

# UNIT 14 – UPSC - Indian culture: the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times

Culture is a principal mechanism to explore, integrate and assert the national identity of India which truly and certainly pluralistic. Culture pervades every sphere of human activity, determines and governs life and pattern of Indian civilisation. The word 'Culture' is emanated from the Latin term 'cult or cultus' which means tilling, or cultivating or refining and worship. Overall, it means cultivating and refining a thing to such an extent that its end product evokes our admiration and respect. This is nearly the same as 'Sanskriti' of the Sanskrit language. Basically, Culture denotes to a human-made environment which includes all the material and nonmaterial products of group life that are communicated from one generation to the subsequent.

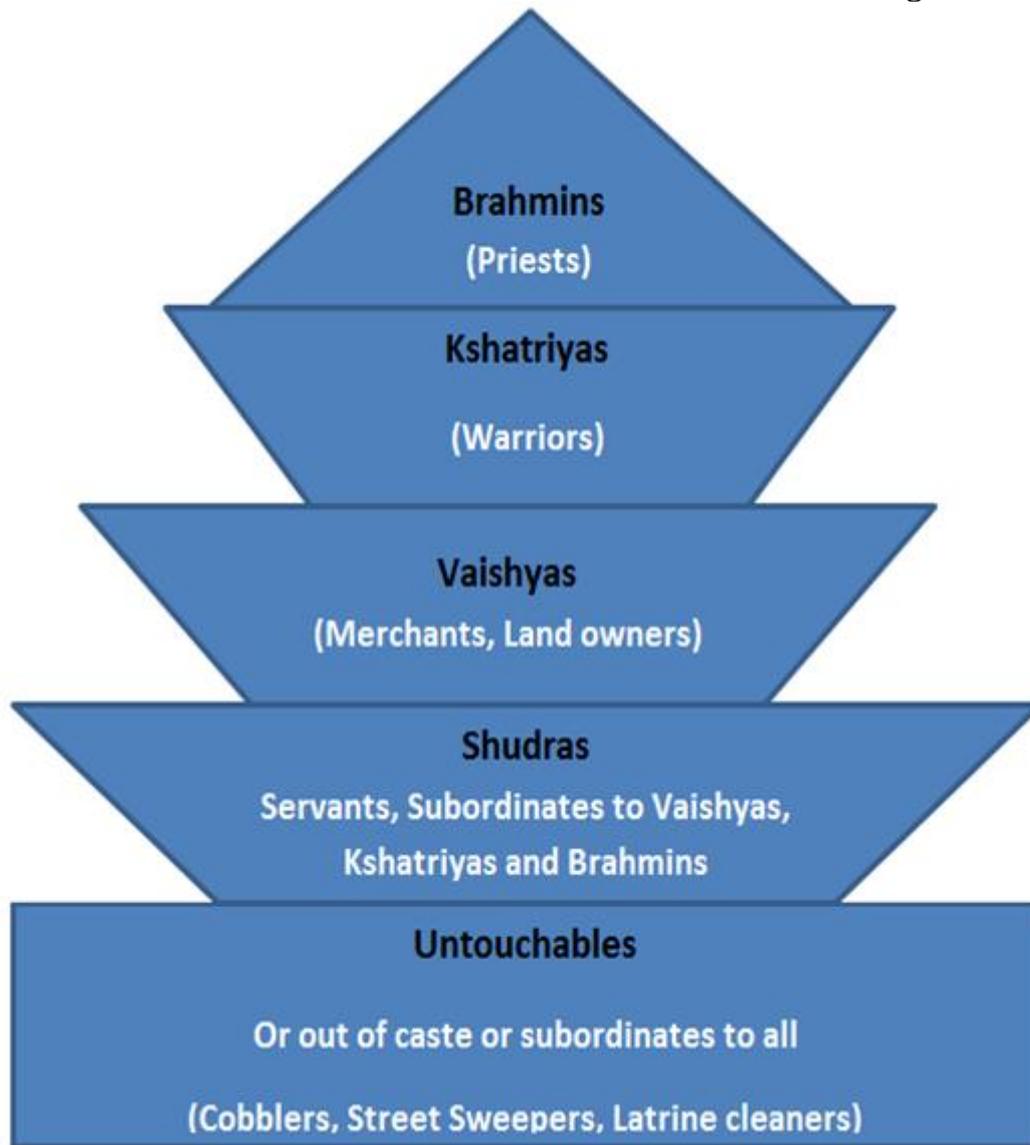


The culture of India is about how people maintain their lifestyle. It was evident that India's languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food, and customs changed from place to place

within the country. The Indian culture, often labelled as an incorporation of several cultures, spans across the Indian subcontinent and has been influenced by ancient history where many rulers dominated and altered its art, and architecture. Many features of India's diverse cultures, such as Indian religions, Indian philosophy and Indian cuisine, have had a weighty impact across the world. Significant aspects of Indian culture is the caste system. The caste system in India is significant part of ancient Hindu custom and dates back to 1200 BCE. The phrase caste was first used by Portuguese travellers who entered to India in the 16th century. In Hinduism there exists four castes arranged in a hierarchy. The highest Varna is of the Brahman. Members of this class are priests and the educated people of the society. The Varna after them in hierarchy is Kshatria. The members of this class are the rulers and aristocrats of the society. After them are the Vaisia. Members of this class are the landlords and businessmen of the society. After them in hierarchy are the Sudra. Members of this class are the peasants and working class of the society who work in non-polluting jobs (R.K. Pruthi, 2004).

