modern world has potentially reduced itself to a global village by the rapid expansion and distribution of communication networks such as the telephone, communication satellites, and jet airplanes. Generally, we are unable to communicate personally with all other humans alive today. Nevertheless, it is now possible to communicate collectively with more people in the world simultaneously than existed in the entire world a few centuries ago. As more and more control in exerted over communication and culture through the human applications of technology, an understanding of communication and culture and their linkages becomes of paramount importance.

**Cultural components of communication**

The communication even can be seen as total culture communicating, or as a major communicating situation of the culture itself. The culture’s messages, its communicators, its
codes by which the messages are presented and interpreted, and its channels or media serve as other important communication components.

The fundamental issues can also be viewed in the context of major aspects of culture, including such cultural components as perceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, beliefs, norms, values, and thought-patterns.

Human social life depends upon the constant development and varied uses of modes of communication and upon shared and contested understandings of the world, necessitating the systematic study of communication and culture, and of their mediation through a variety of channels. In a regional, national and global order in which the cultural and communications industries play an increasingly central role, and forms of social and political organization and creative expression are touched at every point by media forms and practices, such study becomes even more vital.

**Culture is communicated**

You are familiar with the concept that culture is an accumulated store of symbols, ideas and material products which are transmitted from one generation to the other. Cultural forms regulate social activities. Thus, in the present context, cultural processes of change show the various ways through which Indian culture responds to numerous changes earlier introduced in India. The sources of change fall under two broader categories--endogenous and exogenous.

While endogenous sources of change orginate from within the society, exogenous sources flow from outside a particular society. Changes in the cultural structure of India have emanated from both endogenous and exogenous sources. In the following sections, the significance of these cultural processes has been discussed with the help of four concepts namely, Sanskritisation, Islamisation, Westernisation and Secularisation.

Anthropologists have been deliberating on the question: Why do humans have culture? There have been books written on the subject that explain the origins, development and function of culture in society.

Actually humans are human because they have culture. The emergence and evolution of humans are coeval with the emergence and evolution of culture. Formation and acquisition of culture is precisely the point of departure between the humans and non-humans like living beings.

What is culture then? Though it is a very familiar term widely brandied about in every day parlance as well as scholarly discourse, when it comes to definition we all fall into a mire of confusion, mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought. The modern connotations of this highly evocative word are very recent. In Indian languages, the equivalents of “culture” acquired its current meanings only after the First World War. Rabindra Nath Tagore lamented the absence of an equivalent Bengali term for the English word “culture”. It was then that the great linguist Sunithi Kumar Chatterjee came forward to save the situation by suggesting the adoption of “sanskritic” for culture. The usage of this word in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi etc. also could be traced to the post-First World War decade.

All these goes to prove not just the evolution of the meaning of the word but the evolution, transformation and even metamorphosis of the concept itself – the concept of culture, its nature and functions. Both, the material culture of the anthropologists and the mental culture and cultural products of non-anthropologists, were always recognized as very vital to human life.
and society, but relation of culture to power structure of society and its hegemonic patterns and their ideological underpinnings are new discoveries of the recent one or two decades – generally termed as post-modern era.

**Cultural media and Cultural messages**

It is through communication that culture is inherited, exchanged and transformed. And communication needs media. Almost 250 centuries ago human began communication through the media of lines, colours and shapes, paintings and artifacts. About the symbolic communication through abstract and arbitrary lines. The alphabet is a newfangled fashion in human history with no more than fifty centuries. For many centuries only microscopic minority of society had the skill and permission to handle this device, which may be termed the first technologisation of the word. Even in this century more than half the humanity is illiterate.

Now on the threshold of the 21st century, we have traveled a long way form the days when our forefathers discovered this wonderful device of the alphabets – skins perchaments, palm leaves, bricks, metal sheets, paper, printing – and back again to live sound and image communication of the dawn of civilization with our electronic gadgets.

The growth and expansion of media technology at break-neck speed and hair breadth precision increased human communication skills and effectiveness immensely. Accumulation and propagating of knowledge and ideas have become truly global reaching out to every nook and corner of earth and even to ethereal expanses. But along with such benefits dangerous and counter-productive hazards too.

According to ancient Indian sages, culture or sanskriti is the sum total of faculties of the individual which enables him to be attund to his immediate environment on the one hand and to the historical past on the other. The idea of continuity and the need for adaptation and assimilation was inherent in this concept.

In ancient India, ideas moved faster than objects. The whole of India bears the impress of certain common ideals and institutions which distinguish the civilization of India from all other civilizations of the world and marks it out “as a unit in the history of the social, religious and intellectuals development of mankind”.

Thus, in these very early days we find the beginnings of the civilizations and culture which were to flower so abundantly and richly in subsequent ages, and which have continued, inspite of many changes, to our own day. The basic ideals, the governing concepts were taking shape, and literature and philosophy, art and drama, and all other activities of life were conditioned by these ideals and world view.

**Culture must be communicated**

The urge to express, to communicate, to share something beautiful gave birth to performing arts. In this process, the living progressive impulse to the timeless universal gets a coherent shape in creative designs. Tradition plays an important role in the creative artistic process particularly in the field of folk performing arts. Folk art is functional and spontaneous. Every activity in the village has its relevant music, dance or theatre. The folk performing art is changing its structure continuously over countries modifying itself to the needs of the changing situations making it functionally relevant to the society. Tradition is the process of the transmission of age-old values and the contextual manifestation and interpretation of the universal. Tradition is not only a repetitive behavioral pattern or some persistent symbol or motif in community culture. It is also an assertion of an identity, a revival and regeneration of
the life-force of the community. The traditional performing art is an aesthetic of the constant concept of belongingness and affinity in a cultural context. In tribal societies, art is an integral part of the general life of the people. Every activity in the tribal village has its relevant music, dance and theatre.

In the process of cultural change, innovation has a special role. The roots are unchanging, the process is continuous, yet the fusion of newer concepts and ideas regenerate newer forms of creative expression. It is the same tree with the same root. It is the sap which unfolds itself in a variety of leaves and flowers. The essence of creative existence manifests itself in many forms. The degree of innovation depends on the degree of the evolution of society and its sense of cultural identity or self image. Tradition and its transmission implies the value judgment about the desirability or superiority of some transmitted elements from the past.

**Sruti and Smriti: Communication Media**

The Sruti and the Smriti are the two initial authoritative communication media in Indian culture. Sruti literally means what is heard, and Smriti means what is remembered. Sruti is revelation and Smriti is tradition. The Upanishad is a Sruti. The Bhagavad Gita is a Smriti.

Sruti is direct experience. Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of religion and left a record of them for the benefit of posterity. These records constitute the Vedas. Hence, Sruti is primary authority. Smriti is a recollection of that experience. These Smritis have varied from time to time. The injunctions and prohibitions of the Smritis are related to the particular social surroundings. As these surroundings and essential conditions of the Hindu society changed from time to time, new Smritis had to be compiled by the sages of different ages and different parts of India.

**Indian culture maintains unbroken continuity through communication**

The older strata of India’s cultural life go back far beyond anything in the West. Some practices and beliefs of popular Hinduism, for instance, the cults of the sacred bull and the pipal tree, are as old as the protohistoric Harappan culture, and probably even older. In fact every generation in India, for over 4,000 years, has bequeathed something, if only very little, to posterity.

No land on earth has such a long cultural continuity as India. In India the Brahman still repeats in his daily worship Vedic hymns composed over 3,000 years ago, and tradition recalls heroic chieftans and the great battles fought by them at about the same time. In respect of the length of continuous tradition China comes second to India and Greece makes a poor third.

A civilization may be known by its ideals and the means by which these are sought to be realized. No observer of the complicated picture of ancient and medieval Indian polity can fail to note the ideals which were affirmed. He will find them voiced in adages and maxims as numerous as their companions, the witty formulate that embody the essence of statecraft. The ideals were common to all regions, and were shared by learned and illiterate alike. Our treatises on law and politics contain principles popularized through the epics and the Puranas. The essence of good manners and good policy reached the uneducated by such means, while the worldly wisdom of these texts fed the compilers of fables and less juvenile handbooks. The great popularity of Chanakya-niti, that great pool of wise saying on ‘good policy’, proves that techniques of managing any social or political question were not the perquisite of courtiers.