The untouchability feature in the caste system is one of the harshest aspects of the caste system. It is seen by many as one of the strongest racist phenomenon in the world. In Indian society people who worked in ignominious, polluting and unclean occupations were seen as polluting peoples and were therefore considered as untouchables. The untouchables had almost no rights in the society. In different parts of India they were treated in different ways. In some regions the attitude

towards the untouchables was harsh and strict. In other regions it was less strict.



Since earlier time, India had many religions that include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, collectively known as Indian religions.

### Ancient India:

The History of India originates with the Indus Valley Civilization and the coming of the Aryans. These two periods are generally defined as the pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. The Indus River Civilization dates back to 2300 – 1750 BC and had two main cities; Harappa in western Punjab and Mohenjo-Daro on the lower Indus in Sindh. Currently, the two important provinces of Pakistan. Both cities were urban grain growing civilizations and were believed to have run by Aryans who came from some other place. The statues found at the locations include both human and animal forms with intricacies and premium details. Some seals were found engraved with figures and motifs also. All these things were made with limestone, bronze, stone and terracotta (Pal, 1988). When discussing architecture, The Harappa and Mohanjo Daro sites display the great architecture patterns of the time. The Houses were made of baked bricks, the drains and bathrooms were also laid down by bricks. There was a proper drainage system from the houses to the central drain. The houses were double storey with the ground floor made of bricks and the upper storey of wood. There was a public bath site found that could have been used for religious motives. Thus

the cities were scientifically laid down. It was found in literature that there were cultural relationships of Indus valley civilization with other communities like the similar items are found in Mesopotamia (Mcintosh, 2008).

In previous literature, it is documented that India's past is the Rig Veda. It is difficult to date this work with any accuracy on the basis of tradition and vague astronomical information contained in the choruses. It is expected that Rig Veda was composed between 1,500 B.C. and 1,000 B.C. In Rig Veda, there are references of dancing and other musical instruments as part of religious practice. The hymns of Rig Veda were chanted as a religious singing, it was more like a recitation than singing (Gupta, 1999). It was noted that The Vedas are the most primitive fabricated literary record of Indo-Aryan civilization. It entails mostly mantras or prayers and summons in praise of various Aryan gods. The word Veda means insight, facts or revelation, and it is valued and regarded as the language of the gods in human speech. The core message of the Vedas is to control the social, legal, domestic and religious traditions of the Hindus which are exactly followed to the present day. All the customs of Hindus conducted upon birth, marriage, death etc. are based upon Vedic principles and they are being followed from time immemorial (Khanna, 2007).

The Rig Veda is an assemblage of inspired songs or hymns and is a main source of information on the Rig Vedic civilization. It is the oldest book in any Indo-European language and contains the earliest form of all Sanskrit mantras that date back to 1500 B.C. - 1000 B.C. Some scholars date the Rig Veda as early as 12000 BC - 4000 B.C. (Vipul Singh, 2012).

Brahmanism was found in 900 B.C. In the meantime a group of solitary persons or loners and wanderers of the forest developed the concept of Supreme Reality in terms of "Brahma, the infinite divine power which means that by stripping off everything external a man can find its true being, the self, the soul. This originated the ideas of Hinduism, which later was the reason and motivation of many religious movements in the area. This later period is portrayed in the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. There are folklores about the basis of dance in Hinduism, like the great Lord Siva gave the first indication of the dance who was a cosmic-dancer and among his many great names is Nataraja meaning the Lord of Dancers and Actors. Another holy dance is that of Krishna and Radha, the Eternal Lovers ((Bahadur, 1979). In this period, the class system divided the society and the people of lower castes were repressed and cruelly treated by the upper classes. There were no mixing of the lower and upper classes people, no social contacts, no marriages and lower classes were considered and treated like slaves.

In 500 B.C or 6th Century B.C, two major religions emerged such as Jainism and Buddhism. They transmitted the messages of Truth, Non-violence and Renunciation/Denial. They advocated for religion as a personal matter of an individual and exhibited reflection on the daily conduct of life (Sen, 1988). Their message was for ethical values and they believed in love, freedom and equality for all human beings. But people were divided into class system the oppression of the priests, became prone to their teachings and large number of people among the middle class and kings changed to Buddhism and Jainism was mostly followed by the richer merchant class (Sen, 1988). The lessons of Buddha were against the development of art as it leads to desire and avoid the man from reaching the final goal, so the monks were prohibited to paint the pictures on the walls of the monasteries or to indulge in the art of sculpture. So we find no traces of sculpture art in this period (Swarup, 1968). With respect to development of Architecture, from Indus Valley Civilization till the period of Maurya, there were no traces of architectural leftover and have to depend upon the literature and make assumption. The Vedic literature showed about houses, halls and fire-

altars. In Ramayana and Mahabharata, there is description of assembly halls, balconies, gateways and double storey buildings (Swarup, 1968)

In the period of 327-26 B. C, Alexander attacked the Punjab state of the region and linked India with Iranian Civilization (Gordon and Walsh, 2009). In the fifth century, large sections of India were amalgamated under the regime of Maurya vansh. The 6th Century B.C. was a period of great uproar in India. The kingdom of Magadha, one of the 16 great Janapadas had become dominant over other kingdoms of the Ganges Valley. In this period, there was emergence of various heterodox cliques in India. In this period, Buddhism and Jainism arose as popular protestant movements to pose a serious challenge to Brahmanic convention.

During the period of 324 – 200 B.C or 273 – 236 B.C, Asoka Maurya's period was dominated by Buddhism but he also showed tolerance to other religions (Sen, 1988). This period was followed by the Mauryas of whom the most famous was Ashoka the Great. The borders of his empire extended from Kashmir and Peshawar in the North and Northwest to Mysore in the South and Orissa in the East but his reputation rests not so much on military conquests as on his celebrated rejection of war. Asoka tried to give harmony of culture by making stupas (Buddhist relic shrines) and pillars inscribed with his addresses and lectures.

The pillars of Asoka's period were regarded as marvellous piece of work in the Indian art history as they embodied bold designing, technical skills and expressive symbolism. During this era, there were renewal of Sanskrit language and the great epics. Under, Pushyamitra and his successors, the Buddhists were permitted to embellish their stupas and eventually the ritualistic worship was accepted in Buddhism also (Sen, 1988). This paved the way for art to flourish as the Buddhists opinions and ideas, myths and legends were presented in visual forms. The pillars and stupas of that time portrayed the reincarnation stories of Buddha and were illustrated as scenes on them. The use of stone in architecture began in Maurya's rule (Schmidt, 1995). He established monuments, pillars and stupas engraved with the teachings of the Master (Buddha). In the supremacy of Asoka, the dance continued as a sacrificial practice (Schmidt, 1995).

The greatest monument of this period, executed in the supremacy of Chandragupta Maurya, was the old palace at the site of Kumhrar. Excavations at the site of Kumhrar nearby have unearthed the remains of the palace. The palace is thought to have been an aggregated of buildings, the most important of which was an immense pillared hall supported on a high substratum of timbers. The pillars were set in regular rows, thus dividing the hall into a number of smaller square bays. The number of columns is 80, each about 20 high.

During the reign of Ashoka, stonework was highly diversified order and comprised lofty free-standing pillars, railings of stupas, lion thrones and other colossal figures. The use of stone had reached great perfection during this time that even small fragments of stone art was given a high lustrous polish resembling fine enamel. This period noticeable the beginning of the Buddhist school of architecture, Ashoka was responsible for the construction of several stupas, which were large halls, capped with domes and bore symbols of Buddha.