There is something unique about the continuity of a cultural tradition through five thousand years of history, of invasion and upheaval, a tradition which was widespread among the
masses and powerfully influenced them. Books and old monuments and past cultural achievements helped to produce some understanding of India.

Yet this is not a complete or wholly correct survey. If there had only been a long and unrelieved period of rigidity and stagnation, this might well have resulted in a complete break with the past, the death of an era, and the erection of something new on its ruins. There has not been such a break and there is a definite continuity. Also, from time to time, vivid periods of renaissance have occurred, and some of them have been long and brilliant. Always there is visible an attempt to understand and adapt the new and harmonize it with the old, or at any rate with parts of the old which were considered worth preserving. Often that old retains an external form only, as a kind of symbol, and changes its inner content. But something vital and living continues, some urge driving the people in a direction not wholly realized, and always a desire for synthesis between the old and the new. It was this urge and desire that kept them going and enabled them to absorb new ideas while retaining much of the old.

Everywhere in India we have a cultural background which has exerted a powerful influence on our lives. This background was a mixture of popular philosophy, tradition, history, myth, and legend, and its was not possible to draw a line between any of these. Even the entirely uneducated and illiterate shared this background. The old epics of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and other books, in popular translations and paraphrases, were widely known among the masses, and every incident and story and moral in them was engraved on the popular mind and gave a richness and content to it. Illiterate villagers would know hundred of verses by heart and their conversation would be full of references to them or to some story with a moral, enshrined in some old classic.

Some example of culture as communication

Before the discovery of the Indus Valley civilization, the Vedas were supposed to be the earliest records we possess of Indian culture. There was much dispute about the chronology of the Vedic period. Whatever the exact date may be, it is probable that this literature is earlier than that of either Greece or Israel, that in fact, it represents some of the earliest documents of the human mind that we possess. Max Muller has called it: ‘The first word spoken by the Aryan man’.

Indian mythology is richer, vaster, very beautiful, and full of meaning. I have often wondered what manner of men and women they were who gave shape to these bright dreams and lovely fancies, and out of what gold mine of thought and imagination they dug them.

Looking at scripture then as a product of the human mind, we have to remember the age in which it was written, the environment and mental climate in which it grew, the vast distance in time and thought and experience that separates it from us.

There was the unfolding of the human mind in the earliest stages of thought. The Vedas (from the root vid, to know) were simply meant to be a collection of the existing knowledge of the day; they are a jumble of many things; hymns, prayers, rituals for sacrifice, magic, magnificent nature poetry.

The Rig Veda, the first of the Vedas, is probably the earliest book that humanity possesses. In it we can find the first outpourings of the human mind, the glow of poetry, the rapture at nature’s loveliness and mystery. In India, as in China, learning and eruditions have always stood high in public esteem, for learning was supposed to imply both superior knowledge and virtue. Before the learned man the ruler and the warrior have always bowed. The form is
terse, often of question and answer between pupil and teacher, and it has been suggested that the *Upanishads* were some kind of lecture notes by the teacher or taken down by his disciples.

The two great epics of ancient India – the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* – probably took shape in the course of several hundred years, and even subsequently additions were made to them. They deal with the early days of the Indo-Aryans, their conquests and civil wars, when they were expanding and consolidating themselves, but they were composed and compiled later. There are no books anywhere which have exercised such a continuous and pervasive influence on the mass mind as these two. Dating back to a remote antiquity, they are still a living force in the life of the Indian people.

Translations and adaptations, and in those innumerable ways in which tradition and legend spread and become part of the texture of a people’s life. They represent the typical Indian method of catering all together for various degrees of cultural development, from the highest intellectual to the simple unread and untaught villager. They make us understand somewhat the secret of the old Indians in holding together a variegated society divided up in many ways and graded in caste, in harmonizing their discords, and giving them a common background of heroic tradition and ethical living.

Popular open-air performances where the *Ramayana* story was enacted and vast crowds came to see it and join in the processions. Indian mythology is not confined to the epics; it goes back to the Vedic period and appears in many forms and garbs in Sanskrit literature. The poets and the dramatists take full advantage of it and build their stories and lovely fancies round it. This lack of historical sense does not affect the masses, for as elsewhere and more so than elsewhere, they build their view of the past from the traditional accounts and myth and story that were handed to them from generation to generation. This imagined history and mixture of act and legend became widely known and gave to the people a strong and abiding cultural background.

The *Mahabharata* itself is a storehouse of sociological and other data and many more books will not doubt yield useful information.

Another example is Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* of the 4th century B.C., which gives details of the political, social, economic and military organization of the Maurya Empire. An earlier account, which definitely takes us back to the pre-Buddhist period in India, is contained in the collection of the *Jataka* tales. They are supposed to deal with the previous incarnations of Buddha and have become an important part of Buddhist literature. But the stories are evidently much older and they deal with the pre-Buddhistic period and give us much valuable information about life in India in those days.

The *Jatakas* deal with the period when the final amalgamation of the two principal races of India, the Dravidians and the Aryans, was taking place. They reveal ‘a multiform and chaotic society’ which resists more or less every attempt at classification and about which there can be no talk of an organization according to caste in that age. The *Jatakas* may be said to represent the popular tradition as contrasted with the priestly or *Brahminic* tradition and the *Kshatriya* or ruling class tradition.

What Ashoka felt and how he acted are known to us in his own words in the numerous edicts he issued, carved in rock and metal. Those edicts, spread out all over India, are still with us, and they conveyed his messages not only to his people but to posterity.

Thus, Indian culture is a mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold includes almost every aspect of the life of India.
Cultural change is also communicated

Change is characteristic of all cultures but the rate and direction of change vary considerably. The factors that influence the direction of such changes are the degrees to which a culture encourages as well as approves flexibility and the particular needs of the culture at a specific point of time. Even when the cultural changes are supposed to be beneficial, it may be difficult for an individual within a culture to accept the change, because of an individual in a society is guided by certain norms and beliefs. Hence for securing social change and development, what is required is the change in the beliefs and the value systems of the individual and thus making him more adaptive and responsive to organic development and growth. This is the role of the communicator in the society. The communication potential of Indian traditional performing art has been proved time and again by many instances of national importance. The traditional media became effective in many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi. After independence, the union government continued to utilize these traditional performing arts to convey the message and to generate awareness of the development programmes in the rural areas.

Traditional art forms have survived for centuries and they will survive in the future for their flexibility. They could be the media for social change in rural India. Traditional performing arts being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the message of change, development and growth. As Rabindranath Tagore put it aptly, “All traditional structure of art must have sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicate or virile, to grow with its growth, to dance with its rhythm”.

Conclusion

Culture and communication are closely associated with each other. All human interactions including actions and reactions are linked to the cultural background. The cultural traits are either inherited acquired and transmitted through communication. In modern times, the rapid expansion of communication networks due to application of newer technologies has made it possible to communicate collectively to wider audience in efficient manner.

Long Questions

4. Discuss the relationship between the culture and communication.
5. Explain how Indian culture maintains unbroken continuity through communication.
6. Discuss some examples from our ancient traditions to show culture as communication.

Suggested Readings:
   ________, *Cultural History of India*, Oxford University Press.
2. Ainslie T Embree,.., and Stephen Hay, eds. *Sources of Indian Tradition*.
3. Mode, Heinz, and Subhodh Chandra. *Indian Folk Art*.
Introduction

Art as an expression of a particular person or group of people, makes up a large part of culture, as it is symbolic of traits, morals, and religious characteristics. An artist is defined as “a person whose creative work shows sensitivity and imagination”. That sensitivity and imagination is what can make a culture and something that influences many parts of our lives.

The arts provide a way for people to explore new possibilities “to notice the world”. Art defines a culture because “culture is a pattern of behaviours, ideas, and values shared by a group”. Without art, what is a culture? A way of life

There is evidence that since ancient times humans had art as part of their culture. Art and culture were entwined from the beginning; art in its most basic form after all is a means of communication between one person and another. The first cave paintings were popular culture because they were the culture. They were pictographic representations of the lives of people, who drew them. The same concept still applies (whether the artist intends it or not) to contemporary work today, albeit in a more complex way.