Maurya

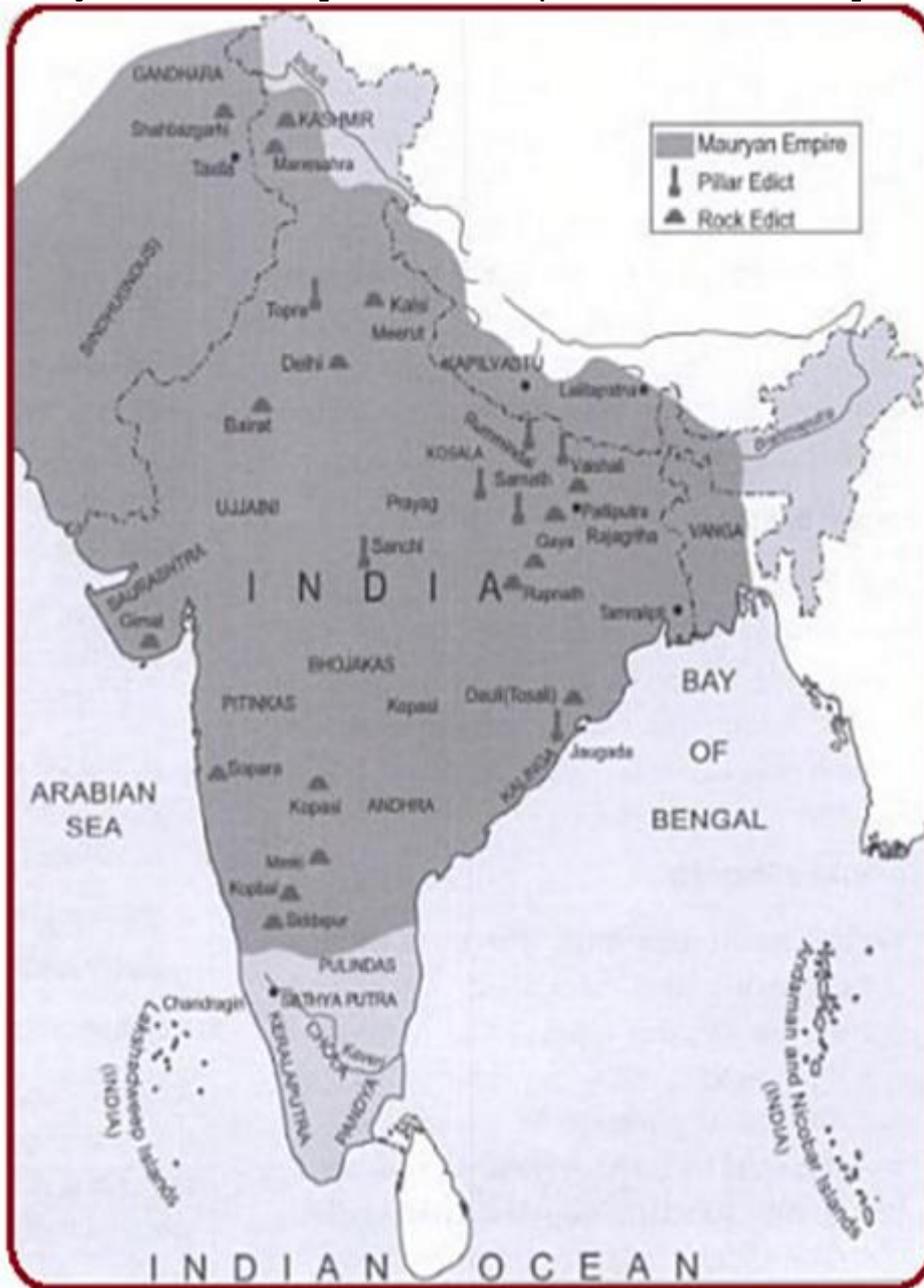
Empire

(Source:

Vipul

Singh,

2012)



For the next four hundred years (after the great Mauryas), India remained politically separated and weak. It was recurrently invaded and plundered by outsiders. In Gupta Dynasty, there was some stability. The art of the time was reflected as “classic” in Indian history as it touches the limits of elegance and sophistication. Different gods of Hindu were portrayed in sculpture with sensuous details. The animal figures were also made but vegetative patterns found no place in the art (Prakash, 2005). It was the period of peace and prosperity and observed an unparalleled pinnacle of art, literature and the sciences. This period also witnessed as the beginning of Hindu temple architecture. The Gupta regime saw the development and rise of pivotal period in the form of temple as a Hindu sense of “House of god”. The Vishnu temple in Jabbalpur district, Siva temple at Bhumara in Negod, Parvati temple at Nachna in Ajaigah, temple of Siva at Deogarh in the Jahnsi district and nine rock-cut asylums in Gupta tradition at Udayagiri in Bhopal are the examples of fine architecture of the time (Prakash, 2005). In Gupta administration, dancing became basic

elements in upper class culture and dancing at courts was a common feature. The history shown that some of the rulers of Gupta regime were musicians themselves (Prakash, 2005).

After the Guptas, there was only a brief glow, in the time of Harshavardhana of Kannauj. A Chinese traveler, Huen-tsang visited India from (629 - 645 A.D.) during the supremacy of Harshavardhana. He made changes that had taken place in the lives of the Indian people since the days of the Guptas.

### Muslim era:

Mahmud invaded the region in 1000 A.D. from Ghazni and demolished the worship style and wealth of the area and as a result the Hindu domain disappeared from most of the Punjab. A century passed and another Muslim warrior Sultan Muhammad came from Ghur a neighbouring area of Ghazni with his slave governor, Qutbuddin Aibak. Mughal Empire lasted from 1526 to 1858. The Muslims who supported for one God and the equality of all men, their simplicity and disapproval of caste system, polytheism, worship and ritualism became popular in the masses and most of the Hindus embraced Islam for the true faith, sincerity and purity of life which symbolized from the life of the Muslims. But at the same time, there were Muslim writers and poets (Muslim Sufi order) who along with their Islamic traditions brought assimilation with Hinduism and the rulers offered Hindus the jobs in bureaucracy and in Army too, without compromising in the supremacy of Islam. Hindu music, art and dance were given space at the courts and Hindu motifs got blended with Islamic art (Richard, 1995). In that period, the teachings of Islam and Quran forbade making of sculptures so human and animal statues and drawings are not found in this period (Sharma, 1999).

The Muslim architecture of the time was dominated by carving and paintings of text from the Holy Book “Quran” and Arabic and Persian floral and geometric motifs are found on the sites of Muslim architectures. The Mosque and the Grave were major important buildings of the time. Agra Fort and Moti Masjid near Delhi, Taj Mahal at Agra by Shahjahan and Badshahi Mosque at Lahore built by Aurengzaib (1674), are the fine examples of Muslim architecture (Sharma, 1999). The paintings in the regime of The emperors Khilji and Tughluq included the calligraphy (transcribing the text from the Holy Quran) and also the garden scenes but no animated picture could be found in this time.

The Mughal had good perception in art. The style of painting in their rule is known as “miniature” which was primarily done on the delicate palm tree leaves till the introduction of paper in the country in 1400, which then became the most popular material for paintings. The supremacy of Jehangir was also considered as the Golden age of Mughal painting, the portraits of emperors, members of royal families, holy men, saints, soldiers and dancing girls were depicted by the artists in the paintings (Sharma, 1999). In the period of Muslim rule, there were decline of dancing art particularly in the North, only Kathak dance was the only survival in North with all its emotions and with the passage of time and the influence of the ruling elites became more and more secular (Sharma, 1999). Well-known Persian, Hazrat Amir Khusrau was a poet, a musician and a soldier during that time. In Akbar’s court, there were total thirty eight masters of music as stated in Ain i Akbari and Dhrupad was the most favoured melody sung mostly by Swami Hari Dass at Akbar’s court. The later emperors, Jahangir and Shahjahan displayed the same desire for music. Tansen played Rabab a musical instrument of that time and Amir Khusrau use to play sitar. Tabla and Shehnai were other popular musical instruments in later years of Mughal rule (Sharma, 1999). Sufism is a spiritual system that has had an incredible impact on world literature and has affected