Historically, the arts flourished under the support of two main categories of patron-- the larger Hindu temples and the princely rulers of states both small and large. There are three main motives for a patronage of art and culture--piety, prestige and pleasure. Art patronage was good public relations for rulers.

Patronage and its Rationale

The products of cultural activities and the institutions for their productions display an enormous diversity and accordingly ways for financing them also vary. Some activities may be carried out entirely on a commercial basis. Others need public intervention for their survival. The main issue in connection to subsidies, in addition to that of the public good character already discussed seems to be the fact that the production period for cultural goods is very long, as in their economic lifetime. It may extend over much longer periods than the lifetimes of individual artists or scientists, so that it becomes practically impossible for the cultural workers to recover the discounted values of all the future revenues, provided they can at all the anticipated.

Only after very long periods do the prices of cultural commodities reach substantial values, and this only for embodied goods. Painters, sculptors and architects are thus better off than composers, writers, and scientists. The uncertainty, inherent in future evaluations, however, makes the situation difficult even for those producing embodied cultural goods.

Investors in such objects tend to regard them as speculative investments, and then everything pertinent to the investors’ volatile expectations comes to play. For these reasons the market can seldom provide for an adequate production of culture, and patron becomes an essential ingredient in this context.
Motivations for patronizing the arts

First, we must begin with a clear motivation for patronizing the arts. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to assay the reasons for the necessity and purposes of art, let us at least say that art is an inevitable part of what man does. Being created in the image of God and the with the capacity for imagination and thought, man will have his art. You can be sure that the most primitive and wretched of all human societies is a culture which has surrounded itself with artistic objects (though what they mean by art and use it for may differ). It is therefore not a question of “Shall we have art or not?” but a question of “Which art should we support?”

Secondly, we must recognize, especially in India, that art is always religious in nature. This should in no way be considered an exaggerated claim, since it is clear that all of life is inherently religious. Men may or may not acknowledge their religious nature, just as they may or may not acknowledge their Creator, and the art they produce may or may not be consistent with their religious beliefs. Nevertheless, all art is religious. Whether we are considering the Vedas, a Chola bronze, classical dance and music, or the Taj Mahal, all art reflects a certain worldview, which is to say a certain religion. This means that art is not neutral. Something is being asserted about God and the world He has made, and that something measures up to varying degrees to what God Himself has revealed to us.

Therefore, we have a clear motive for care in selecting the art with which to adorn our environments. We must never permit ourselves to be lulled to sleep by our contemporary ease of procuring art or by the surfeit of goods which has been spread before us. Every artistic choice we make (and we make many during a typical day) is a vote for a particular piece of art, and that vote has consequences as real and effective as the political votes we cast.

When we speak of patronage of art, we are not speaking necessarily of Art or the fine arts. Sometimes the term ‘art’ is reserved for the art of painting, and sometimes it also includes all of the fine arts. But art is never limited to these. Look around you – you will be surprised at the amount of art the 20th century man has surrounded himself with, much of it unconsciously.

Finally, our motivation in patronizing the arts should be to encourage those whose calling before the Lord is in the arts. We have much to learn from the artists in our midst, just as we have much to learn from those who are scientists, businessmen, or housewives. Artists are a virtual part of the body of culture, perhaps akin to our eyes. Without them our sight begins to fail.

A brief history of patronage in India

Any student of history, broadly speaking, is well-equipped to grasp immediately the history of patronage. The history of patronage follows the history of culture. The vast scope of the Indian art mingles up with the cultural history, religions and philosophies which place art production and patronage in social and cultural contexts. Where monarchs have been ascendant, monarchical patronage has also reached its summit. When a particular religion has extended its kingdom, then ecclesiastical patronage has flourished with it. And wherever the middle class and common man have come into their own, then middle class and common patronage has become ubiquitous. The following sketch of patronage through the ages is not meant to be complete or definitive but only suggestive.

Art appears not because it is imposed from the outside but because of the internal needs of society. Public architecture and sculpture in ancient India, as in many other pre-modern
civilizations, was created to satisfy religious needs. Faith alone, without the material wherewithal, could not realize such ambitious projects. There is a complex interaction between patronage and social institutions, and between artistic tradition and individual creativity, a phenomenon which Pierre Bourdieu aptly put as ‘the field of cultural production’. One of the problems of studying ancient Indian artists is their relative anonymity, commensurate with the their artisan status. Only exceptionally did the artists publicly declare their authorship.

Indian art is an expression of Indian life and thought attuned to its vast natural background and its socio-religious traditions. It is not exclusive or sectarian in the narrow sense of the term. Its style, technique or general tenor has nothing to do with any particular religious outlook. It is fed and fostered upon a vast store-house of Indian traditions, symbols and designs.

With about a 5000 years old culture, Indian art is rich in its tapestry of ancient heritage, medieval times, Mughal rule, British rule, Progressive art and now contemporary art.

The term Hindu, Jaina or Buddhist art is but a popular nomenclature to distinguish one group of monuments, including painting, cave temples and architecture, etc., from another standpoint of the predominance of one or the other religious theme. Hence, by Buddhist art is meant popularly those monuments and paintings which have for the main purpose the edification or popularization of Buddhism.

The earliest recorded art of India originated from a religious Hindu background, which was later replaced by a soaring popular Buddhist art. Moreover, from a timeless era art in India has been inspired by spiritualism and mystical relationship between man and god. Art in India had survived in its homeland and spread from time to time all over the world. This was possible because many kings who recognized budding talent patronized art and themselves were great connoisseurs. Each king has left a deep impression of his affinity to the artist community. Until today, art is patronized by the rich and famous in the country.

Development of Arts in India

Indian artists relied heavily on religious scriptures to draw inspiration. Since there was no restriction, they flourished under the patronage of rulers. Their art has survived the ravages of time and has a unique place in historical records. Water colors, charcoal, vegetable dyes were popular methods of painting. Fabric painting was extensive and Indian designers still adapt ancient patterns to modern fabrics. The purpose of art in ancient India was not just to adorn the walls. Each painting had a story to narrate. Visually ancient Indian art was colorful, aesthetic and appealing to naked eye. Mostly kings used to commission the artists to paint from inspiration. Stone and marble were also used to create art. Indian sculpture until today remains a mute testimony of the talent that emerged under many different kings. One of the many purposes of art was to spread the word around about the king and glorify his deeds. Good art symbolized the prosperity of many empires in ancient India. Most of the art was produced to promote religious activities. Most Hindu kings were well-wishers of Brahmin community. Art was an extension of their tribute and respect to the knowledgeable class. It is no surprise that most of the artwork of Hindu kings depict scenes from epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and other mythological stories which continue to inspire artists even now.

In India, whether a religion is governed by conduct or ritual, the final goal is to obtain communion with the Almighty. This goal is realized by different modes of worship. The study of religious art reveals the manner in which visual art has disseminated religious teaching, mythology and philosophy and aroused the fervor of the common man. The spiritual and ritual aspects of most native and foreign religions in India have manifested in artistic form using
visual, performing and literary arts as their media of expression. It is on this note of concurrence that one may look at Indian religious art with its icons, manuscripts and ritual accessories.

The pre-Vedic Harappan culture bequeathed to later times sacred animals and trees, the Mother Goddess, the preoccupation with personal cleanliness, and, less certainly, other aspects of Indian culture. From the Vedic Aryans came many of the gods, the Vedic hymns, some of the most important personal ritual of Hinduism, the patriarchal and patrilineal family systems, and the horse. Later Vedic times (circa 1000-600 BC) brought the passion of speculation on ultimate causes, the quest for the absolute, the doctrine of transmigration, the search for release from the cycle of rebirth, and mystical gnosis. In social life and material culture the same period saw the crystallization of the four classes (varnas) of Hindu society, the introduction of iron from Western Asia, the domestication of the elephant, the development of kingdoms out of tribal chieftanships. In the 300 following years, coined money became common, and writing, known in the time of the Harappan culture and later apparently forgotten, became widespread. Heterodox teachers, chief of whom was the Buddha, spread new doctrines which bypassed the gods, the Vedas, and the Brahmanas, and the era of civilization steadily expanded into the remoter parts of the subcontinent.

Political developments over the preceding led to the first great empire of India, that of the Mauryas, when for the first time most of the subcontinent was united under a single government. This period (circa 320-185 B.C.) produced the Machiavellian system of statecraft associated with the name of minister Kautilya, the reputed author of the famous Arthasastra. From the Mauryas also came the earliest surviving stone sculpture of India, the oldest artificial caves, and the most ancient Buddhist stupas. Under Asoka (circa 272-232 B.C.), Buddhism increased its influence, and was taken to Ceylon.

The 500 years between the Mauryas and the Guptas (circa 184 B.C. – A.D. 320) saw tremendous developments in Indian civilization, partly due to fresh influences brought in by various invaders and traders, and partly the result of internal developments. New forms of devotional religion emerged, centering around the gods. Magnificent art and sculptures gave way to meticulous carving of intricate detail without nobility of conception or design. The vigour and richness of language, powerful yet simple, were followed by highly ornate and complex literary forms.

It was an urban civilization, where the merchant class was wealthy and evidently played an important role. The streets, lined with stalls and what were probably small shops, give the impression of an Indian bazaar of today. Professor V.G. Childe says, “It would seem to follow that the craftsmen of the Indus cities were, to a large extent, producing ‘for the market’.”

Among the exports from India were silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewellery and gold (seldom silver). These were the main articles in which the merchant dealt. India, or rather north India, was famous for her weapons of war, especially for the quality of her steel, her swords and daggers.

There are books on the training of elephants, the breeding of horses, etc; each one of these are called a Shastra. This word has come to mean scripture or holy writ, but it was applied indiscriminately to every kind of knowledge and science, varying from mathematics to dancing.
Writing in India goes back to the most ancient times. Old pottery belonging to the Neolithic period is inscribed with writing in the Brahmi characters. Some of Ashoka’s inscriptions are in the Brahmi script while others, in the north-west, are in the Kharoshti script.

As early as the sixth or seventh century B.C., Panini wrote his great grammar of the Sanskrit language. He mentions previous grammars and already in his time Sanskrit had crystallized and become the language of an ever growing literature.

The study of astronomy was specially pursued and it often merged into astrology. Medicine had its textbooks and there were hospitals. Dhanwantri is the legendary founder of the Indian science of medicine. The best known old textbooks, however, date from the early centuries of the Christian era. These are by Charak on medicine of Sushruta on surgery. Charak is supposed to have been the royal court physician of Kansihka who had his capital in the north-west. These works enumerate a large number of diseases and give methods of diagnosis and treatment.

They deal with surgery, obstetrics, baths, diet, hygiene, infant-feeding, and medical education. The approach was experimental, and dissection of dead bodies was being practiced in the course of surgical training. Various surgical instruments are mentioned by Sushruta, as well as operations, including amputation of limbs, abdominal, caesarian section, cataract, etc. Wounds were sterilized by fumigation. In the 4th or 3rd century B.C. there were also hospitals for animals. This was probably due to the influence of Jainism and Buddhism with their emphasis on non-violence.

In mathematics the ancient Indians made some epoch-making discoveries notably that of the zero sign, of the decimal place value system, of the use of the minus sign, and the use in algebra of letters of the alphabet to denote unknown quantities. In the Arthashastra, we are given the weights and measures which were in use in North India in the 4th century B.C. They were used or careful supervision of the weights in the market places.

In the epic period we have frequent mention of some kind of forest universities, situated not far from a town or city, where students gathered round well-known scholars for training and education, which comprised a variety of subjects, including military training. These forest abodes were preferred so as to avoid distractions of city life and enable the students to lead a disciplined and continent life. After some years of this training they were supposed to go back and live as householders and citizens. Probably, these forest schools consisted of small groups, though there are indications that a popular teachers would attract large numbers.

But in the north-west, near modern Peshawar, there was an ancient and famous university at Takshashila or Taxila. This was particularly noted for science, especially medicine, and the arts, and people went to it from distant parts of India. The Jataka stories are full of instances of sons of nobles and Brahmins traveling, unattended and unarmed, to Taxila to be educated. During the Buddhist period it became also a centre of Buddhist scholarship and attracted Buddhist students from all over India and across the border.

There was a growth of luxury in the Mauryan Empire. Life became more complicated, specialized, and organized. Inns, hostleries, eating houses, serais, and gaming are evidently numerous; sects and crafts have their shows as too great a distraction from the life of the home and the fields. At the same time there were penalties for refusal to assist in organizing public entertainment. The King provided in amphitheatres, constructed for the occasion, dramatic, boxing, and other contests of men and animals, and also spectacles with displays of pictured
objects of curiosity...not seldom the streets were light for festivals. There were also royal processions and hunts.

Ashoka was a great builder and it has been suggested that he employed foreign craftsmen to assist in building some of his huge structures. This influence is drawn from the designs of some clustered columns which remind one of Persepolis. But even in those early sculptures and other remains, the characteristically Indian art tradition is visible.

Between Patliputra (Patna) and Gaya lie the impressive remains of Nalanda University, which was to become famous in later days. It is not clear when this began functioning and there are no records of it in Ashoka’s time.

The age of the Guptas, from the literary and artistic point of view, was a brilliant period. King of Kannauj, Harshavardhana, the king of Kannauj was a famous ruler, who thereafter built up a powerful state right across Northern and Central India. He was a poet and dramatist and gathered round his court many artists and poets, regarded as the ‘nine gems’, making his capital Ujjayini, a famous centre of cultural activities. Astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata was the first human known to have calculated the solar year accurately, and Kalidasa, ancient India’s greatest poet and playwright. So was Vatsyayana, who composed the Kamasutra. A contemporary reference to Gupta images as being ‘made beautiful by the science of citra’ suggests the existence of aesthetic manuals. Drama and lyrical poetry, written in courtly Sanskrit, reached unprecedented heights. The theatre was at its peak during this time of the Gupta era and many great dramatic authors received support for their work. Drama had precise rules of conduct and was codified in various pieces, making dramatic writing an art designed for the educated and was of no appeal to the Sudras and untouchables. Actors depended on the patronage of the kings and the wealthy, for there were no permanent theatre companies. Actors were constantly on the move from town to town, performing in courts, temples, or a place would be built for the occasion. The theatre was in a form of a rectangle where the audience sat according to caste or trade, but the untouchables and Sudras who were illiterate were excluded. The performances took place for religious or precio use festivals, and new works were presented in the spring. The actors were taken from the low castes, and had atrocious reputations, the actresses were considered to be part of the courtesans’ guild. The aristocracy enjoyed leisure through literature and the merchant class were able to enjoy it to a small extent. Ambitious stupas, viharas, and caityas continued to be raised all over India and beyond, as a complex network of Buddhist patronage stretching throughout theSilk route.

The patronage of Jain merchants rivaled that of royalty. These powerful urban merchants often acted as bankers to monarchs. The repeated invasions of North India did not affect the South directly. Indirectly they led to many people from the North migrating to the South and these included builders, craftsmen and artisans.

Kingship was an integral feature of Indian history and civilization. Ancient and medieval India was for the most part shared amongst many contending kingdoms and dynasties. Much of Indian history was thus a history of majesty and splendor, and of courtly pomp and opulence, despite the fact that kings spent a great part of their time warring as well. It was a history that saw royal patronage and indulgence in the arts reach unprecedented heights.

Court Patronage

In ancient India, kingship was an important office which entailed heavy public responsibility. Hindu legal texts set out the ideal that the king was expected to aim for. The Arthashastra, for example, lists the standards of royal existence, from the daily activities of the
king, his moral and public duties, to the qualities of his courtiers, councilors and servants. Numerous poets, painters, musicians and learned men also dwelt in the palace and enjoyed royal patronage. The Brahmins or priests were among the most honored members of the court.