many cultures. The impact of Sufism on Islamic culture can also be observed in the design of many buildings and the architecture in general, the patterns of poetry and music, and the visual effect of colours and calligraphy (Bayat and Jamnia, 1994). Art in the Muslim period prospered due to their decent taste and aesthetic sense. The artists, writers, poets, thinkers, scholars from all over Asia came to their courts. It was a period of Indo-Islamic culmination of appearance and magnificence in arts (music, painting, crafts and architecture) and culture (Richard, 1995). Historical reports indicated that All the Mughal rulers stimulated the artists and musicians and thus the people of different religions gather together and also the sufis saints of the time paved a way in bringing people together.

In the period of 1700 – 1900, The European came to India from the route of the sea. These were the Portuguese traders, then subsequently came the British, the French and the Dutch. All these invaders brought with them the elements of western cultures into the art and ways of living of the people of the country. The Portuguese initiated the revival of glitzy art and the French introduced their tastes in the decorations of palaces and houses. The British brought with them the Britain style of architecture and also influenced their modes in paintings and sculptures to such an extent that the Indian mind became alien to their own inheritance. In Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi, there is a clear picture of the British impact on Indian architecture. Apart from these architectural leftovers, the colonial state also left behind a uniform system of government, a system of education based on Western ideas, science and philosophies. Modern literature in Indian languages were all profoundly influenced by the spread of English education and through it India's intimate contact with the ideas and institutions of the West.

### The salient aspects of Art Forms in India:

It is documented that India have a rich and ancient history. Since ancient times there has been an amalgamation of indigenous and foreign influences that have shaped the course of the arts of India, and subsequently, the rest of Asia. Arts is defined as paintings, architecture, literature, music, dance, languages and cinema. In early India, most of the arts were derived Vedic influences.

Ancient Indian art: It is analysed that each era is exclusive in its idiosyncratic culture. In the same way Indian art forms have constantly evolved over thousands of years. In ancient India, various art forms like paintings, architecture and sculpture evolved. The history of art in ancient India begins with prehistoric rock paintings as theoretical literature indicated.

After the birth of current Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, arts thrived with the support of emperors. In the era of Islam, new form of Indian architecture and art were visible. Finally, the British brought their own Gothic and Roman influences and attached it with the Indian style. They have a culture infusion in their art. The use of symbolic forms in India is ancient since the period of the Harappan seals. The fire altars of the Vedic period, with their astronomical and mathematical significance also play an important role in the development of the later temples. It was followed by a period in the history of Indian art that is important for rock-cut caves and temple architecture. The Buddhists introduced the rock-cut caves, Hindus and Jains started them at Badami, Aihole, Ellora, Salsette, Elephanta, Aurangabad and Mahabalipuram. The rock-cut art has constantly progressed, since the first rock cut caves, to suit different purposes, social and religious contexts, and regional differences. Together with the art forms like architecture, paintings and sculpture, there have been evolving, changing, altering, folk and tribal art traditions in India. These art forms are expression of people belonging to different cultural and social groups of India. It is the communication of people whose life is adjusted to the rhythms of nature and its laws of

recurring change and whose life is tangled with natural energy. In India tradition, Gods and legends are transformed into modern forms and familiar images. Fairs, festivals and local deities also has significant role in the development of these arts forms. It is an art where life and creativity are inseparable. The tribal arts of India have a unique sensitivity, as the tribal people possess an intense awareness very different from the settled and urbanized people. Their minds are flexible and intense with myth, legends, and snippets from epic, multitudinous gods born. Their art is an expression of their life and holds their fervour and mystery.

### Architecture:

The greatest achievements of Indian civilization is unquestionably its architecture which was the outcome of socio-economic and geographical condition. Indian architecture is that vast drapery of production of the Indian subcontinent that includes a multitude of expressions over space and time, renovated by the forces of history considered exclusive to the sub-continent, sometimes abolishing, but most of the time absorbing. The earliest production in the Indus Valley Civilization was characterised by well-planned cities and houses where religion did not seem to play an active role. The Buddhist period is mainly represented by three important building types- the Chaitya Hall (place of worship), the Vihara (monastery) and the Stupa (hemispherical mound for worship/memory) – exemplified by the awesome caves of Ajanta and Ellora and the monumental Sanchi Stupa.

In early period, Hindu temple architecture have been traced to the remains at Aihole and Pattadakal in present day Karnataka, and have Vedic altars and late Vedic temples as described by Panini as models. Later, as more differentiation took place, the Dravidian/ Southern style and or the Indo-Aryan/ Northern/ Nagara style of temple architecture emerged as prevailing modes, epitomized in productions such as the magnificent Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur, and the Sun Temple, Konark. The older terminologies of Dravidian and Indo-Aryan are not used in recent practice because of their racial and uncertain origins. Buddhist elements and themes have influenced temple architecture to great extent.