The Islamic dynasty in India, composed of nineteen sovereigns who ruled from A.D. 1526 to 1858. Many of India’s greatest works of art and architecture were produced during the Mughal period. Under the patronage of Mughal sultans, court artisans produced many royal portraits and illustrated literary and historical texts. Domestic metal work, metal engraving, and jade carving also became prominent art form during the Mughal period. The red sandstone and marble masjid jami (Friday mosques) at the successive Mughal capitals of Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Fatehpur Sikri were erected during this period.

It was Shah Jahan (reigned A.D. 1627-1658) who built the Taj Mahal as a tomb garden for his wife, establishing it as the greatest creation of Mughal dynasty.

A typical court had not only its usual entourage of courtiers and literary scholars, but also an assemblage of highly skilled artisans. Indeed, it was primarily due to the patronage and financial support of royalty that some of the most splendid examples of art and architecture in India were created. Sculpture, painting and the decorative arts were commissioned to bolster the magnificence of the courts and the sovereignty of kings. Hindu rulers also believed that they would acquire merit by commissioning religious work of art. The Mughal emperors (A.D. 1526-1857), in particular, were ardent patrons and connoisseurs of the arts. Mughal autobiographies and diaries, were written not only by the monarchs but also by the ladies of the harem.

For much of India, the refined urbanity and elegant lifestyle of the Mughal Court, its standards of haute cuisine and its codification of Indian classical music remain the essential benchmark. Mughal blood sports were taken up by the British Raj, as was the game of polo. Mughal emperors took their sartorial elegance as seriously as their collections of curiosa, jewellery, and precious objects of jade and hardstone.

The Rajput maharajas, who had spent varying periods at the Mughal court after their subjugation, were influenced by the opulence they saw and began to commission decorative arts for their courts, some of which were no less inferior to those of the Mughals in terms of their quality and sophistication.

The courts of the Mughals, as well as the Deccani (A.D. 1500-1868) and Rajput rulers, had workshops attached to them. Some of these workshops (known as karkhanas or manufactories in the Muslim courts) were situated within the palace walls while others were established in cities away from the capital where local craftsmen were readily available.

The most skilled craftsmen were employed in the karkhanas and they were mostly indigenous workers. Such was the value of craftsmen that when Timur massacred the inhabitants of Delhi in A.D. 1398, he spared the Indian craftsmen and recruited large number into his service. The local artisans employed in the karkhanas were either converts to Islam or were former slaves. Mughal trained Muslim artists also entered into the service of the Rajput courts. The number of foreign craftsmen who came to India was fairly small. Many of the foreigners who were employed in the royal workshops were highly skilled craftsmen who usually acted as the guide and teacher of their local counterparts. Akbar, for example, employed Persian masters to train Indian artists in the atelier that he founded. During Jahangir’s reign (A.D. 1605-1627), European and Persian artisans entered into the ranks of the karkhanas. In this way the expatriates did exert some influence on the style and decoration of objects, as is
evident from the artworks of this period, which show discernible European and Persian elements. As they were expected to attain a high standard of excellence, the craftsmen in the royal workshops were closely supervised. Jahangir, for example, personally selected his craftsmen, and sometimes even oversaw the production of their work.

Given the specialization of craftsmen and the fact that skills were often passed down from father to son, the production centers in the various regions came to specialize in a craft or technique which, in time, had come to be associated with that region. For example, Bidar in the Deccan was famous for its bidri (metal with silver inlay) industry while the Kotah region in Rajasthan was well known for its resist dyed fabrics. The materials from which the objects were made as well as the degree of sophistication and ornamentation were important indicators of the wealth and standing of those who commissioned them. Thus, objects made of jade and gold were usually produced for the Mughal court. Imperial items were also generally more ornate and spectacular than those made for the other Indian courts. The finest articles produced by the royal workshops were usually given away as gifts or were used for ceremonial purposes. However, functional objects such as weapons, carpet weights, huqqas (a traditional instrument of smoking using coal, water and tobacco) and drinking vessels were just as elaborately designed and ornamented. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether an object was made explicitly for a utilitarian purpose or for a purely decorative or ceremonial function.

Each religion and philosophical system provided its own nuances, vast metaphors and similes, rich associations, wild imaginations, humanization of gods and celestial beings, characterization of people, the single purpose and ideal of life to be interpreted in art.

During the Mughal period the incipient ‘urbanism’ affected the subject matter of art, hitherto the preserve of the three great religions, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Mughal painting expressed lively engagement with the external world, which may be loosely termed as ‘realism’. The art of the book had transformed patronage during the Sultanate, a process that reached a climax during the Mughal era. Art became an autonomous activity, fostering a close relationship between the patron and the artist; it ceased to be a communal concern. The Mughal emperors were fervent patrons of the arts, their multifaceted personalities informing their patronage – Akbar, the brilliant creator of a vast efficient empire; Jahangir, the endearing hedonist; and Shah Jahan, the royal architect and avid collector of precious objects–each was unique in his personal style of patronage.

**Folk and Tribal Consciousness**

Folk and tribal arts in India take on different manifestations through varied medium such as pottery, painting, metalwork, paper-art, weaving and designing of artefacts such as jewellery and toys.

They differ from the classical mainstream art forms, in the sense that folk and tribal art traditions have been evolving and transforming at a much greater pace. They are the visual expressions of people belonging to different cultural and social groups.

Folk and Tribal arts represent the kernel of energy of the respective communities as a whole. It is a living, changing art form which changes with time, necessity, memories and experiences of peoples. It is the expression of people whose life is tuned to the rhythms of nature and its laws of cyclic change and whose life is entwined with the energies of the earth.

Often Puranic gods and legends are transformed into contemporary forms and familiar images. Fairs, festivals, and local deities play a vital role in these arts. It is an art where life and creativity are inseparable.
The tribal arts have a unique sensitivity, as the tribal people possess an intense awareness very different from the settled and urbanized people. Their minds are supple and intense with myth, legends, snippets from epic, multitudinous gods born out of dream and fantasy. Their art is an expression of their life and holds their passion and mystery.

Folk art also includes the visual expressions of the wandering nomads. This is the art of people who are exposed to changing landscapes as they travel over the valleys and highlands of India. They carry with them the experiences and memories of different spaces and their art consists of the transient and dynamic pattern of life. The rural, tribal and arts of the nomads constitute the matrix of folk expression. The folk spirit has a tremendous role to play in the development of art and in the overall consciousness of indigenous cultures.

**Patronage and Audience under Colonial Rule**

British colonial rule had a great impact on Indian art. The first sign of change was the loss of courtly patronage in India with the fall of the Indian powers in the late 18th century. The old patrons of art became less wealthy and influential, and Western art more ubiquitous. Rabindranath Tagore, referred as the father of Modern Indian art, had introduced Asian styles and Avant garde western styles into Indian Art.

The East India Company employed artists for its wide ranging economic surveys and documentation of natural history. British residents commissioned paintings of Indian flora and fauna from Indian artists who were trained in western techniques. The new rulers also engaged artists to produce ethnographic subjects, especially castes and professions, which enjoyed popularity during the Enlightenment.

The rise of Calcutta as a rapidly expanding urban centre drew village scroll painters (patuas) to the city. A more revolutionary development was the introduction of the techniques of mechanical reproduction. By the end of the 19th century Calcutta had become a staple of popular consumption.

As traditional art declined, the Indian rulers as well as the leading Indian elite turned to collecting western art and sitting for portraits by European artists. By the middle of the 19th century, the taste of the elite, and to some extent of the underclass, had become thoroughly Victorian.

The advent of academic art was accompanied by a social revolution in India. In contrast to the earlier humble position of court artists, the colonial artists enjoyed the elevated status of independent gentlemen, in part because they now hailed from the elite. The growth of art exhibitions, art journalism, and the rise of an art conscious public changed the public’s perception of arts and the artists. However, while gaining freedom, they faced an uncertain economic future. Art societies, originally founded by British residents, became with the admission of Indians an instrument of Raj patronage.

**State Patronage**

With the decline of India’s traditional patronage culture in the arts, the state gradually took on the role of arts patron. In independent India, a national art institute, the Lalit Kala Akademi, promotes the visual arts through lectures, prizes, exhibitions, and publications. The government supports the Sahitya Akademi, which was set up in 1954 to promote excellence in literature. The National School of Drama (1959) and the Sangeet Natak Akademi (1953), promote dance.
Apart from these, India has long had government-sponsored national research organizations for the sciences, including the Archaeological Survey of India (1861), the Botanical Survey of India (1890), the Census of India (1890), the Census of India (1867), the Ethnological Survey of India (1901), later the Anthropological Survey of India (1946), the Geological Survey of India (1851), the Indian Forestry Service (1865), the Indian Medical Service (1786), the Indian Council of Medical Research (1912), the Indian Meteorological Department (1875), the Linguistic Survey of India, and the Zoological Survey of India. The antecedent of all these institutions was the Survey of India (1832), which did the first scientific mapmaking of the subcontinent. There has been an annual Indian Science Congress, a national conference, which began as the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in 1876.

With independence, an overarching bureaucratic organizations came into being, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, as well as an Atomic Energy Commission and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. To avoid centralization of these organizations in and around Delhi and Bombay, regional institutes of technology were set up in a number of large cities. The government also supports four national academies: the Indian National Science Academy in New Delhi, the Indian Academy of Sciences in Bangalore, the National Academy of Science in Allahabad, and the Indian Science Congress Association in Calcutta. Other centrally supported research councils include the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Indian Council of Historical Research, the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training.

Conclusion

The cultural products such as art forms, etc. require patronage and audiences for their survival and development. The patron could be either an individual or a group. The nature of art forms, the patronage to these and their popularity among the various groups of audience has been changing since ancient times. During the ancient period there was a strong link between the art and religion, which influenced the themes of the art forms. The royal or the court patronage played a significant role in the promotion of art and culture during the ancient and medieval periods. The karkhanas or the workshops, meant for the product of art products by skilled craftsmen, were important feature of the Mughal period. The folk and tribal traditions have helped in preserving our culture to a great extent. During the colonial rule, there was much focus upon the western art and the older less wealthy and less influential patrons were replaced by the rich and powerful patrons. In the post-independence era the role of state as a patron of arts became significant mover in this direction. The state with its various created institutions help in the promotion of arts accompanied by lectures, exhibition, prizes, publications etc.

Long Questions:

5. Discuss briefly the history of patronage in India.

6. Trace the development of arts in India.

7. How did the court patronage help in the promotion of arts in India?

8. Discuss the changes in the nature of patronage and audiences under colonial rule.

Suggested Readings:


LESSON 8C

NATIONALISM AND THE ISSUE OF CULTURE: CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

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Introduction

In common parlance Culture is a social concept and nationalism is understood primarily as a political concept meaning an ideology which provides basis for national integration and cohesion. In the case of India, nationalism in its contemporary connotation came into being for seeking national independence from colonial or semi-colonial rule of imperialist powers.

Destruction of old socio-economic system in India and initiation of modern trade and industry and most importantly, rise of new classes constituted the basis of nationalism. This ideology was adopted in its modern sense by the Indian people in the 19th century, during their movement for independence from British colonial domination. It was in this process that multifarious national and ethnic identities, who had for the most part of their history lived under separate rulers, but now for nearly a century had come under the same foreign power's rule, came closer to each other. It is in course of this very struggle against the common enemy, the British colonialists, they together forged a nation.

We must note here that culture is something very different from politics and economics. Nationalism is a product of a definite stage of development of society and its political and economic aspects take concrete shape in that particular period, and in this respect they do draw a demarcating line from the past socio-economic systems. Democracy based on adult franchise and capitalist production relations are manifestations of these aspects. But culture is continuous, it transgresses the dimension of geographical space and time. It cannot be bound to nationalism because its sources cannot be bound to a geographical territory.

Indian Civilization or Indian Nationalism?

India is a subcontinent with a vast population of the most diverse levels of culture. Anthropological knowledge of the people of India reveals that almost all known racial groups have migrated to India at different times in the past with their own language, religion and culture. Since there was plenty of space, the migrating cultural and racial groups could pass on and penetrate further into the interior without much opposition. Thus, the various cultural groups did
not destroy each other, but continued to live on and consolidate into the main components of the
present-day population. The caste system also helped to keep the diverse racial, social and
cultural groups apart, for it prevented them effectively from mixing with one another. The
population of India is thus very heterogeneous. Variety and diversity permeates the whole
subcontinent, every state and district, every town and village.

According to Kothari (1988), "In the absence of a centralized political authority it was
'the Indian civilizational enterprise' which 'over the centuries achieved a remarkable degree of
cohesion and held together different sub-systems in a continental-size society'”. Thus, the
unifying force of Indian civilization was the acceptance of multi-culturality and linguistic
diversity rather than a political ideology of regimentation.

The Age of Nationalism in the modern sense of the word is a recent phenomenon. It
developed in the eighteenth century in the West and emerged at a later period as a universal
political concept. In India nationalism emerged in the context of colonialism. It can be traced to
the political and administrative unification followed by the economic unification by the British.
The introduction of English education, European science and philosophy, as well as the pride in
India as a nation and her past culture, emerged at this historical turning point.

What is the Cultural Foundation of Modern India?

Pannikar (1995) observes that in its early manifestation, the struggle for nationalism, anti-
colonial consciousness and the need for independence were not in the realm of politics but in the
realm of ideology and culture. The first expression of this consciousness was in the form of
social and religious reform movements. The important question then was — what is the cultural
foundation of Indian society and how are we to reconstruct it as a modern nation on a par with
other modern nation states?

Two strands of thought emerged: one led to an attempt at reconstructing Indian society on
the basis of Western ideas originating in the age of Enlightenment and Liberalism, and the other
wanted the reconstruction to take place on the basis of ancient Hindu traditions. These two
visions of India developed their own ideology, leadership and organization in the course of
freedom struggle in India. A third vision was voiced by oppressed and marginalized people of
India. These three visions of modern India shaped the course of dialogue in India at the birth of
the Indian nation and the framing of her Constitution. They are also influential in the current
political debates today.

Indian Identity(ies) and the Framing of the Constitution

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All these visions were active and influential in the formation of the modern Indian State during the freedom struggle. A continuous dialogue took place with regard to identity in free India.

After almost three years of deliberation, the Constituent Assembly of India on 26 November 1949 adopted a constitution for the world’s largest liberal democracy. The debate in the Assembly reflected the paradoxes of the Indian situation, which we highlighted above as the contending visions for India. The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution defended the notion of a pluralistic society and a neutral state based on equal rights and citizenship. The Indian Constitution may justifiably be described as secular and multicultural. Recognition and protection was offered to religious, cultural and linguistic minorities. Equal respect, fairness and non-discrimination were to be the guiding principles of state policies towards minorities.

Differences are recognized but so are the values of equal citizenship and equal rights. After protracted discussions in the Constituent Assembly, the Constitution was passed upholding ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious pluralism in India and promising recognition and protection for all and non-discriminatory state policies. It articulated a secular and inclusive nationalism of equal opportunities and equal liberty for all, regardless of their religious affiliations or social status. It meant that the state itself was not to become partisan to any particular group, nor does it privilege any particular religion. The equidistance to all religions became the quintessence of secularism and this is ensured in the Constitution.

**Institutions of Cultural Practices: Colonial and Post-Colonial**

There were two major phases in colonial rule, the early phase in which Orientalist forms of knowledge about the colonised and Christian missionary views dominated, and the later, more important phase, when (after the Mutiny of 1857) direct rule was established and major transformations in the nature of colonial state took place, and concomitantly, new forms of knowledge emerged, and Indian tradition and social institutions were studied.