Previously, temples were rock-cut, later structural temples evolved. The Kailasanatha temple at Ellora is best illustration of the former, excavated from top to bottom out of a massive rock face. The pyramid formed an essential architectonic feature in any temple composition- stepped in the Dravidian style, stepped and slightly curved in the Northern style. The structural system was essentially trabeated and with stone being the basic raw material for the Indian craftsman, construction could be done with minimal or no mortar. Decoration was necessary to Indian architecture and is seen in the innumerable details of figured sculpture as well as in the architectural elements. The notion of fractals has been used to observe the form of the Hindu temple, both in terms of its planning and external appearance. The garba-griha or the womb chamber forms the central focus housing the deity of the temple and is provided with a circumambulation passage around. However, there are also many subsidiary shrines within temple complexes, more particularly in the South Indian (the Dravidian style) temple. As the Hindu temple is not meant for congregational worship, the garba-griha is small in scale when compared to the whole temple complex. However, it is articulated externally by the vimana or the sikhara. Pillared halls or mandapas are found preceding the garba-griha.

The three-dimensional experience of a South Indian temple multifaceted and is considered particularly rich and meaningful. Among them, such as the Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangam, the concentric enclosures or prakaras along with the series of gopurams or entrance

gateways reducing in scale as they move towards the garbha-griha set up a rhythm of solids and voids as well as providing a ritual and visual axis. The principles of temple architecture were organised in treatises and canons such as Manasara, Mayamatam, and Vaastu Shastra. These offered an ordering framework yet permitted a certain autonomy for contextual articulation. Presently, most of the ancient Hindu architecture flourishes in temples of south India and South-east Asia as the subsequent forces of Islam renovated the cultural landscape of India more dominantly in the north.

Rich literature have shown that the Jaina temples can be seen in the Dilwara Temples in Mt.Abu. Early beginnings of Hindu temple architecture have been traced to the remains at Aihole and Pattadakal in present day Karnataka, and have Vedic altars and late Vedic temples as described by Paṇini as models. Later, as more differentiation took place, the Dravidian/ Southern style and or the Indo-Aryan/ Northern/ Nagara style of temple architecture emerged as dominant modes, epitomised in productions such as the magnificent Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur, and the Sun Temple, Konark.

With the arrival of Islam emperors, the arch and dome began to be used and the mosque or masjid too began to form part of the landscape, adding to a new experience in form and space. The most famous Islamic building type in India is the tomb or the mausoleum which evolved from the basic cube and hemisphere vocabulary of the early phase into a more elaborate form during the Mughal era where multiple chambers are present and tombs were set in a garden known as the char-bagh. Popular architectural buildings are the Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur and the Taj Mahal, Agra, the latter renowned for its attractiveness in white marble, its minarets and its setting. With colonisation, a new episode began. Though the Dutch, Portuguese and the French made substantial raids, it was the English who had a lasting impact. The architecture of the colonial period varied from the beginning attempts at creating authority through classical prototypes to the later approach of producing a supposedly more responsive image through what is now termed Indo-Saracenic architecture, a mixture of Hindu, Islamic and Western elements.

After independence and initiation of Modern Architecture into India, the quest was more towards progress as a paradigm fuelled by Nehruvian visions. The planning of Chandigarh is good example. Later on as modernism exhausted itself in the West and new directions were sought for, in India too there was a search for a more expressive architecture rooted in the Indian situation. Apart from this, process of globalisation and economic development in the decade of the 90s, has produced an inspiring collection of modern Information Technology campuses and skyscrapers, and as economic reform accelerates, metropolitan areas are gaining innovative horizons.

### Literature:

Indian literature is generally recognized, but not wholly established, as the oldest in the world. India has 22 officially recognized languages, and large form of literature has been produced in these languages over the years. Sanskrit literature has a special place in Indian civilization. It extended from about 1400 BC to AD maha 1200 and reached its height in the period from the 1st to the 7th centuries AD. The two major one of the oldest literatures Ramayana and Mahabharatha, and Abhigyanashakuntalam, Meghadutam by Kalidasa, are the best examples. The Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and Dharmasutras are all written in Sanskrit. In Indian literature, oral and written forms are both important. Hindu literary traditions govern a large part of Indian culture. The Vedas are the earliest known literature in India (Pande, 1990). The Vedas were written in Sanskrit and were handed down orally from one generation to the other. There are four Vedas,

namely, the- Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. Each Veda consists of the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Aranyakas. The Rig Veda, Sama Veda and the Yajur Veda are collectively known as Traji. In later years the Atharva Veda was incorporated in this group. The Rig Veda is the original of the Vedas. It is a collection of 1028 hymns in Vedic Sanskrit. Many of these are beautiful explanations of nature. The prayers are largely for seeking worldly prosperity. It is supposed that these recitations are the natural outpouring of Vedic rishis experiencing a mentally transcendental stage. Some of the famous rishis during that period were Vasistha, Gautama, Gritasamada, Vamadeva, Vishvamitra and Atri. The prominent gods of the Rig Veda are Indra, Agni, Varun, Rudra, Aditya, Vayu, Aditi and the Ashwini twins. Some of the prominent goddesses are Usha - the goddess of dawn, Vak - the goddess of speech and Prithvi - the goddess of earth.

Yajur entails sacrifice or worship. This Veda is related with resources and mantras of different sacrifices. It gives directions for the performance of the yajnas. It has both poetic and prose versions. Being a treatise on rituals, it is the most popular of the four Vedas. There are two major categories of Yajur Veda, namely Shukla and Krishna Yajur Veda i.e. Vajasaneyi Samhita and Taitriya Samhita. This text replicates on the social and religious condition of India at that time.