Colonial conquest was not only the result of the power of superior arms and military organisation, but sustained and strengthened as much by the cultural technologies of rule. This was achieved by the creation of an archive, built up through Orientalist approach to archaeology, ritual texts, agrarian structure, land organisation, classification and assessment, anthropological surveys and the enumeration of caste in the census, through which the British set in motion equally powerful transformations. Colonialism played a critical role in the identification and production of Indian tradition, devalued under conditions of colonial modernity.
In the second half of the 19th century, in the wake of the 1857 rebellion and the establishment of direct British rule, colonial ethnology took the place of colonial history. Ethnography became the primary colonial modality of representation linking politics and epistemology. Knowledge became privileged more than any other form of imperial understanding. Attempts to find some method that could produce useful and uniform knowledge for all of India, beyond district gazetteers and manuals, led to compilation of material on demographics and identities, in a new kind of empirical quest. A relentless anthropologising resulted in a colonial anthropology and sociology, which had the greatest impact and force in relation to the subsequent colonial and post-colonial history of India. This resulted in setting up of Central Institutions such as *Anthropological Survey of India, Arcaheolgoical Survey of India*, a network of site museums as well as museums of national importance (Indian Museum, and Victoria Memorial, Kolkata; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangharalaya, formerly Prince of Wales Musuem, Mumbai to name a few).

As a step towards preservation and protection of cultural heritage, first antiquarian laws were formulated and put into effect.¹

Cultural renaissance of early nineteenth century witnessed enactment of the first ever antiquarian legislation in India known as *Bengal Regulation XIX of 1810*. This was soon followed by another legislation called as *Madras Regulation VII of 1817*. Both these regulations vested the Government with a power to intervene whenever the public buildings were under threat of misuse. However, both the acts were silent on the buildings under the private ownership. *The Act XX of 1863*, was therefore enacted to empower the Government to prevent injury to and preserve buildings remarkable for their antiquity or for their historical or architectural value.

2. Legislations are from the website of The Archaeological Survey of India

[http://asi.nic.in/asi_legislations.asp](http://asi.nic.in/asi_legislations.asp)

The *Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878 (Act No. VI of 1878)* was promulgated to protect and preserve treasure found accidentally but had the archaeological and historical value. This act has enacted to protect and preserve such treasures and their lawful disposal. In a landmark development in 1886, James Burgess, the then Director General succeeded in prevailing upon the
Government for issuing directions: forbidding any person or agency to undertake excavation without prior consent of the Archaeological Survey and debarring officers from disposing of antiquities found or acquired without the permission of the Government.

The cultural heritage ushered in a new era when the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (Act No. VII of 1904) was promulgated. This act provided effective preservation and authority over the monument particularly those, which were under the custody of individual or private ownership. As this Act has not been repealed, it is deemed to be in force. Next act was the Antiquities export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947) and Rules thereto which provided a regulation over the export of antiquities under a licence issued by the Director General and empowering his to decide whether any article, object or thing is or is not an antiquity for the purpose of the act and his decision was final.

In 1951, the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951 (No LXXI of 1951) was enacted. Consequently, all the ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains protected earlier under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (Act No. VII of 1904) were re-declared as monuments and archaeological sites of national importance under this act. Another four hundred and fifty monuments and sites of Part ‘B’ states were also added. Some more monuments and archaeological sites were also declared as of national importance under Section 126 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956.

In order to bring the act on par with constitutional provisions and providing better and effective preservation to the archaeological wealth of the country. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological sites and remains Act 1958 (No 24 of 1958) was enacted on 28th August 1958. This act provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects. Subsequently, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules 1959 were framed. The act along with rules came into force with effect from 15 October 1959. This act repealed the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951.

The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 (No. 52 of 1972) is the latest act enacted on 9th September 1972 for effective control over the moveable cultural property consisting of antiquities and art treasures. The act is to regulate the export trade in antiquities and art treasures, to provide for the prevention of smuggling of, and fraudulent dealings in, antiquities, to provide for the compulsory acquisition of antiquities and art treasures for preservation in public places and to provide for certain other matters connected therewith on incidental or ancillary thereto. This act was also supplemented with the Antiquities and Art Treasure Rules 1973. The act was
Rules have been in force with effect from 5th April 1976. This legislation repealed the Antiquities Export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947).

The effects of colonial anthropology were most direct in the census, which was related in fundamental ways to imperial projects of army recruitment, policing, labour migration or even controlling of prostitution.

As catalysts for innovation, education, and economic development, cultural institutions play a powerful role in creating vibrant communities. Through exhibitions, theater and opera productions, dance and music performances, creativity prospers, diversity is celebrated, and local businesses and economies are supported. As societies and forms of cultural expression evolve, however, it is important that the relationships between cultural institutions and their communities evolve as well and keep pace with the times.

India is one of the unique nations in the world having a developed culture and a developing economy. Its culture is deeply rooted in a pluralistic ethos of age-old history providing creative expression, value sustenance and belief patterns to society. India also occupies an important place on the cultural map of the world. We have witnessed in India the emergence of the role of culture as giving meaning to our existence. The role of culture lies not only in encouraging self-expression and exploration on the part of individuals and communities, but also supporting to arts and artists and also correcting some of the distorting effects of cultural expression by people at large, and developing creativity as a social force.

The Department of Culture has given a fillip and helped to preserve this diverse cultural background through a network of institutions and schemes. Our cultural heritage has been regenerated through organizations such as the Archaeological Survey of India and the Anthropological Survey of India, and a network of museums and archives. The setting up of Zonal Cultural Centres has created awareness among the masses at the regional level. The department has also provided a forum for the exchange of cultural traditions with other nations.

An attempt has been made by the Department of Culture to build up linkages through a network of institutions and schemes between the past and the present in terms of their bearing on future development. Within this conceptual framework, the preservation of our cultural heritage through the Archaeological Survey of India, Museums and Archives, has maintained the continuity of cultural traditions in the context of development.
The Department of Culture operates Plan Schemes of the Government of India for preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the country. It has a network of subordinate and attached offices besides a number of other autonomous institutions/organizations in the field of Culture, such as, Archaeological Survey of India, Anthropological Survey of India, National Archives, Museums, Libraries, Akademies, etc.

The focus of the schemes of Department of Culture has been on development of Culture from the grassroots level in association with a network of institutions for promotion, preservation and dissemination of the cultural heritage of the country.

Broadly speaking, there are three dimensions of culture: National Identity, Mass Media, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage. However, seen from a higher perspective, it also addresses issues relating to history, values and beliefs in conjunction with several other Ministries/Departments, such as, Tourism, Education, Textiles and External Affairs. Within this conceptual framework, the preservation of cultural heritage through the Archaeological Survey of India, Museums & Archives, has maintained the continuity of cultural tradition in the country. The programmes of encouragement of contemporary creative activities through three National Akademies of performing, literary and visual arts as well as through incentives, awards and fellowships have helped in the articulation of the creative genius of India. The establishment of seven Zonal Culture Centers has highlighted not only the cultural kinships transcending territorial bonds, but also close relationships that subsist between sharpening of people’s cultural consciousness and upgradation of Human Resource Development.

In addition to the services provided by the ministry, a wide range of services are provided through two Attached Offices, six Subordinate Offices and twenty five Autonomous Bodies spread all over the country.

**Attached Offices – Department of Culture**

iii) Arcaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

- Aims to maintain, conserve & preserve Centrally Protected Monuments/Sites and Remains.
- Also conducts archaeological exploration and excavations, architectural survey of monuments and training in archaeology.
iv) National Archives of India, New Delhi
   - Houses Central Government records of enduring value for permanent preservation and use by administrative scholars.
   - It also assists Government Departments in their record management programmes.

   - Creates an understanding and sensitivity among the Indian public towards visual and plastic arts and promotes the development of contemporary Indian Art.

   - Main activities are in the areas of exhibitions, education, public relations, publication and conservation.
   - It undertakes numerous activities in improving the displays and strengthening conservation activities.

   - Aims to develop conservation capabilities of different cultural institutions in the country and provides services to museums, archives, archaeology departments in conservations of cultural property.

10. Central Reference Library, Kolkata
    - Responsible for Compilation and Publication of *Indian National Bibliography* and *Index Indiana*.

2. Website of the Department of Culture

   [http://www.indiaculture.nic.in](http://www.indiaculture.nic.in)

Subordinate Offices
   • An Institute of national importance, which acts as a reference centre for research scholars.
   • It co-ordinates and determines standars in the fields of library services in the country.

12. Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata
   • A scientific organization for research in the field of anthropology engaged in activities like collection, preservation, maintenance, documentation and study of ethnographic materials as well as of ancient human skeletal remains.