Sama means tune or songs. This Veda comprises of 6,000 ragas and raginis or musical notes. Out of total 1875 verses only 75 are original and others are from the Rig Veda. The Sama Veda suggests the tunes for the recitation of the hymns of the Rig Veda. It may be called the book of Chants (Saman). This book is an evidence of the development of Indian music during this period.

The Atharva Veda is also recognized as the Brahma Veda. It contains treatment for ninety-nine diseases. The source of this Veda is traced to two rishis called Atharvah and Angiras. The Atharva Veda has great value as it signifies the religious ideas at an ancient time of civilisation. It has two categories, the Paippalada and the Saunaka. This book gives detailed information about the family, social and political life of later Vedic period.

In brief, Vedas provide education (siksha), grammar (vyakarana), ritual (kalpa), etymology (nirukta), metrics (chhanda) and astronomy (Jyotisha).

After creation of the four Vedas, other works known as the Brahmanas were developed. These books gave a thorough explanation of Vedic rituals and instructions and deal with the science of sacrifice. The latter portions of the Brahmanas were called the Aranyakas while the final parts of the Aranyakas are metaphysical books named Upanishads which belong to the later stage of the Brahmana literature. Each of the four Vedas have their own Brahmana books. Rig Veda had Kaushitaki and Aitreya. Taitteriya belongs to Krishna Yajur Veda and Shatpath belongs to Shukla Yajur Veda. Tandav, Panchvish and Jaimaniya belongs to Atharva Veda. It is through them that we get a detailed information of the social, political and religious life of the people. The Arayankas deal with soul, birth and death and life beyond it. These were studied and taught by men in Vanprastha i.e. Munis and the inhabitants living inside the forests.

After that Upanishads were produced as literature. The word Upanishad is derived from upa (nearby), and nishad (to sit-down), that is, "sitting down near". The Upanishads mark the conclusion of Indian thought and are the final parts of the Vedas. Historical texts represented that there are more than 200 known Upanishads, one of which, the Muktika, gives a list of 108 Upanishads. This number corresponds to the holy number of beads on a mala or Hindu rosary. The Upanishads form an important part of Indian literary inheritance. They deal with questions

like the origin of the universe, life and death, the material and spiritual world, nature of knowledge and many other questions. The ancient Upanishads are the Brihadaranyaka which belongs to the Sukla Yajur Veda and Chand yoga which belongs to the Sama Veda. Some of the other important Upanishads are the Aitareya, Kena, Katha Upanishad.

Besides the Vedas which are a sacred form of knowledge, there are other works such as the Hindu extravaganza such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, treatises such as Vaastu Shastra in architecture and town planning, and Arthashastra in political science. Two great literatures the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are popular among Hindu society of India. The Ramayana of Valmiki is the original Ramayana. The Ramayana showed a picture of a perfect society. The other epic, the Mahabharata, was written by Ved Vyas. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have several versions in different Indian languages. The Mahabharata contains the famous Bhagavad Gita which contains the spirit of divine wisdom and is truly a universal gospel.

In the Bhagvad Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a fighter and prince and elaborates on different Yogic and Vedantic philosophies with examples and analogies. This makes Gita a concise guide to Hindu philosophy and a parochial, self-contained guide to life.

The rationalistic age of India is characterised by the rise of two major reform movements such as Vedanta and Buddhism. Vedanta is orthodox and accepts the Vedic Word, but no longer in a literal sense. The interpretation of Scripture by the Vedantic theologians is extremely bold and independent. Buddhism is heterodox, and rejects the authority of the Vedas altogether. Buddha first preached the People's Gospel in B.C. 522, when Bimbisara was King of Magadha. The battle between the old-established faith and the Buddhist rebels raged for two hundred years, and, when the Greek battalions of King Alexander attacked the Punjab (b.c. 327), the sun of Brahminism was setting, and the new star was shining in the East. At that time, Nanda sat on the throne of Magadha. His empire was conquered by the dissident Chandragupta, who was the first to tie the North of India from Magadha to the Punjab under one Imperial Government. By birth a Shudra, the Emperor was not expected to be antagonistic to a religion which swept away all social distinctions, and put Brahmin and Pariah on the same level. Buddhism ruled supreme in the land of its birth until the fifth century after Christ, when Brahminic influence once more became powerful.

Devotional Hindu drama, poetry and songs span the subcontinent. Among the popular are the works of Kalidasa (writer of the famed Sanskrit play Shakuntala) and Tulsidas (who wrote an epic Hindi poem based on the Ramayana, called Raamcharitmaanas). Tamil literature has been in existence for more than 2500 years. Tolkaappiyam has been attributed as its oldest work, whereas the exact origins of Thirukkural is unknown. The golden age of Tamil literature was during the Sangam period, roughly 1800 years ago. The classic works of this period are Cilappatikaram, Manimekalai, and Sivakasinthamani. Tamil literature is identified for its secular traditions, although its authors had strong religious beliefs. Thirukkural is considered to be the greatest of Tamil works.

Kannada literature is perhaps the third oldest in Indian literature next to Sanskrit literature and Tamil literature. The earliest reported work in Kannada literature dates back to the fifth century. The first available literary in Kannada is Kavirajamarga, written in the eighth century by Amoghavarsha Nrpatunga. Hindi literature started as religious and philosophical poetry in medieval periods in dialects like Avadhi and Brij. The most famous personalities during this era

were Kabir, Tulsidas and Meerabai. The Scriptures of modern Hinduism are the Puranas which were first committed to writing about the sixth century of era. The Hindus has inclination towards stories about the Gods. The ancient myths were handed down from father to son, and poets largely added to the stock from the stores of their leanings.

Antiquaries and divines took great pains to preserve this ocean of folklore. They set to work in the same fashion as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The two brothers went about the country, and collected ancient folklores among the German peasantry. Generations of Brahmins must have been busy compiling and arranging, curtailing and enlarging the Puranas which were modified time after time until they came out in that encyclopedic form in which we possess them now. The Puranas have interesting information on almost every topic. There are lengthy accounts of the lives of gods and patriarchs, stories of the creation, sacred as well as profane history. Psalms and prophecies stand peacefully by the side of geological teaching, anatomy is taught together with music, and theories about the movement of the stars are oddly intermixed with lessons on grammar. But long-winded as the Puranas, they are grand old books, comparable to a fine old man who is excellent company when he affectionately strolls over the various events and experiences of his chequered life.

The era of Indian modern literature began in the late nineteenth century. With the establishment of vernacular schools and the importation of the printing press, a great impetus was given to popular prose, with Bengali writers perhaps taking the lead. In modern times Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and many others used the text to help motivate the Indian independence movement. During this period, the Khadi dialect became more noticeable and different types of literature was produced in Sanskrit. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand etc rank among the world's best literary personalities. Some of the prominent modern writers in Indian languages include Premchand, Aageyeya in Hindi; Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, Sunil Gangopadhyay in Bengali; Amrita Pritam in Punjabi; Ali Sardar Jafri, Firaq Gorakhpuri and Josh Malihabadi in Urdu; Shiv Shankar Pillai, M.T.Vasudevan Nair, Malayattor Ramakrishnan in Malayalam; Subramaniya Bharati in Tamil; Gobind Triumbak Deshpande in Marathi; and Tara Shankar Joshi in Gujarati.

The most famous Bengali writer is Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who received the Nobel Prize in 1913 for Literature. Tagore's own translation of 'Gitanjali' into English brought him international fame. His 'Gora' is considered to be a very outstanding novel in Indian literature. In the last century, several Indian writers have distinguished themselves not only in traditional Indian languages but also in English. VS Naipaul, a diaspora Indian novelist born in Trinidad, also won the Nobel in 2001. Other eminent writers who are either Indian or of Indian origin and derive much inspiration from Indian themes are R. K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Raja Rao, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Mukul Kesavan, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Ashok Banker , Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Bharati Mukherjee. In Indian culture, Indian dance, music and theatre traditions span back more than 2,000 years, (Kluwer Law International, 2010). The major classical dance traditions, Bharata Natyam, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam and Kathakali draw on themes from mythology and literature and have rigid presentation rules. Regarding attire of India, Indian clothing is diligently identified with the colourful silk saris worn by Indian women. The traditional outfit for men is the dhoti, an unstitched piece of cloth that is tied around the waist and legs. Men also wear a Kurta, a loose

shirt that is worn about knee-length. For special occasions, men wear a Sherwani, which is a long coat that is buttoned up to the collar and down to the knees.

It is appraised that the ancient culture of the Indian sub-continent is vast and diverse. There are people in India who are still living in the Stone Age and also others who are equally competent and look up to the West. Indians live simultaneously with their beggars, their own satellites and Indian cosmonauts. India is a secular state with tribal philosophies and there are many religions like mixed with Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Sikh faiths. There is no single faith of religion, and no dominant religious community.

To summarize, the art of India is principled in nature with strong traces of different cultures and civilizations in it. It is apparent from the history that the cultural representatives in the region were the invaders, warriors that brought the cultural transmission through hard power but along with them there were numerous soft power promoters as artists, suifs, poets, musicians, and story tellers. The role of these cultural diplomats was important in contributing to the better sociocultural understanding and building relationship between people of different faiths, sects and regions.

History of Indian literature evolved as a wholesome domain through the Hindu literature like Ramayana and Mahabharata, treatises such as Vaastu Shastra in architecture and town planning and Arthashastra by Kautilya, making political science and involvement in politics household in ancient India. Prehistoric devotional Hindu play, poetry and songs sweep the subcontinent, with almost distinct imagery noticed in the gradual evolvement of literature in India. Certainly, if thoroughly investigated, it can be observed that history of literature in India can be divided into three periods, comprising of the ancient, the medieval and modern or contemporary.

In architecture, as in all other visual arts, there is a search for identity. In Indian architecture, government buildings of India, which are actually intended to display the nation's identity, are a complete distortion. Due to dominance of many rulers like the British, the Mughals and the diverse native Indian architecture, the perceived notion of Indian identity is in a complete confusion. During Indus Valley Civilization, there were well planned cities. Buddhist and Jaina Architecture represented three important building types- the Chaitya Hall (place of worship), the Vihara (monastery) and the Stupa. Many temples were built for devotees. With the beginning of Islam, the former Indian architecture was slightly modified to allow the traditions of the new religion, but it remained strongly Indian at its heart and character. Arches and domes began to be used and the mosque or masjid too began to form part of the landscape, adding to a new experience in form and space.