Autonomous Bodies

26. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manva Sangrahalaya Bhopal
   • Houses a collection and display of antiquated objects and endeavours to record and revitalise both traditional and contemporary community knowledge.

27. National council of Science Museums, Kolkata
   • Engaged in popularizing science and technology amongst students in particular through a wide range of activities and interactive programmes

28. Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi
   • Maintains a personalia museum which portrays the life and times of Jawahar Lal Nehru, a library of printed materials, books, periodicals and photographs with special emphasis on history of modern India

29. Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi
   • The Akademi is devoted to furtherance of performing arts of India, and bestows honours annually on outstanding artists in the field of performing arts and also arranges performances by renowned veterans as well as by talented artists of younger generation through training programmes, award of scholarships, documents etc.

30. Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi
• The Akademi promotes the cause of Indian Literature and National Integration by way of publications, translations, seminars workshops, cultural exchange programmes and literary meets organized all over the country.

31. Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
• The Akademi aims to promote and propagate an understanding of India art both within the country and abroad.

32. National School of Drama, New Delhi
• Aims to train students in all aspects of theatre, including theatre history, production, scene-design, costume design etc.

33. Centre for Cultural Resources & Training, New Delhi
• Aims to revitalize the education systems by creating an understanding/awareness among students about the cultural plurality of India.

34. Gandhi Smriti & Sarshan Samiti, New Delhi
• Objective is to preserve, maintain and look after the upkeep of Gandhi Smriti and Gandhi Darshan Complex.
• Propogates the life, mission and thoughts of Mahatama Gandhi.

35. Allahabad Museum, Allahabad
• Museum organizes lectures, seminars, workshops on varying issues of art and culture.

36. Delhi Public Library, New Delhi.
• It is a premier public library system of modern India in Delhi and has become the busiest public library in South East Asia.
• It provides services to rural, urban, folk, adults, children, students, visually handicapped etc.,
37. Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata
   • Promotes and supports the public library movement in country by providing adequate library services and popularizing reading habits.

38. Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh
   • Main aim is to develop the multifaced personality of students through inculcation of wisdom of Buddhist thoughts, literature and to familiarize them with research work relevant to Buddhist studies.

39. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi
   • The main aim is restoration of ancient learning and implementation of multidimensional Tibetan Studies.

40. Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata
   • Objective is to conserve memorial buildings and all artefacts, modernize galleries, digitization of artefacts, holding exhibitions, seminars and lectures.

41. India Museum, Kolkata
   • Organises exhibitions, seminars, lectures and mass communication programmes.
   • Acquires antiquities/art objects/enthnographic artefacts.
   • Reorganises galleries.

42. Asiatic Society, Kolkata
   • It is a vast treasure house of rare books/manuscripts, journals and other printed materials on Asiatic Arts and Science.
   • Its museum preserves and exhibits a large stock of manuscripts, archival materials of historical importance, coins, inscriptions and sundry other objects of academic value.

43. Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad
   • It is a rich repository of global art collections. The collection of museum consists of India, art, Middle eastern art, Far Eastern and European art.
44. Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna
   • It has the richest collections of manuscripts with over 20,000 manuscripts, 2,00,000 printed books and about 230 original paintings of Mughal, Rajput, Oudh, Iranian and Turkish schools.

45. Rampur Raza Library, Rampur
   • It is considered to be highly valued treasure house of thousands of rare manuscripts, miniature paintings, illustrated manuscripts, specimen of great calligraphers of Islamic World.

46. Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai
   • Integrates all art forms and regional variants thereof and to revive the ancient glory of Indian culture and set standards of true arts.

   • Conducts M.A. and Ph.D. courses in History of Arts, Conservation and restoration of works of arts and museology. It also conducts certificate courses on Indian art and Culture, Art appreciation and Bhartiya Kala Naidhi.

48. Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, Bihar
   • It is the only institution in India devoted exclusively to teaching, research and publication in Pali and Buddhist studies.

49. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian studies, Kolkata
   • It is a centre for research and learning with focus on social, cultural, economic and political/administrative developments in Asia from middle of 19th century onwards and the life and works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

50. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.
   • It has a collection of resources materials and fundamental research in filed of arts and humanities.
   • It focuses upon the inter-relationship with the disciplines of science physical and material metaphysics as also anthropology and sociology.
Besides the above there is the *Central secretariat Library*, New Delhi, which is mainly responsible for providing Reference and Referral service to Registered members, Policy Planners, Academicians, Research Scholars and to general readers etc.

Moreover, under the existing central and state legislations, 3,673 monuments and sites are looked after by the central government and about 3,500 monuments and sites by the states respectively as protected heritage is highly limited, compared to the vast number of monuments existing in the country. For a country of the size and cultural wealth of India this admittedly is not a big number. There are still a large number of monument and sites that fall outside the purview of either of these two agencies. Whereas for the protected monuments, a good deal of data is available, no documentation exists for the unprotected monuments. It is now realized that if we want to understand our history and also ensure and preserve our heritage for posterity, we must have a proper management plan of our highly fragile cultural resources. This is possible only when we understand its cultural value in terms of quality, quantity and nature of such cultural remains in the context of our heritage.

Keeping the above mentioned scenario in the country, the **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities** has been launched with the following major mandates-

5. Preparation of National register and set up state level database of built heritage, sites and antiquities for better management of such cultural resources.
6. Promote awareness programme concerning the benefits of preserving the historical and cultural aspects of built heritage, sites and antiquities.
7. Extend training facility and capacity building to the concerned state departments, local bodies, NGOs, universities, museums, communities etc. in the field of conservation of built heritage, and preservation and management of antiquarian remains.
8. Help in developing synergy between institutions like the *Archaeological Survey of India* State Departments, concerned institutions and NGOs to generate close interaction for effective management of archaeological resources.

The **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)**, an autonomous organization of the Government of India, was established in 1950. The objectives of the Council, as defined in its Memorandum of Association, are:

- to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India’s external cultural relations to promote cultural exchange with other countries and peoples.
- to promote and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.
• to establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture

The council, with its headquarters in Azad Bhavan, New Delhi, carries out this mandate of cultural diplomacy through a wide spectrum of activities which include:

A programme wing:

• Exchange of visits by scholars, academicians, opinion-makers, artists and writers
• Facilitation of the organization of and participation in seminars and symposia abroad
• Exchange of visits by performing arts groups
• Exchange of exhibitions
• Commissioning of busts and statues of Indian leaders for installation abroad
• Presentation abroad of informatics, audio-visual material, books on India and Indian musical instruments
• Active collaboration in the operations of some Foreign cultural centres in India (e.g. nine of the thirteen British Libraries in India – the ones outside the four metropolitan cities – are run jointly by the ICCR and the British Council)

3. information available on ASI home page

4. for more information on ICCR see www.iccrindia.org

B Administration & Education Wing

• Administering of scholarship schemes for foreign students for studies in India
• Assisting organization of and participation in seminars and symposia in India
• Maintaining the Council’s Regional Offices in India and its cultural centres abroad
• Establishing and maintaining Chairs and Professorships for Indian Studies in Universities abroad
• Administering the Jawharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding
• Organising the Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture
• Conducting the Maulana Azad Essay Competition
• Publications
The council has **regional offices** in Bangalore, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.

The council has **Cultural centres aborad** in Georgetown, Paramaribo, Port Louis, Jakarta, Moscow, Berlin, Cairo, London, Tashkent, Alamty, Johannesburg, Durban, Port of Spain and Colombo (in order of establishment)

**Conclusion**

Through the centuries Indian culture – while retaining and revitalizing its unique insights and expressions, its wisdom and multiplicity, has always remained open to outside influences. It is in the realm of culture that the Indian dynamics of internalizing change within tradition, of integrating modernity with traditional wisdom, of bringing about a consonance between continuity and innovation, has most clearly, constantly and effectively manifested itself.

**Long Questions:**

4. Discuss the important legislations implemented during the colonial and post-colonial periods for the protection and preservation of our cultural heritage.

5. Discuss about the role of at least ten autonomous bodies which have been set-up for the preservation and promotion of our cultural traditions.

6. Write short notes on the following:
   a. National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities
   b. Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).

**Suggested Readings:**


8. -------- *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.